

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data for the present study was collected from think-aloud protocol, process log questionnaire, retrospective interview and subjects' essays. Based on the data analyzed, the researcher will present the findings under the following headings:

- Profiles of the five subjects
- General Composing Processes and Behaviors of the five subjects
- Dominant Language in Use
- Discussion of the findings
- Summary of findings

4.1 Profiles of the Five Subjects

The five subjects who participated in the present study comprised three males and two females, aged between 19 and 21. They were all educated in Chinese-medium primary schools from Standard One to Six. Whilst two of them i.e. CCF and LYF continued their studies in the Chinese-medium private secondary schools, the other three subjects, TSC, NCP and CHH had their secondary school education in Malay-medium schools. All subjects used Chinese to communicate with their friends and family.

In accordance with the New Primary School Chinese Language Program, they started writing essays in their first language i.e. Chinese in Primary Three whereas writing essays

in English began in the first year of secondary school. TSC, NCP and CHH are holders of Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia certificate whilst CCF and LYF are holders of the Unified Examination Certificate for Chinese School. They obtained an average grade eight for their English paper and grade six for their Chinese paper in their SPM or UEC examination. At the time of the study, they were enrolled in the pre-intermediate class of an English proficiency program in a private college.

Table 2: Profile of Subjects

Name	TSC	CCF	NCP	LYF	CHH	Average
Age	19	19	19	21	19	19.4
SPM/UEC Results:						
Chinese (Grade)	6	4	7	6	7	6
English (Grade)	7	9	8	9	8	8.2

4.2 General Composing Processes and Behaviors of the five subjects

In the present study, the five subjects were asked to write descriptive essays in their first language and in English. Using the think-aloud protocol analysis, their composing processes and behaviors were coded using the coding scheme which was adapted from those used by Ardnt (1987), Lee (1989) and Noorchaya (1994). All five subjects employed a variety of processes and behaviors throughout their writing in their first language and in English. The number of occurrences of composing processes and behaviors were totaled and tabulated as displayed in the summary table (Table 3).

**Table 3: Composing Processes and Behaviors of all Subjects
(no. of occurrences and average)**

Subjects	TSC		CCF		NCP		LYF		CHH		Average	
Processes and Behaviors	Ch.	Eng	Ch.	Eng	Ch.	Eng	Ch.	Eng	Ch.	Eng	Ch.	Eng
Idea Generation	6	6	7	1	12	5	16	8	7	5	9.6	5
Global Planning	3	2	3	0	0	0	5	8	0	0	2.2	2
Local Planning	4	4	7	2	6	3	4	1	6	2	5.4	2.4
Rehearsing	14	3	22	7	15	9	19	8	0	0	14	5.4
Repeating	8	4	8	2	9	7	34	4	0	0	11.8	3.4
Rereading sentences	10	2	14	2	10	6	4	1	0	0	7.6	2.2
Rereading phrases	7	7	10	1	3	1	10	0	0	0	6	1.8
Rereading words	5	6	3	4	6	7	8	1	0	0	4.4	3.6
Reading Topic	4	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	2.4	1.2
Reading Contents	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.6	0.6
Reading Draft	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0.2	0
Editing	18	8	20	10	19	26	13	11	9	10	15.8	13
Revising	4	0	1	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	2	0.2
Questioning	14	13	1	2	5	5	9	0	1	0	6	4
Looking at topic/notes	1	4	4	1	1	0	22	9	3	2	6.2	3.2
Jotting down ideas	3	3	3	0	0	0	10	9	0	0	3.2	2.4
Translating	1	14	0	15	0	15	0	32	0	0	0.2	15.2
Say and write	13	14	20	8	20	14	15	18	0	0	13.6	10.8
Say ideas without writing	2	1	1	3	1	5	7	2	0	0	2.2	2.2
Short Pause	4	4	2	0	3	7	5	5	2	8	3.2	4.8
Long Pause	0	2	0	5	3	0	1	1	1	10	1	3.6
No. of words	275	169	337	101	538	179	330	230	823	447	460	225
Time to complete task	30	24	44	22	40	26	64	36	44	40	44.4	29.6
No. of words per minute	9	7	8	5	13	7	5	6	19	11	10.8	7.2
Language in use	Ch.	C/E	Ch.	Ch.	Ch.	Ch.	Ch.	C/E	Ch.	Eng		

The subjects' composing processes and behaviors will be discussed generally under each process or behavior as follows:

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Idea Generation

All subjects were observed to have higher occurrences of idea generation in their Chinese writing with an average of 9.6 occurrences as compared to 5 in their English writing. Idea generation was displayed throughout the writing process although in most instances, it occurred more frequently at the beginning of their writing, which is natural in writing process. The display of this process throughout the writing process indicates that writing is a continuing act of discovery of what one wanted to say as discovered by Emig (1971). CCF, LYF, NCP and CHH displayed this behavior more frequently in their Chinese writing as compared to their English writing. Only one subject, TSC showed equal occurrences of idea generation in both her Chinese writing and English writing. However, when asked how she got her ideas for her English writing, she reported that she transferred her ideas from her Chinese writing.

Metacommenting

There were very few occurrences of metacommenting. Only two subjects displayed this behavior on two occasions in their Chinese writing i.e. at the planning stage and before they started writing. Both TSC and CCF verbalized the planning stage by telling themselves to do an outline and also mentioned their readiness to start writing upon completing the outline. For example, TSC verbalized "write an outline" after reading the topic and upon completion of the outline, she said, "I can start writing now." No metacommenting was observed in the English writing.

Planning

Planning was evident during the subjects' writing in Chinese and English but most of them planned locally. Three of the subjects were observed to have planned globally before they started writing. TSC and NCP jotted down their ideas in point form as they planned globally on what to include in both their Chinese and English writings. CCF did this for her Chinese writing only. All three reported that they usually planned in this manner before the actual writing process began.

The other two subjects did not display this behavior overtly. LYF planned as he wrote which was mostly local planning. He reported that he organized his Chinese writing into three parts i.e. introduction, body and conclusion. CCH on the other hand, displayed a totally different way of planning where he verbalized his plans without jotting down the ideas. He seemed to conceive the whole essay in his mind and verbalized it for the first ten to fifteen minutes. He did this in both his Chinese and English composing processes. In the retrospective interview, he reported that he always planned his writing in that manner.

In general, there were higher occurrences of local planning in the Chinese composing process with an average of 5.4 occurrences as compared to 2.4 occurrences in the English composing process.

Rehearsing

Four of the subjects rehearsed more in their Chinese writing with an average of 14 times as compared to 5.4 times in their English writing. They verbalized the sentence structure or phrases before writing them down as if to experiment with the sentences structure to express their ideas. The researcher also observed the subjects rehearsing to complete an idea. For example, NCP was observed to rehearse his sentence first before writing it down as follows: “*There is a stream...*There is a stream with clear water” (phrase in italics is rehearsal).

CCF had the highest occurrences of rehearsing while composing the Chinese essay with 22 occurrences as compared to 7 occurrences in the English essay. NCP displayed 19 occurrences while composing the Chinese essay compared to 8 occurrences of rehearsal in the English essay. LYF displayed 15:9 occurrences whereas TSC displayed 14:3 occurrences in their Chinese and English composing processes. CHH did not display this behavior whilst writing but his verbalization of the whole essay in the planning stage was very much a rehearsal of his written product. The researcher deduced this by comparing his written product with his think-aloud transcription where a lot of similarities were noted (see Appendix D).

Repeating

Repetition of words or phrases occurred more frequently during the Chinese composing process with an average of 12 occurrences as compared to 3.4 occurrences in the English composing process. When writing in Chinese, the subjects seemed to be able to generate

more ideas after repeating words or phrases. NCP displayed the highest occurrences of this behavior in his Chinese writing where he was observed to have repeated words that prompted him to continue writing. For example, in the midst of writing the sentence "The cost of living here is low", he repeated the words 'cost of living' twice before completing the sentence. The other subjects, TSC, CCF and LYF also displayed this behavior more frequently in their Chinese writing.

However in the English writing, repetition of words or phrases was more a means to transcribe the word correctly in terms of spelling. For example, LYF repeated the word 'farmer' three times before transcribing it in his English writing. CCF was observed repeating the word 'fruit' twice before transcribing it as 'fuit' in her writing.

Rereading

Four subjects reread sentences and phrases more often whilst writing in Chinese as compared to English. Rereading sentences and phrases seemed to provide an impetus for the subjects to generate ideas and to see if the sentences needed editing. TSC, CCF, LYF and NCP displayed this behavior throughout their writing in Chinese and English. Rereading sentences occurred more frequently in the Chinese writing with an average of seven occurrences. In comparison, there were only two occurrences of rereading sentences in the English writing. For example, in the first 14 minutes of the Chinese writing, TSC displayed this behavior seven times, which helped her to generate more ideas as well as to continue writing. She was also seen editing after rereading some sentences. Raimes (1987) noted similar recursive behavior in her subjects as she reported that: "Reading back sometimes served the purpose of checking to see if a sentence fulfilled the writer's

intention and whether it fit with whatever knowledge the writer had about the conventions of written English; in these cases it was followed by revising and editing.” (p. 158)

The four subjects also reread words throughout their composing processes in Chinese and English. All displayed almost equal number of this behavior except for NCP who reread words more frequently in his Chinese writing. Rereading words in the Chinese writing seemed to prompt the subjects to continue writing whereas display of this behavior whilst composing in English was more a means to confirm the spelling of the words. For example, TSC kept rereading the word ‘original’ which she spelt ‘orniginal’ whilst CCF reread the word ‘building’ which she spelt ‘built’.

Reading

Reading topic occurred more frequently in the Chinese writing with an average of 2.4 occurrences as compared to 1.2 occurrences in the English writing. Three of the subjects, CCF, NCP and CHH read the topic twice when writing in Chinese but only once in the English writing. CCF reported that reading the topic helped her to generate ideas for her writing. One of the subjects, TSC read the topic four times in the course of writing in Chinese as compared to only once when writing in English. The other subject, LYF was observed to read the topic twice in both the Chinese and English writing.

Only two subjects read the contents of their writings upon completion. Both TSC and CCF read the whole contents of their Chinese and English writings upon completion. The researcher observed TSC editing her writing while reading her written essay. The other three subjects, NCP, LYF and CHH did not display this behavior.

Reading the draft copy of writing was done by one subject only i.e. NCP when writing in Chinese. He started writing a draft immediately after he read the topic but discarded the draft after about 10 minutes of writing when he could not think of what to write. He read the draft and then jotted down his ideas in point form before commencing the actual writing.

Editing

Three of the subjects, TSC, CCF and NCP edited more frequently in their Chinese writing than in their English writing. The other two subjects, LYF and CHH edited more in their English writing. All the subjects seemed to edit from the beginning to the end of their composing, which according to Sommers (1980) and Zamel (1983) was the characteristic of their unskilled L2 writers. The purpose of editing was different where in the Chinese writing, editing was done to replace words with better choices while in the English writing, it was done to correct the spelling of words or surface errors. TSC, CCF and LYF cited spelling mistakes and grammatical errors as the type of changes made to their English writing. This concurs with the finding made by Lee (1989) where her unskilled writers were more concerned with the surface level demands of the task in respect of grammatical errors.

Revising

Revising occurred more frequently in the Chinese writing of three subjects as compared to zero revising in the English writing. TSC, CCF and NCP were observed revising their ideas

while writing. All of these three subjects reported that they revised to clarify or express their ideas in a better manner. Both TSC and NCP commented that they were not able to make changes that needed to be made in their English writing although they knew that these changes were necessary to make their writing more comprehensible. LYF revised once in his English writing but no revising process was observed in his Chinese writing. He mentioned that he made changes merely to increase the number of words. The other subject CHH did not revise in both his writings, which he confirmed in the questionnaire.

Questioning

Whilst two subjects, TSC and NCP were observed to use this behavior more frequently in their Chinese writing, the others either used less or the same frequency in both their writings. Questioning in the Chinese writing was focused on clarifying the correct manner to write the characters or how to write the characters and what ideas to include. For example, TSC questioned herself quite often on how to write certain Chinese characters. NCP questioned the way to express his ideas on the attitude and mentality of his hometown's residents so that he could express them in a more positive manner.

In the English writing, questioning was a means to evaluate their translation from Chinese to English or to confirm the spelling of words. For example, LYF verbalized the following questions when writing in English, "How do we say 'xiang jiao' (rubber) in English?" On the other hand, CCF questioned the manner to spell the word 'building', which she spelt as 'built' in her English essay.

Looking at topic or notes

All the subjects showed different frequency of this behavior in both the Chinese and English writings. TSC was observed to look at her notes more frequently when writing in English whereas CCF and NCP referred to their notes more often in the course of writing their Chinese essay. LYF was observed looking at the topic once during his Chinese writing.

Jotting down ideas

The three subjects who started their composing process with an outline jotted down their ideas on another sheet of paper as they generated ideas and planned globally. TCS and CCF who started the writing process with an outline jotted down the main points to be included in their writing whilst NCP started with a draft which he discarded soon after. NCP then jotted down the types of contents in point form that he referred to frequently. He also cancelled out those points that he had included in his writing as he looked at his notes. LYF and CHH did not display this behavior in both the Chinese and English composing processes.

Translating

Four subjects were observed to have used translation only in their English writing. When writing in English, TSC, CCF, LYF and NCP thought in Chinese and then translated the sentences, phrases and words to English. Three subjects, TSC, CCF and LYF were found to

translate key words of the English topic to Chinese. Lay (1982) also had a similar finding where her subjects translated key words from English to their L1.

TSC reported that she recollected what she had written in the Chinese writing and then translated them into English when writing in English. When she could not translate, she ignored the idea. For example, in her Chinese writing, TSC wrote about famous food in her hometown mentioning beef noodles as one of the famous food. However, she omitted this idea in her English essay at the planning stage because she could not translate the name of this food from Chinese to English. This finding is similar to what was experienced by Tam (1988) when she was writing in Malay where she ignored the words that she could not translate to Malay. All four subjects in the present study reported that they used another idea when they were unable to translate their initial ideas from Chinese to English. NCP added that he would use more words to describe the idea when faced with the problem of translating.

Although one of the subjects, CHH mentioned that he thought in English when writing in English, the researcher observed him pausing at certain points in his writing seemingly to translate from Chinese to English. Moreover, he reported in the questionnaire that he would use more words to describe his original idea when he could not translate it to English.

Say and write

Four of the subjects, TSC, CCF, NCP and LYF displayed this behavior throughout both their Chinese and English writing. The other subject, CHH kept silent throughout his writing because he reported that he could not say and write simultaneously, as it would

impede his writing process. He instead verbalized his thoughts before the actual act of writing.

Say ideas aloud without transcribing

TSC and NCP displayed this behavior more frequently in the Chinese writing session due to their inability to transcribe certain characters required to express their ideas. For example, TSC wanted to express the idea of captivating scenery but due to her inability to write the Chinese character, she discarded this idea.

The other two subjects, LYF and CCF who were educated in Chinese schools from primary to secondary level verbalized their ideas but did not transcribe them in their English writing because they did not know how to express them in English. For example, LYF wanted to write about Chinese New Year celebration in his hometown but this idea was not transcribed. CHH did not display this behavior since he did not verbalize while writing.

Pause

All subjects displayed different frequency of pauses in both their writings. TCS had an equal number of short pauses in both her Chinese and English writing but had more occurrences of long pauses in her English writing. The researcher noted that she paused for a short while during her Chinese writing to recall the way to write certain Chinese characters. CCF had more short pauses in Chinese writing but more long pauses in her English writing. She paused for a long while when she could not translate her ideas into

English. LYF displayed an equal number of short and long pauses in his Chinese writing whilst more short pauses in his English writing. NCP showed an equal number of pauses, both short and long in his Chinese and English writing. CHH displayed more pauses in his English writing. This could be due to his inability to translate from Chinese to English.

4.3 Dominant language in use

All the subjects, TSC, CCF, LYF, NCP and CHH used Chinese as the dominant language to think of ideas throughout their Chinese composing. The subjects were observed to use Chinese to verbalize their thoughts while writing in Chinese. Two subjects, TSC and LYF used English once during their writing in Chinese. TSC verbalized the word “camping” as she tried to recall the word in Chinese whilst LYF mentioned the word “funfair” at the beginning of his Chinese composing process.

Three of the subjects, TSC, CCF and LYF reported that they used Chinese to think of ideas while composing in English, as they felt that were able to express their ideas better in this language. They also reported that writing first in Chinese and then in English using the same topic helped them in their English composing process. This finding concurs with finding made by Kobayashi and Rinnert (1989) who deduced that students with lower proficiency in English composing initially in their first language would find it easier to express their ideas.

NCP reported that he used both Chinese and English, which was evident in the think-aloud session. He also agreed that writing first in Chinese and then in English helped his English composing process. The English used whilst writing in English was verbalization of

sentences translated from Chinese to English which occurred throughout their writing in English. For example, TSC verbalized the sentence in Chinese and asked herself how to translate to English when she composed in English as illustrated in the following excerpt from her writing:

“In their have many islands because in Johor is...*how to say san mian tou se hai..in English...beside the sea...*” (words in italics represent Chinese verbalization. Errors are maintained in this sentence taken from the subject’s writing).

While composing in English, CCF was observed to use Chinese to verbalize her ideas throughout her writing. She reported that she used Chinese to think while composing in English and translated her ideas into English. She felt that she was able to express her idea better in Chinese. This is evident when the researcher compared her English writing with her Chinese writing. She was more expressive in her Chinese writing when she described her hometown with ninety-four words in one paragraph. For the same description in her English writing, she wrote only one sentence which read “My hometown have many beautiful view and plant.” In terms of length, her Chinese writing was longer than her English writing.

CHH was the only subject who reported that he used solely English to think of ideas whenever he wrote in English. When asked whether writing in Chinese first would help him in his English composing process, he said it would not because he felt that these languages differ from each other. CHH was observed to verbalize everything in English during the planning stage of writing in English. However, at certain points of verbalization, he paused for a long while as if to arrange his ideas in English before verbalizing.

Translating ideas from Chinese to English could have happened during the long pause. This possibility was indicated by his answers to the questions in the questionnaire where he mentioned that he used another language to think of ideas and that he used more words to describe the ideas when he could not translate them.

The researcher noted the usage of a third language i.e. the Malay language by TSC and LYF for name of places and certain nouns. For example, TCS used “Gunung Ledang” (Mount Ledang) in both her Chinese and English writing whilst LYF used the word “kelapa sawit” (oil palm) in his English writing. NCP reported that he used the Malay language when composing in English but transcription of the think-aloud process did not present usage of this language. Malay language being the national language is taught in Chinese-medium primary school from primary one as compared to English which is taught from primary three onwards.

4.4 Discussion on Findings

The researcher will discuss the findings according to the research questions and hypothesis for this study.

4.4.1 Are there similarities in the composing processes and behaviors of pre-intermediate ESL students writing descriptive essays in their first language and the English Language? If yes, what are the similarities?

Yes, there are similarities in the composing processes and behaviors of pre-intermediate ESL students as they used the same composing processes for both their writings in Chinese

and English. Like their counterparts in other studies conducted by Edelsky (1982), Lay (1982), Zamel (1983), Ardnt (1987) and Noorchaya (1994), the pre-intermediate ESL students of this study transferred their L1 composing skills to L2. The subjects exhibited similar behaviors such as planning, rehearsing, rereading, editing and revising in both the Chinese and English composing. Despite the similarities, the subjects reported that it was more difficult to write in English, which concurs with Lay (1982) who found that the composing process of English writing was more difficult for L2 writers.

While the subjects displayed common processes and behaviors in both the Chinese and English composing, they did not display similar behaviors among each other. Each subject approached his or her writing differently although they were homogenous in terms of language proficiency and academic qualification. For example, NCP was a detailed planner who jotted down his ideas elaborately as he generated ideas. He then referred to his jottings when he wrote his essays. LYF on the other hand did not jot down his ideas but started writing immediately after reading the topic. CHH seemed to conceive his essay in his mind and then verbalized the whole essay for the first ten minutes. He then kept quiet throughout his writing but he was observed to write continuously as if mapping his ideas in his mind onto the paper. The display of variety in composing behaviors amongst the subjects concurs with similar finding by Ardnt (1987) who observed “the lack of similarity” (p.260) and Noorchaya (1994) whose subjects displayed a variety of behaviors that differed from each writer.

4.4.2 Are there differences in the composing processes and behaviors of pre-intermediate ESL students writing descriptive essays in their first language and the English? If yes, what are the differences?

Yes, there are differences in the composing processes and behaviors of pre-intermediate ESL student in the present study. Although there are a lot of similarities in both their composing processes, the pre-intermediate ESL students in this study were found to exhibit some differences in their composing processes in the Chinese and English writing. One striking difference was the frequency of processes used in both the writings. All subjects were found to exhibit higher occurrences of composing processes in their Chinese writing as compared to their English writing. Rehearsing was one of the behaviors which occurred the most in the Chinese writing with an average of 14 occurrences as compared to an average of 5.4 occurrences in the English writing.

However, one composing process that was found to occur more frequently in the English writing was pauses. There were more occurrences of pauses in the English composing process with an average of 4.8 short pauses and 3.6 long pauses as compared to 3.2 short pauses and 1 long pause in the Chinese composing process. Higher frequency of pauses in the English writing could be due to truncated ideas and disrupted flow of thoughts as experienced by Tam (1988) in her self-study when she was writing in a language she was less proficient in.

One other difference that was noted in this study was the usage of more than one language while composing in English. Four of the subjects used their L1 in the English composing process. This finding concurs with Martin-Betancourt (Krapels,1991) and Lee (1989).

Martin-Betancourt observed her Puerto Rican subjects using L1 in the second language composing process whilst Lee's Malaysian-Malay subjects reported that thinking in their L1 facilitated the flow of ideas. The subjects in the present study also reported that thinking in Chinese enabled them to express their ideas better.

4.4.3 Are there composing processes and behaviors that are unique only to one language? If yes, what are the processes and behaviors?

Yes, the researcher observed two types of composing processes that seemed to be unique to only one language i.e. metacommenting while composing the Chinese essay and translating while composing in English. Two subjects, TSC and CCF displayed metacommenting in their Chinese writing only. This could be due to usage of a language which they were comfortable with as deduced by Noorchaya (1994) in her study of six Malaysian Chinese. However, in contrast with her subjects who displayed this behavior in their English composing process using the English Language, the subjects of the present study metacommented in Chinese while composing the Chinese essay.

Translating was observed to occur in the English composing process only. This behavior was displayed by four subjects, TSC, CCF, LYF and NCP who translated sentences, phrases and words from Chinese to English. This finding concurs with Martin-Betancourt (Krapels, 1991), Dryden (1987) and Lee (1989) who noted this behavior among their subjects. The Puerto Rican subjects in Martin Betancourt's study incorporated translation into their L2 writing processes. Four of Dryden's Malaysian-Malay subjects admitted translating from Malay to English when experiencing problems writing in English. Lee's unskilled writers did most of their thinking in their L1 and then translated their thoughts

into English. In the present study, one subject, TSC reported that she recalled what she had written for her Chinese writing and then translated the ideas to English. The subjects in the present study indicated that whenever they could not translate, they ignored the idea or used more words to express their idea.

4.4.4 Pre-intermediate ESL students use L1 as the dominant language to think when writing in their first language and the English Language.

L1 was the dominant language used by the pre-intermediate ESL students in this study to think when writing in their first language and the English Language. Out of the five subjects who participated in this study, four of the subjects were observed to use Chinese, which is their L1, as the dominant language to think when they were composing in their Chinese and English writing. TSC, CCF and LYF reported that they used Chinese to think when they were writing in Chinese as well as in English. NCP who reported that he used both Chinese and English to think in his English composing process was observed to use more Chinese. These four subjects reported that using Chinese to think allowed them to express their ideas better.

The other subject, CHH used Chinese throughout the Chinese composing process whereas in the English composing process, he used only English to verbalize his thoughts. However, in the process log questionnaire, he reported that he used another language to think when writing the English essay and when he could not translate, he would use more words to describe his ideas. Therefore, he could be using Chinese to think subconsciously while composing in English and then translated his ideas to English when he verbalized his thoughts. Moreover, he was observed to have the highest occurrences of pauses while

composing in English as if to construct his ideas, which were thought in Chinese, into sentences in English before he verbalized them.

This finding validates the finding made by Lay (1982), Ardnt (1987), Lee (1989), Cumming (1989), Kobayashi and Rinnert (1989) and Friedlander (1991). However, this finding contrasted with the one made by Noorchaya in her study conducted in 1994, in which she found her subjects using English dominantly in their Chinese and Malay composing processes. Despite this contrasting finding, the researcher agrees with Noorchaya's reason that the dominance of a language in the students' composing process could be attributed to the frequency of usage of that language in the students' daily activities. Her subjects used English because they used that language in all their writing tasks as well as their ongoing development of academic language in English. However, the subjects in the present study used Chinese in most of their communication activities and Chinese was a language they were familiar and comfortable with. They were also not proficient in the target language that is English therefore they naturally relied on their first language to help them write in English.

4.5 Summary of Findings

- a) Pre-intermediate ESL students were found exhibiting similar processes and behaviors when composing in their first language and the English Language, which therefore concurs with the finding made by Zamel (1983), Lay (1982), Ardnt (1987), Dyden (1987) and Noorchaya (1994) that composing skills were transferred across languages.

- b) Although all the subjects exhibited similar processes and behaviors in their Chinese and English composing process, individual subjects displayed different frequency of composing processes and behaviors amongst themselves. This concurs with the finding made by Lay (1982) and Noorchaya (1994).
- c) Whilst there were similarities between their Chinese and English composing processes, the subjects of this study also displayed differences in terms of frequency of processes and behaviors which were higher in the Chinese composing process. The only behavior with higher occurrences in the English composing process was pauses.
- d) The other difference between the Chinese and English composing processes was the usage of another language when composing in English i.e. the subjects used their L1 to generate ideas for their essay. This finding concurs with finding made by Lay (1982), Kobayashi and Rinnert (1989) and Friendlander (1991).
- e) The researcher noted two types of behaviors that were unique to different language composing processes i.e. metacommenting which occurred only in the Chinese composing process and translating which occurred only in the English composing process.
- f) Finally, the usage of L1 to think was apparent in both the Chinese and English composing processes thus validating the hypothesis that pre-intermediate ESL students used L1 as the dominant language to think when writing in their first language and the English language.