

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a preview of the present research study. It includes a brief background of the study, followed by the problem statement and the significance of study. Then, the discussion proceeds with the objectives and the research questions of the study. Finally, the limitations of this study will also be presented.

1.1 Background of Study

There are four main languages spoken in Malaysia. Malay is the official national language of the country being spoken by all Malaysians; most of the Malaysian Chinese speak Chinese (some Malaysian Malays and Indians are also able to speak Chinese as they are educated in Chinese schools since young); and Malaysian Indians speak Tamil. English language is also used as lingua franca in Malaysia, but generally by the urban middle classes (Gaudart, 2003). In this multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual country, most Malaysians can speak more than one language in daily communication. Due to the exposure to various languages, it is a norm for Malaysians to speak what is known as *bahasa rojak* – a language formed by a mixture of different languages.

Malaysians use English widely as the medium of communication in commercial and social settings, in business transactions, the Internet communication, advertisement, entertainment industry, both formal and informal interactions, as well as in academic fields. Adams and Keene (2000) state that English, as the means of instruction, contributes strongly to education and students' efficiencies to communicate (as cited in

Al-Khasawneh, 2010). English is a medium for students to learn, transfer, present and share their acquired knowledge. Therefore, teaching and learning good English is important to help students cope with their academic tasks as well as to prepare them for their future career.

Realising the importance of the English language, many parents send their children to language centres or tuition classes and seek for any possible means to help improve their children's English proficiency level. In Malaysia, the National Education Policy stipulates that English is taught as a second language in Malaysia to students at the age of seven, while some students get even earlier exposure during pre-school and home education.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the efforts placed on preparing the younger generation with good English skills, English language proficiency among young graduates in Malaysia falls below satisfactory level. Unemployment among fresh graduates in Malaysia is often linked to the inability to communicate fluently in English, in both spoken and written forms. For instance, JobStreet.com, one of the main job-seeking websites, conducted a survey in October 2011 and reported that among the 571 human resource practitioners, 64% agreed that the main reason of rejecting fresh graduates after interview sessions was due to the candidates' unrealistic salary or benefits requests. Another two reasons were bad character, attitude and personality of the jobseekers (60%) as well as poor command of English language (50%).

Additionally, The Sun Daily reported that according to the National Graduate Employability Blueprint published by the then Ministry of Higher Education in 2012,

the major issues faced by the employers were graduates' poor command of English (60%), poor character, attitude and personality (40%), and their problem-solving skills (25%). Moreover, many English leading newspapers in Malaysia like The Star, New Straits Times, and the Malay Mail had also reported on the poor standard of English among fresh graduates. Quotes below were some statements taken from the mainstream newspaper articles:

"The declining standard of English among the young in Malaysia has been well document. For many years, many concerned stakeholders from employers, educationists and linguists to parents have voiced their concern."

(The Star, 2011)

"The National Education Blueprint released September this year said, "Poor English proficiency among fresh graduates, since 2006, has been consistently ranked as one of the top five issues facing Malaysian employers."

(The Malay Mail Online, 2013)

"In speech, they are brief and are unable to communicate effectively, and their writing is no different from the abbreviated terms they use when sending out text messages through their mobile phones."

(The Malay Mail Online, 2013)

Before investigating the root cause of this phenomenon, it is crucial to find out the importance of writing and how it affects the ESL students at tertiary level because at universities or college, every student needs to master writing skills to express and present their knowledge and most of the evaluations are made based on what is demonstrated in the written form. Nevertheless, writing can be very challenging especially for ESL students due to many factors, such as first language interference. The students encounter problems to present knowledge acquired in their field using English language, both in written assignments and while answering examination questions. A cursory investigation of examination questions of all universities' courses and

discussion with lecturers who teach the content subjects confirms this observation (Roszanaliza, 2006). Hence it appears that the role played by English instructors is undeniably crucial in determining the level of language acquisition in the country.

With this regard, many research in writing have been conducted among the ESL/EFL students to find out the challenges they encounter. For instance, Wang and Wen (2002) had investigated about first language interference on EFL students' writing by using TAPs as the main research tool. By applying the same methodology, Roszanaliza (2006) had conducted a research with three ESL Malay writers at Universiti Teknologi MARA, in Shah Alam, Malaysia, to find out factors affecting the writers' cognitive processes. Furthermore, Margaret and Vijay (2012) and Ghabool (2012) had also conducted research in ESL writing field by applying TAPs. The aforesaid research and other relevant studies have come out with interesting results and made some contribution to the academic field, however, there is a lack of research study conducted among Chinese ESL students at tertiary level in Malaysian context.

The historical context in which Malaysians grew up in has influenced the use of English in different ways for different people. Many students who learn English as a second language at schools, especially those who come from non-English speaking homes, tend to think in their mother tongues before they transcribe their thoughts into the target language and they find it challenging to express the desired meaning. Silva (1992) reports that many ESL students think primarily in their first language and then translate their thoughts into English. As a Chinese ESL student, the researcher has encountered the same experience and is therefore intrigued to find out the factors affecting Chinese ESL students' writing, particularly students at tertiary level.

1.3 Malaysian University English Test (MUET)

In Malaysia, STPM (Higher Certificate of Education in Malaysia) candidates, matriculation, diploma and pre-university students who wish to pursue a first degree programme in local universities are required to sit for the Malaysian University English Test (MUET), a mandatory requirement for admission into public universities. MUET was introduced by the Ministry of Education in Malaysia in 1999 as a competency test or language assessment tool to measure the students' English proficiency level. The Malaysian Examinations Council describes MUET as a competency test designed to measure students' level of English proficiency (Lee, 2004). It may be considered as an equivalent to the international English examinations such as the Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS). However, unlike TOEFL and IELTS, MUET is accepted as the certification of English Language proficiency and recognised only in Malaysia and Singapore (Yusup, 2012).

Basically, MUET comprises four main assessment tests: Listening (15%), Speaking (15%), Reading Comprehension (45%) and Writing (25%). Students' performance in MUET is reported based on an aggregated score with respect to six levels of achievement: Band One being the lowest and Band Six the highest. The students are required to pass the MUET with a minimum of Band Three before graduation. In MUET, writing is evaluated based on five main criteria, namely, accuracy, appropriacy, coherence and cohesion, use of language functions, and task fulfilment. The possible writing genres to be tested in MUET include reports, articles, letters and essays. Therefore, students must have acquired the knowledge, format, and skills to compose the relevant writing genres before they take MUET.

1.4 Aims and Research Questions

Given the scenario of the declining standard of English in Malaysia, this study seeks to investigate the root problem by probing into the cognitive processes of Malaysian undergraduates using Think-Aloud Protocols (TAPs) while they are performing the writing tasks. The main objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the cognitive processes of five participants while engaging in both formal and informal letters writing tasks
2. To discover the differences of their cognitive processes in formulating the formal and informal letters
3. To identify the factors affecting the participants' cognitive processes while composing the letters.

In order to achieve the objectives above, the study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the cognitive processes of ESL students, as they engage in formal and informal letter writing?
2. What are the factors affecting the cognitive processes of ESL students while they are composing?
3. Is there any difference between cognitive processes in formal and informal letter writing while the ESL students think-aloud? If yes, how do they differ?

In Malaysia, students' English proficiency in writing is often evaluated based on the end product but many research have suggested that the "during-process" plays a crucial role in determining the quality of the writing too (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Ericsson & Simon, 1984 & 1993). The best way to model the writing process is to observe and study a writer in action. However, introspective analysis of what they do during the writing course is obviously inaccurate and likely to be influenced by their notions of what they should have done (Flower & Hayes, 1981). One way to get into the minds of the writers is through protocol analysis. The thinking process is vital to be investigated because written products are the result of thinking. Thinking aloud protocol is used to collect a detailed record of what is going on in the writer's mind while engaging in a composing task. It appears that thinking and writing are two inseparable elements. The correlation between these two elements will be discussed in the following chapter.

1.5 Significance of the Study

In the past, although there have been some studies which use TAPs to investigate ESL/EFL students' language skills from a variety of language backgrounds, such as the abovementioned research in Section 1.2 and some other research in reading and writing (will be further elaborated in the next chapter), little is known about Chinese ESL writers at tertiary level in a Malaysian context. In order to bridge the gap, this study aims to uncover the cognitive processes involved as well as the factors affecting the Chinese ESL students' cognitive processes during their letter-composing processes.

It is hoped that through the findings obtained from this study, it will help ESL instructors to gain a deeper understanding of their ESL students' writing behaviors and thus able to facilitate their students to improve their writing capabilities.

1.6 Participants of the Study

University of Malaya (UM) is the oldest university in Malaysia located in the southwest of Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia (*History of UM*, 2013). Five Chinese ESL undergraduates from UM were selected from a group of ten as the participants to this study. They were chosen based on their ability to perform think-aloud procedures with ease while engaging in writing tasks. All participants are Band Three achievers in the Malaysian University English Test (MUET). Further particulars about the participants and how they were chosen would be elaborated in Chapter Three.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

Although TAPs is a useful research tool to investigate cognitive processes, the cognitive processes recorded are not necessarily complete because the subjects may verbalise only part of their thoughts. This view is supported by Flower and Hayes (1980), who describe TAPs as a means of description, although not completely, of what writers do as they write by showing aspects of the rhetorical problem actually come under consideration and representation (as cited in Roszanaliza, 2006).

Besides, the participants of the present study are Chinese ESL students from UM, thus, the findings of the study may not be applicable to other ESL students of different races, cultural backgrounds, and institutions.

Furthermore, this research only focuses and examines ESL students' cognitive processes in writing formal and informal letters (Rationale for selecting letter-writing as the composing task will be discussed in Chapter three). Therefore, other genres of writing tasks may yield varied outcomes of TAPs.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter begins by presenting some relevant second language acquisition (SLA) theories. The next section will discuss about some writing theories as well as its' relationship with thinking. Then, it will proceed with the introduction of the main research tool used for data collection in this study, i.e. Think-Aloud Protocols (TAPs) and some of its relevant research studies conducted in the past.

2.1 Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theories

English is being taught and acquired by students as a second language in Malaysia. As mentioned in Chapter One, most Malaysian students are exposed to English learning at the age of seven or even earlier, during pre-school and home education. Due to the exposure to the various languages in Malaysia, most Malaysians can speak more than one language, though not necessarily of high competence. As a result, it becomes even more challenging for learners to acquire English with the interference of the first and/or other language(s).

A very influential figure in the field of language acquisition is Stephen Krashen. Krashen proposed five hypotheses in *The Natural Approach* (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) regarding the optimum conditions for language acquisition. The first and key hypothesis of his theory was the distinction between the learning and acquisition of a language. According to Krashen, learning is different from acquisition whereby learning is a conscious rule-based process, whereas acquisition on the other hand is a subconscious

and natural process. He states that learning is a conscious acceptance of knowledge 'about' the target language, i.e. grammar or form. On the other hand, acquisition involves subconscious acceptance of knowledge through natural communication, in which he claims to enable learners to communicate more effectively using the target language.

His second hypothesis - The Monitor hypothesis further explains how acquisition and learning are used for developing language acquisition. While acquisition can initiate utterances, learning acts as an editor of the utterances. Krashen (1981) suggests that although monitoring can contribute to the language accuracy, it can hinder the learner's language fluency if overuse. However, optimal use of monitoring especially in writing is essential for ESL learners to enhance their writing competency because in writing, there is sufficient time for writers to focus on the rules and form of language use.

Furthermore, Krashen (1981) proposed The Affective Filter hypothesis, where the learners' emotional variables such as anxiety, self-confidence, motivation and stress might influence the language acquisition too. Krashen (1981)'s other three hypotheses are The Natural Order hypothesis, The Input hypothesis and The Reading hypothesis, but these will not be further elaborated here as they are not applicable to the present study. However it is noted that Krashen's work have been widely criticised throughout the years by many scholars (Horner, 1987; Spada & Lightbrown, 2002; Steinberg & Sciarni, 2006, as cited in Groves, 2013) but his ideas were not totally rejected. Ellis (2005) did not reject his idea that ESL learners should focus on meaning not form but he asserted that it was only one of the many possibilities. Besides, Ellis (2005) also highlighted that instruction needed to consider learners' individual differences and that

instructors should provide an appropriate learning platform and design teaching methods to motivate the learners and to match their aptitude of learning.

Additionally, Skills Acquisition Theory as introduced by DeKeyser (2007) relates to the ideas of explicit and implicit learning. This theory states that the students learn the explicit rules of a language first, then use the language without carefully considering the rules and finally to use it automatically, without much conscious needed (as cited in Groves, 2013). Dornyei (2009) further suggests that implicit learning happens when the learners acquire the language patterns and its regularities unconsciously in an environment (as cited in Groves, 2013). This idea seems to be similar to the situation in which how most Malaysians acquire different languages outside the classroom. In Malaysia, there are some weaknesses in the approach of delivering ESL lesson because there is a tendency to rely too much on explicit learning, i.e. over-emphasis on the rules of the language and lacking focus on implicit learning, which has subsequently caused the learners not having the ability to apply in real life situations.

2.2 Writing Theories and Thinking

Of the four language skills in ESL, writing is considered to be a productive skill, used as a means of recording what has been communicated where the invisible thoughts are transferred to be visible. It is also a skill that requires the most effort in terms of processing cognition. The development of English as second language (ESL) writing is very complicated. Angelova (1999) stated that language proficiency, L1 writing competence, use of cohesive devices, metacognitive knowledge about the writing task, writing strategies and writers' personal characteristics are factors affecting the process and ESL written product (as cited in Mu, 2005).

Written products are the results of thinking, we write what appears in our mind first before the ideas and thoughts are recorded in written form. According to Voon Foo (2007), writing is an important learning tool to help students to understand ideas and concepts better, whereas Tan and Miller (2008) define writing as an intentional, social communication that involves literacy. Students' level of understanding of certain subjects is often examined and evaluated by their written reports where they need to transfer and present their knowledge acquired. Since thinking is an invisible process, writing is a medium to transform the invisible to become visible. However, we can hardly examine how exactly the human brain works. Many researchers have attempted to seek deeper understanding on how human brain works and how does it relate to writing. Zamel (1983), known as a pioneer in ESL writing research, considered composing as a non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning.

One of the most recognised researchers, Vygotsky (1978) claims that humans use tools such as speech and writing to mediate their social environments but before speech and writing are produced, thoughts must come first. Therefore, Vygotsky (1978) believes that thought and language cannot exist without each other. There are four significant theories in ESL writing that will be explicated in the next paragraphs, i.e. Contrastive Rhetoric Theory, Communication Theory, Cognitive Development / Process Theory and Social Constructionist Theory.

2.2.1 Contrastive Rhetoric Theory

Contrastive Rhetoric Theory is proposed by Kaplan (1966) in his book "Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Communication" (as cited in Mu, 2005). Research

based on this theory has examined the distinctions between English written texts by its native and non-native speakers, as well as to relate these textual differences to cultural differences in rhetorical expectations and conventions (Mu, 2005). During the past thirty years, Connor (2002) had reviewed the studies of contrastive rhetoric and identified four domains of its investigation which are as given below:

1. Contrastive Text Linguistic Studies: Examine, compare and contrast how texts are formed and interpreted in different languages and cultures using methods of written discourse analysis;
2. Studies of Writing as Cultural and Educational Activity: Investigate literacy development on L1 language and culture and examine effects on the development of L2 literacy;
3. Classroom-based Contrastive Studies: Examine cross-cultural patterns in process writing, collaborative revisions, and student-teacher conferences;
4. Genre-specific Investigations: Applied to academic and professional writing.

(Taken from Connor, 2002, p. 498)

Since the present study focuses on classroom-based setting, it shall fall under the third domain as listed above. Overall, Contrastive Rhetoric Theory claims that people speaking of different languages and from different cultural backgrounds yield different writing styles. This theory has played a crucial role in ESL writing classroom and its central concern is the logical construction and arrangement of discourse forms (Connor, 2002). It is used to analyse elements of paragraphs such as topic, support, concluding sentences, and transitions. Therefore, Silva (1990) identifies it as a means for ESL writers to use as they organize and present their ideas in writing conventions. Nevertheless, Contrastive Rhetoric Theory has been criticised since its emergence for its reductionist, deterministic, prescriptive and essentialist orientation (Leki, 1997, as cited in Mu, 2005).

2.2.2 Communication Theory

The next writing theory to be discussed in this chapter is *Communication Theory*. Mu (2005) suggests that ESL writing is a means of communication that is naturally influenced by *Communication Theory*. This theory emphasises on the communication purposes that are to be achieved via interpersonal discourse or communication. To connect communication theories with composition studies, discourse is placed at the center of attention (Mu, 2005). The theory also suggests that different discourses serve different communicative goals. Likewise, different genres of written discourse are used to achieve different purposes.

In the past, educators evaluated students' writing proficiency mainly based on the end written product. However, as recent research emphasised the importance of process-oriented approach, educators started to alter their teaching approach. According to Hinkel (2004), there are two kinds of writing processes: product-oriented and process-oriented. Zimmerman (1993) introduces process approach while incorporating some aspects of the product approach to teaching writing. According to Zimmerman (1993), those who adopt the product approach will make use of the written products of others in constructing meanings, while those who are inclined to use the process approach tend to collaborate and deliberate with others so that they can exchange and construct their texts (as cited in Hinkel, 2004). This process approach is based on Vygotsky's *Social Development Theory* of learning (Riddle, 1999), which emphasises on the importance of social communication in learning writing.

2.2.3 Social Constructionist Theory

While Tan and Miller (2008) describes writing as an intentional, social communication that involves literacy, Vygotsky's *Social Development Theory* adds that writing is not only a social communication but also leads to cognitive development, and this phenomenon is known as Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Riddle, 1999). Vygotsky (1978) further asserts that a student can perform a task with adult guidance or peer collaboration that could not be achieved alone and claims learning occurs in ZPD which bridges the gap between what is known and what can be known (as cited in Riddle, 1999).

Another important point highlighted by Vygotsky in Social Development Theory is that human's life development is too complex to be defined by stages because it is dependent on social interaction that leads to cognitive development (Driscoll, 1994; Hausfather, 1996, as cited in Riddle, 1999). Writing classes that employ social development theory helps develop the writing skills of the learners by incorporating the acculturation model of the social and psychological integration of the learner into the target language group. This learning process is related to their cognition and leads to the notion of 'thinking'.

Thinking is a mystery because it is invisible. But it becomes visible as we transfer it through an observable medium of communication. There are various medium of communication to convey our thinking, for instance, through language (speaking, writing, signing, paralinguistic, miming), images (blueprints, charts, symbols), art (drawing, painting, sculpting, modeling, architecture, music, dance), scientific formulas, and Mathematics (Kirby & Goodpaster, 2007). These mediums of communication have

their strengths and weaknesses, but the primary form of human communication is language.

Kirby and Goodpaster (2007) define thinking as the activity of the brain that can potentially be expressed in speaking or writing. Writing carries the ability to clarify and enrich the writers' mind, as well as to sharpen their thinking with an understanding that was initially not there before they write. Kumar (1999) says that writing is a significant communication skill because it is an important means of communicating and recording what has been communicated. Through writing, we assemble the invisible thoughts into visible written forms on paper and therefore, allow ourselves to revise our thoughts objectively and eliminate the ambiguity.

2.2.4 Cognitive Development Theory

It is a cognitive process when we are making decisions on what to write on paper. Mu (2005) is of the view that research that study and observe writers' choice- and decision-making processes while engaging in composing processes is the most significant contributory factor that led to the *Cognitive Development Theory*. In English writing research studies, Flower and Hayes's *Cognitive Process Theory* (1981), is often highlighted. These two experts in the field concede that the primary cognitive sub-processes in which writers engage in are planning (developing an agenda), translating (producing written language), and reviewing (reading and editing). In general, they claim that writing process consists of three major stages: Pre-writing, Writing, and Re-writing. They define "Pre-writing" as the stage before words emerge on paper; "writing" as the stage in which a product is being produced; and "Re-Writing" as the final reworking of that product. However, there are no clearly defined stages as the writers are constantly planning and revising as they compose. In agreement to this idea,

Zamel (1983) states that the composing process is a “non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning” (p.15).

In 1987, Bereiter and Scardamalia proposed a *Knowledge Transforming Model* of writing, which was originally developed to explain the process of skilled writing (Klein & Rose, 2010). The authors argue that this Knowledge Transforming Model of writing is based on the metaphor of two mental spaces, which are central to writing cognition, known as: (i) Content Space (writers think about the question, “What do I mean?”) and (ii) Rhetorical Space (writers think about the question, “What do I say?”). They claim that reflective thought during writing processes involves an interaction between these two spaces and if the writer has content knowledge to meet the purpose of writing, writing may proceed smoothly. In other words, if the writers have content knowledge about the writing topic, they are able to write easier compared to those who do not. The relevant information or knowledge of the subject matter is claimed to be retrieved from long-term memory (LTM) whereby new inferences are derived from it (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). This model continues to influence contemporary research on writing until today.

In the same year, Ericsson and Simon (1987) introduced *Information Processing Model* and claimed, “a cognitive process can be seen as a sequence of internal states successively transformed by a series of information processes.” (p. 25) They assert that the information in the human brain is stored in several memories with different capacities and accessing characteristics: (i) several sensory stores of very short duration; (ii) a short-term memory (STM) with limited capacity and/or intermediate duration; and (iii) a long-term memory (LTM) with very large capacity and relatively permanent

storage, but with relatively slow fixation and access times compared with the other memories (Ericsson & Simon, 1987).

Besides, they assume that the information attended to or heeded by the central processor is kept in the STM, and is directly accessible for further processing (eg. for producing verbal reports). Meanwhile, information from the LTM must first be retrieved and transferred to the STM before it can be reported (Ericsson & Simon, 1987). Therefore, cognitive processes can be described as a sequence of states of heeded information. Over the decades, there had been a marked increase in the use of verbal reports to study cognitive processes.

According to Ericsson and Simon (1993), verbal reports can be broadly categorised as either concurrent or retrospective verbal reports and metalinguistic or non-metalinguistic verbal reports. Concurrent verbal reports are collected as the subjects verbalise *while* performing task whereas retrospective verbal reports are collected as the subjects verbalise some time *after* task performance. They claim that both types of verbal reports are generally recognised as major sources of data on subjects' cognitive processes in specific tasks (as cited in Bowles, 2010). In metalinguistic verbalisation, the researcher may ask for specific information (eg. reasoning or explanation) and the subjects provide a metacognitive report (explain the cognitive processes) whereas in non-metalinguistic verbalisation, the subjects think-aloud without explaining them (Leow & Morgan-Short, 2004). In present study, concurrent verbal reports and non-metalinguistic verbalisation were collected.

Leow and Morgan-Short (2003) and Bowles (2010) postulate that the collection of verbal reports to investigate cognitive processes is not a new method to elicit cognitive data. Over the years, it had become standard in many fields, ranging from accounting,

anthropology, care planning, counseling, drug and alcohol addiction treatment, ergonomics, marketing, and psychology (M. Anderson, 1985; Clark, 1987; Fowler, 1997; Bozarth, 1970; Midanik & Hines, 1991; Brinkman, 1993; Biehal & Chakravarti, 1989; K.M. Robinson, 2001, as cited in Bowles, 2010). However, all verbal reports collected were not equal. Kasper (1998) proposes that TAPs are verbal records of thoughts and they are a subset of the information currently available in STM rather than the processes producing the information. The next section of this chapter provides some introduction of the main research tool, Think-Aloud Protocols (TAPs), a method used to collect cognitive data of this study and its relevant studies.

2.3 Think-Aloud Protocols (TAPs) and Relevant Research Studies

By the end of the 1960's, interest in internal cognitive processes grew rapidly and one of the major result was the work by Newell and Simon (1972), who used Think-Aloud Protocols (TAPs) in combination with computer models of problem-solving processes to build very detailed models (Somerén et al., 1994). Their study left a great impact and the method gained increasing acceptance, especially after 1980, which then led Think-Aloud (TA) method to be accepted as a useful strategy by a large part of the scientific community in psychology and it also had its place in the repertoire of many knowledge engineers (Somerén et al., 1994). Today, TAPs are widely used to investigate cognitive processes that involved while reading, writing and other problem-solving tasks like Mathematic.

The TA method is one of the most commonly used methods for data collection of cognitive processes. Using this method, writers are asked to verbalise everything that comes to their minds while performing a particular task. Muhammad (2008) defines Think-Aloud Protocols (TAPs) as the combination of the audio- or video-recordings of

writers' verbalisations while performing writing tasks, the transcriptions of the recordings, the analysis of the transcriptions, and the end product (written texts) produced by the writers. In addition, Huot (1993) claims that TAPs reflect what the subjects *actually* do and are concerned about rather than what they *believe* they do and concerned about (as cited in Barkaoui, 2011).

In 2002, Wang and Wen (2002) conducted an exploratory study of sixteen Chinese EFL writers to investigate how they use their first language (L1) when composing in their second language (L2) and how the use of L1 is affected by L2 proficiency in different writing tasks (narrative and argumentative writing tasks). The researchers used TAPs as the main research tool to collect the data. The TAPs were then coded and analysed. The researchers categorised the students' writing processes into five main writing categories namely, task-examining, idea-generating, text-generating, and process-controlling. In their study, the findings revealed that EFL writers prefer to use L1 during generating and organising ideas when composing in L2 whereas L2 is used for task-examining and text-generating. However, the use of L1 decreased with the students' L2 development, though it varied according to individuals.

By adopting Wang and Wen (2002)'s coding schema, Roszanaliza (2006) conducted a research study with three ESL Malay writers at Universiti Teknologi MARA in Shah Alam, Malaysia. Similarly, TAP was used as the main research tool for her study whereby the student writers were required to write a narrative and an expository essay. Roszanaliza (2006) had also gathered data for her study through interviews and the students' written products to triangulate her findings. The results of her study indicated that the frequency of cognitive processes varied by individual and types of writing tasks. The researcher identified three main factors which were found to have affected the

cognitive processes of the ESL student writers: (i) type of writing task, (ii) lack of vocabulary, and (iii) level of proficiency. Furthermore, the researcher also indicated that two of the three ESL writers performed their TAPs in the language that they were writing in, which incidentally is their second language.

In 2012, Margaret and Vijay (2012) investigated cognitive processes of eight ESL postgraduate students from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) using TAPs when they engaged with teacher's written feedback. The findings of their study suggested that the students viewed teacher's feedback as a social activity and this interaction between the writer and the reader (teacher) helped them to write and understood their progress. Furthermore, interaction between the writer and the reader helped the writers to repair errors and eventually helped them to write (Flower & Hayes, 1981).

Therefore, the findings of their study concurred with the arguments proposed by both Communication Theory and Social Development Theory which emphasised that the function of language was for communication purpose in the society. Besides Margaret and Vijay (2012)'s study, Sasaki (2003) and Smagorinsky (2001) had also found out the social and interactive nature of TAPs. Smagorinsky (2001) claimed that a protocol could be viewed as a 'conversation turn' where the participant anticipated a listener even if the listener was not physically present (as cited in Barkaoui, 2011).

In the same year, Ghabool et al. (2012) from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) conducted a research study about Malaysian ESL students' writing problems at secondary school level instead. The study focused on the students' writing problems and the teachers' feedback on the problems. The findings of their study revealed that lack of English proficiency, particularly in the language use and punctuation was the main challenge Malaysian ESL students faced in writing tasks and that they were greatly

influenced by first language interference, which may be either cultural or linguistic ones (Musa, Lie & Azman, 2012 as cited in Ghabool et. al., 2012).

In EFL context on the other hand, Xu and Wu (2012) conducted an exploratory study of twelve Chinese EFL learners from four senior high schools in Beijing to examine their test-taking strategies for a writing test. Students were chosen from different proficiency levels and were given some training with think-aloud guidelines before the actual study. They were allowed to use Chinese, English or mixed code or whatever language that came in mind to think-aloud while performing the task. After thinking-aloud, the researchers conducted retrospective interviews among the students. The findings of the study indicated that the most frequently used test-taking strategies were code-switching, repeating, rehearsing and translating. The researchers also claimed that the original intention of Interpretational Writing had been badly distorted because the students merely strived to guess the test-developer's intent and figured out the 'best' scheme instead of thinking creatively.

Although TAP is a useful research tool to investigate cognitive processes, some of its theoretical and methodological foundations have been criticised, especially concerning their veridicality and reactivity. *Veridicality* refers to the accuracy of verbal report that represents the participants' true and complete thinking processes, whereas *reactivity* concerns whether the task requirement alters the process being observed and/or its outcomes (Ericsson & Simon, 1984/93; Lumley, 2005; Russon, Johnson & Stephens, 1989; Stratman & Hamp-Lyons, 1994, as cited in Barkaoui, 2011).

In performing thinking-aloud, reactivity is said to take place if the thinking process and decision-making processes are changed or duration of time taken is prolonged (Vijay, 2002). While thinking-aloud, the participants are required to perform two tasks, firstly,

to write (primary task) and secondly, to think aloud (secondary task). Therefore, it is claimed that the primary writing task may be compromised while participants have to perform the secondary task (Schooler, Ohlsson, & Brooks, 1993, as cited in Vijay, 2002) and thus, thinking process could be slowed down. Nevertheless, these statements claiming that think aloud method affects the written product have been empirically refuted by some studies conducted later on.

Ericsson and Simon (1993) argued that it depends on the type of verbalisation requested from the subject. If the subject is requested to verbalise information that is already encoded in their STM, their task performance may be slowed down but verbalisation will not alter their cognitive processes and behaviors. In fact, it provides direct representations of the subject's cognitive processes in STM. Some research studies were also conducted and the results obtained were found to support the stance of Ericsson and Simon (1993).

One of the studies aimed to test reactivity was conducted by Stratman and Lyons (1994). In their study, the participants were asked to revise a faulty text, one by applying TA method and another without TA method. The result of the study purposed that "TA condition merely reduces the amount of certain kinds of verbal processing, without fundamentally altering the nature of the process" (p. 108, as cited in Vijay, 2002). Besides, other studies had also reiterated that although thinking aloud slowed down the speed of composition, it did not affect the nature of writing processes and the final written product. However, if the participants are requested to explain and interpret their thoughts and behaviors while verbalising, their thoughts and behaviors might be affected. Consequently, Ericsson and Simon (1993) advise against the use of the latter type of verbalisation to investigate cognitive processes.

In response to the criticisms on veridicality, Ericsson and Simon (1993) agreed that TAPs are incomplete because automatized processes, non-verbal states, and long-term memory contents are inaccessible to verbalisation, however, the incompleteness of TAP data does not reduce the value of the data collected because the reported data should be sufficient to infer the nature of the un-reportable processes. Nevertheless, they also cautioned that it is essential to elicit data *during* the task performance and not *after*.

Besides reactivity and veridicality, Vijay (2002) has highlighted some other methodological concerns regarding the TA methods. These concerns include the selection of participants, warm up sessions, observer effect and the choice of topics (Vijay, 2002). The selection of participant is crucial because verbalisation while performing a task does not come easily to everyone and it requires practice. Some participants may be able to generate rich verbal data but may not necessarily produce sufficient written text and vice versa. Therefore, warm up session is vital to familiarise the participants with TA methods and only select those who are able to perform dual tasks with ease.

The second TA methodological concern is the warm up or training sessions. During the warm up sessions, participants should be given ample time to practice until they feel comfortable to perform TA procedures. At the initial stage, researcher may demonstrate how TA procedures are carried out so that the participants may have clearer picture.

The next methodological concern is the observer effect, i.e. the presence of the researcher. Based on the previous research reports, the researcher's presence may create negative impact on the verbalisations because the participants may intentionally produce the acceptable data. As a result, it affects the originality of the verbal data collected. In order to avoid this problem, the participants of the study should be doing the recording

and writing on their own when the researcher is confident that they already have the ability to do so after warm up sessions.

Lastly, the choice of topics is also important in a TA study. As suggested by *Knowledge Transforming Model* proposed by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), content knowledge will help a writer to write smoother. Hence, the topics assigned to the participants need to be of their area of understanding but which have not been written previously.

By taking these abovementioned concerns into consideration, the present study has collected relevant verbal data by using TAPs to ensure the accuracy and originality of the data collected to achieve the objectives of the study. Further details of the methodology procedures applied in present study are elaborated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a description of the research design, Think-Aloud Protocols (TAPs) in the data collection of the cognitive processes of five Chinese ESL writers and a summary of a pilot study. The selection of the ESL writers, who will be referred to as the participants, data sources and instruments used to gather the data, and finally, the approach of data analysis will also be discussed in this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

The present study relies primarily on think-aloud protocols or TAP methodology, which is a way to gain data by tapping into the cognitive processes of five Chinese undergraduates. TAP methodology was selected as the main research tool of this study to elicit verbal reports from the participants during their composing processes of formal and informal letters.

Although TAPs is an effective method to collect cognitive data, the main challenge faced by the participants throughout the course of verbalisation was the difficulty to verbalise their inner thoughts because they were unfamiliar with TAP methodology. Therefore, two training or practice sessions were carried out prior to the actual study in order to familiarise the participants with think-aloud procedures. More detailed TAP methodology procedures are elaborated in the following sections.

3.2 Participants Demographics

The participants of this study were five Chinese ESL undergraduates from the University of Malaya (three males and two females) selected from a group of ten undergraduates who had undergone TAPs training sessions. All ten participants volunteered to take part in this project when a call out was made. None of them were familiar with TAPs methodology before the study but they were willing to be part of this study, which caught their interest after the researcher explained the purpose and methodology used.

Hence, two training sessions were held prior to the actual study and only five participants were selected, based on their ability to verbalise their thoughts with ease while they engaged in writing task during the training sessions. All participants had an equivalent English proficiency level, i.e. they are all Band Three achievers in the Malaysian University English Test (MUET). Some of them passed MUET before they were enrolled in UM whereas some took it when they were in UM, before they participate in this study. However, all of them requested not to reveal their identity, therefore, pseudonyms were assigned to them.

Besides that, these participants share the same mother tongue (Mandarin), cultures (Malaysian Chinese), and education background (undergraduates in UM). Despite the similarities, the courses they are currently pursuing in the university vary: Participant A and C are pursuing their degree as Bachelor of Information Technology (Multimedia), participant B in his Bachelor of Science (Biotechnology), participant D in her Bachelor of Laws (LLB), while participant E is doing his degree in Bachelor of Science (Hons) Bioinformatic.

3.3 Think-Aloud Protocols (TAPs)

As mentioned in Chapter Two, although verbal protocols are not immediate revelations or complete data of writers' cognitive processes, TAPs are recognised as an effective method to obtain cognitive data. The main challenge faced in the collection of TAPs could stem from the participants themselves who have difficulty in verbalising their thoughts while composing. Therefore, the participants were instructed and trained to familiarise themselves in using think-aloud procedures before the actual study. Several important aspects were considered in obtaining TAPs:

- a) The setting was ensured to be comfortable and quiet so that the participants would feel at ease as data was collected. The researcher only intervened with the respondents when necessary to avoid influencing the writing processes.
- b) The researcher provided clear instructions and informed participants of the purpose of the study. The instructions were given as a customary practice. The essence of the instruction was: Perform the task and say out loud what comes to your mind. For example,

“I’ll give you the topic of the essay. Please keep talking out loud on what goes through your mind while you are writing.”

- c) The researcher provided two warm up or training sessions before the actual study. During the training, the researcher demonstrated think-aloud while composing in front of the participants. The actual study was conducted only when the students were comfortable and confident enough with the task of

thinking aloud. Out of ten students, five were selected as participants for the actual study based on their ability to verbalise their thoughts while composing.

- d) There were two sessions of data collection, which were conducted within a two-hour interval. In the first session, the selected participants were instructed to compose a formal complaint letter. The formal letter-writing topic was as follows:

Topic 1: You are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel you are staying now at the university campus. Please write a complaint letter to the management office to seek for a solution or some improvement. Limit your letter to 300 words.

In the second session, participants were instructed to compose an informal complaint letter instead. Likewise, a task sheet consisting of the relevant writing instructions was provided. The informal letter-writing topic was as follows:

Topic 2: You are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel where you are staying at the university campus. Please write a letter about this to your cousin staying overseas to complain your dissatisfaction. Limit your letter to 300 words.

The topics of both the formal and informal letters were selected based on the assumption that all participants would have the relevant content knowledge since they were undergraduates in University of Malaya (UM) and thus have had experience staying in the hostels. The participants' verbal reports for both formal and informal letters were audio-recorded.

- e) The formal and informal letters audio-recordings were then transcribed and categorised into different categories (to be further explained in Section 3.7) and reviewed by the researcher's supervisor to ensure accuracy of findings.

3.4 Warm Up / Training Sessions

As mentioned earlier, two training sessions on thinking aloud were held prior to the actual study. This was to enable the participants to familiarise themselves with thinking aloud procedures while executing a writing task at the same time. During the first training session, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, provided a brief introduction of think-aloud procedures and demonstrated how to verbalise thoughts during the composing processes. Next, the researcher provided a letter-writing topic and the participants were instructed to verbalise their thoughts as they composed the letter. The topic was as follows:

You are unhappy with the vandalism problems in your residential area. Please write a complaint letter to the management office to seek for a solution. Limit your letter to 300 words.

Initially, some participants felt awkward and were not able to verbalise their thoughts while composing the letters because they faced difficulty in performing two tasks at the same time. On the other hand, some participants felt at ease to complete the task from the beginning. The training sessions prior to the actual study provided them an opportunity to practise verbalising aloud and to dissipate their anxieties and discomfort while attending to the dual tasks. For participants who faced difficulty in verbalising, the researcher carried out a one-to-one discussion session regarding challenges they encountered during the first training session. Some of the challenges addressed were as follows:

1. They were unable to perform both composing and verbalising tasks simultaneously.
2. They faced difficulty in verbalising their inner thoughts.

3. They did not know how to react or verbalise thoughts when their brains went 'blank'.
4. They were uncertain whether they could verbalise by using other language(s) besides English language.

During the discussion, the researcher helped the participants to overcome the challenges and they were advised to imagine as if they were doing self-talking during the composing processes. The participants were also informed that they were allowed to verbalise using any languages that come into mind, including their mother tongue, Mandarin or the official language, Malay. After the discussion, a second training session was carried out where some of them were able to complete the task whereas some were still unable to do so. Therefore, those who could not meet the task requirements were withdrawn as participants of the study. The actual study was conducted the following week where only five Chinese ESL undergraduates were selected from the group of ten undergraduates based on their ability to verbalise their inner thoughts with ease while engaging in composing.

3.5 Research Procedures

Having selected the five participants, each one of them was required to meet up with the researcher separately at different assigned time slots, some on the same day while some on different days. The actual study was carried out in two sessions. During the first session, the participants were given a task sheet where the formal letter writing instructions including the topic and number of words were stated. They were also reminded to verbalise their thoughts while composing the letter. The whole composing process was audio-recorded. The participants completed the writing tasks in a room without the presence of the researcher in order to minimise the observer effect (as

mentioned in previous chapter, p. 25), i.e. researcher's interference during the composing processes. Every participant completed the writing tasks in less than an hour although there was no time limit assigned to the participants. Upon task completion, the written product was submitted together with their audio-recordings, which was later transcribed by the researcher.

The second session was conducted after a two-hour break where the participants were instructed to write an informal letter instead. By applying a similar approach as in the first writing session, each participant met the researcher individually. Likewise, a task sheet with an informal letter writing instruction including the topic and the number of words were given. Then, similar procedures were carried out as in the first session. When they completed the writing task, the written product and audio-recordings were collected and then transcribed by the researcher. When the participants completed the informal letter writing task, the researcher interviewed them individually to obtain their insights and opinions regarding the study they participated in order to triangulate the results of the study.

According to Ng (1999), there are three types of personal interview, they are: (i) schedule-structure interview, (ii) focused interview, and (iii) non-directive interview. In this study, focused interview was chosen to be employed with the participants because all of them shared a common experience prior to the interview, i.e. they had completed both writing and thinking-aloud tasks on the same writing topics.

During the focused interview, all participants were given considerable freedom to express their opinion and thus, this type of interview allowed the interviewer to obtain details of the personal reactions and emotions of the participants. The main questions

asked during the interview were as follows (some additional questions may be raised with different participant if clarification was needed):

- a) Do you enjoy writing? In any language? Why?
- b) What do you feel when you are requested to write in English? Why?
- c) What are the challenges you face when you are requested to write in English?
- d) Are there differences you find between writing in English and in Mandarin? If yes, what are they?
- e) Do you prefer to write formal or informal letter? Why?
- f) What are the challenges that you face while writing the formal and informal letters?
- g) What are the factors that contribute to these challenges or difficulties?
- h) What solutions do you think could be taken to solve the problems you face to improve your English writing?

The rationale of selecting letter-writing as the task requirement for this study is that letter writing is one of the most common writing genres that all undergraduates have to master, be it for academic purposes or for their future work assignments. Although email is commonly used as a medium of communication, the language used in email appears to be less formal and are not often long and if so, there may not be enough data for this study. Therefore, instead of email, formal and informal letters are observed to be a more suitable option to achieve the objectives of the study, i.e. to compare and contrast whether or not language formality affects the writing processes.

3.6 Data Analysis

By adopting Wang and Wen's coding system (2002), the participants' cognitive processes were coded into five writing categories, namely, task-examining, idea-generating, idea-organising, text-generating, and process-controlling. However, some verbalisations were found inappropriate to be grouped under the stated categories, therefore, in order to solve the problem and to enhance the scope of the discussion, an additional category was added, and given the label, "Emotion-expressing". Description for each coding category is given below.

- a) Task-examining: Analysing the writing prompt (examine the purpose of writing, the topic, and the instructions)
- b) Idea-generating: Planning the content and evaluating it
- c) Idea-organising: Planning of content organisation and evaluating it
- d) Text-generating: Producing and reviewing the text
- e) Process-controlling: Controlling the writing procedures, words, time limit, etc.
- f) Emotion-expressing: Expressing emotion or personal comment(s) during the composing process that is/are irrelevant to the writing prompt and not to be included in the written product.

The reasons of selecting Wang and Wen (2002)'s coding system are based on the rationale below:

- (i) Participants participated in both studies are Chinese, thus sharing a common mother tongue i.e. Mandarin;
- (ii) Both studies share somewhat similar but not identical objectives of study i.e. to investigate the factors affecting the ESL/EFL writers when they are

engaging in English writing, particularly on how the first language influences the writing processes.

The transcripts obtained from the participants were coded based on the context and the emotional expressions captured in the audio-recordings. For instance, when participants read aloud the task topic/requirement, it would be placed under Task-examining. If the participants were considering whether to put certain contents under the same paragraph or next paragraph, it would fall under Idea-organising. As for Emotion-expressing, clue words such as the expression word ‘*aiya*’, which does not carry any specific meaning would be one of the ways to identify its category. Idea-generating and Text-generating on the other hand, often occurred simultaneously as the participants think aloud while generating ideas and wrote down the content directly on the paper.

3.7 Pilot Study

Prior to the training sessions and actual study, with the aim to test-run and to get familiar with the think-aloud procedures. The pilot study was conducted with a female Chinese student who volunteered to take part as a participant (henceforth referred to as participant P). Participant P was briefed on the objectives of the study and was given a demonstration of the think-aloud procedures while composing. Then participant P was assigned to compose two complaint letters: formal and informal. The topics were as follows:

a) Formal letter:

You are unsatisfied towards the conditions of your residential area. Please write a complaint letter to the management office to seek for solution and improvement. Limit your letter to 300 words.

b) Informal letter:

You are unsatisfied towards the conditions of your residential area. Please write a letter about this to your cousin staying overseas. Limit your letter to 300 words.

The result obtained from the pilot study is summarised in the following graphs:

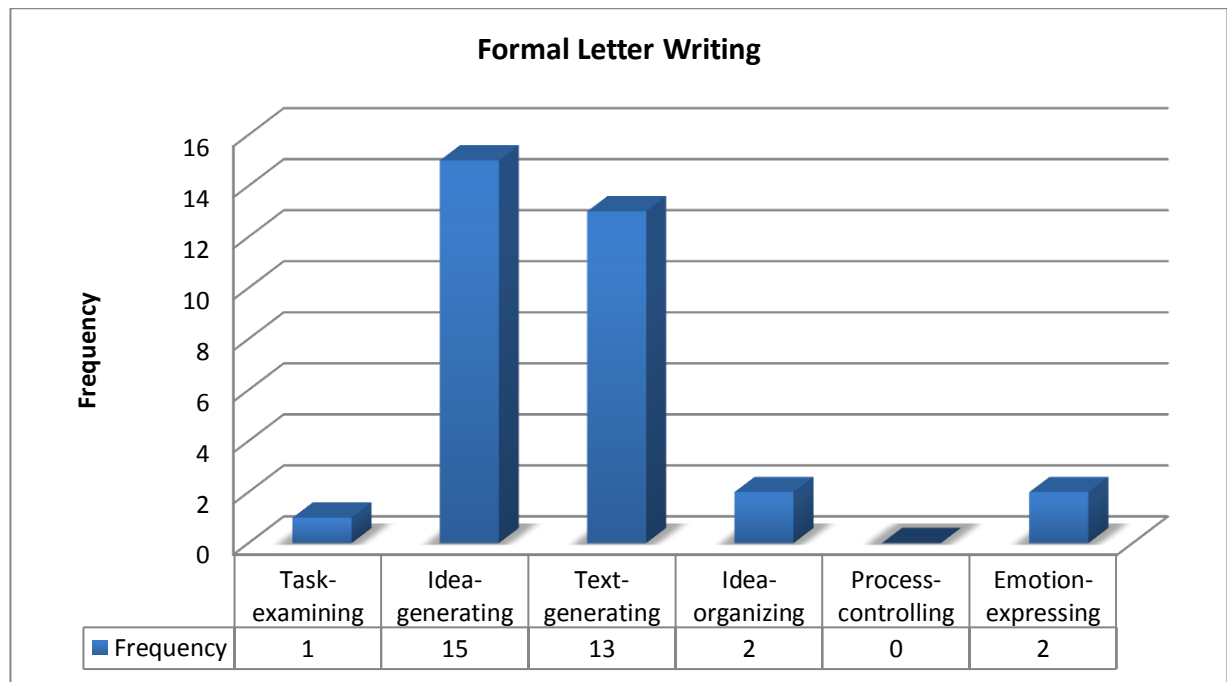


Figure 3.1: Participant P's Frequency of Formal Letter Writing Categories

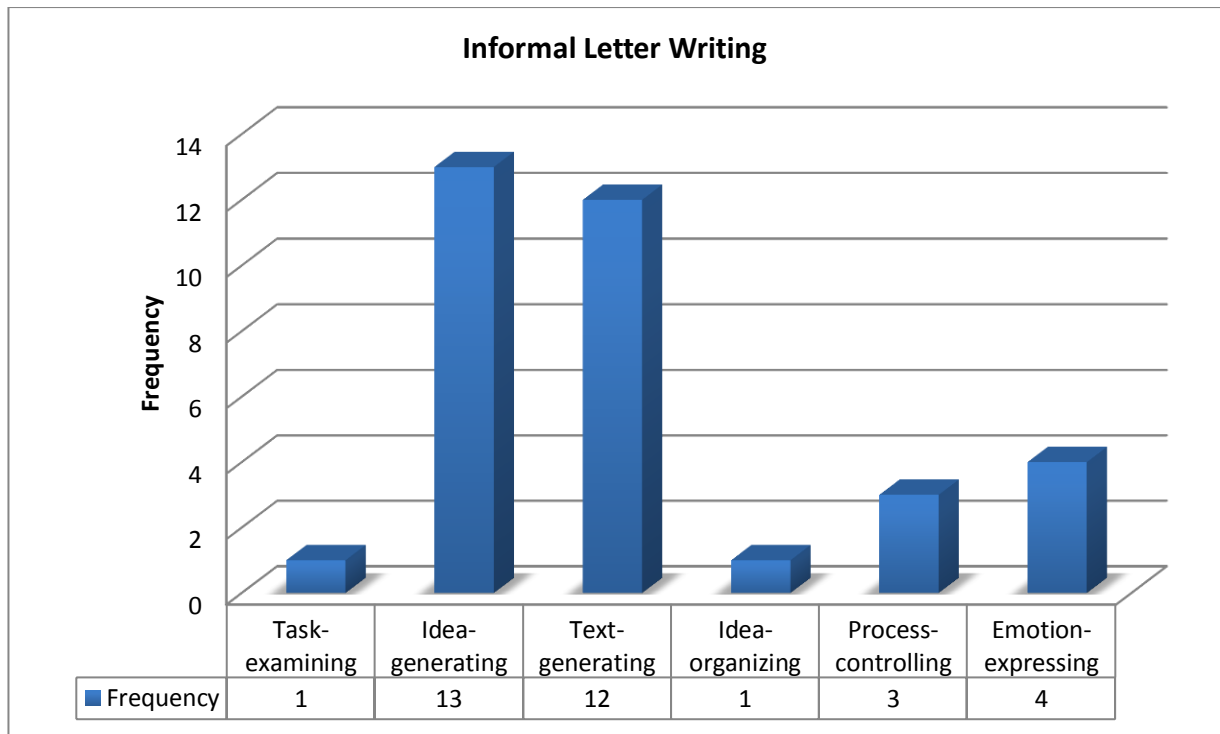


Figure 3.2: Participant P's Frequency of Informal Letter Writing Categories

As illustrated in Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2, both formal and informal letters indicate a similar trend where Idea-generating and Text-generating occurred most frequently compared to other writing categories. On the other hand, an obvious difference between formal and informal letter writing was that Process-controlling and Emotion-expressing occurred more in the informal letter than the formal letter throughout the composing duration. After the study, Participant P shared that she actually felt more comfortable and relaxed when writing the informal letter. Thus, this probably explains why the occurrence of Process-controlling and Emotion-expressing are higher in informal letter than in formal letter.

Generally, there are three main factors found to have affected participant P's cognitive processes while composing formal and informal letters. Firstly, the type of writing task was found to determine the participant's language style. While composing the formal

letter, participant P was more cautious and particular in word choice in comparison to the informal letter, which was observed in the following transcripts:

First of all, hmm... the swimming pool, “swimming pool” of the condominium was so, “was so”, **“so bad” like is a bit, no[t] so polite right... I have to change to another word.** wait ahh... err... “was so...” (cough) Ohh, erm, “the swimming pool of the condominium was” not keep under good condition.

(Appendix G3, Lines 20 - 24)

Ok, I want to write informal letter. This one is like, much more easier lah, I feel like, much more erm, not so boring lah, compared to the formal letter, I need to think of those polite words. Make me feel like very ‘sien’ [a slang, meaning: bored, not interested].

(Appendix G4, Lines 1 – 4)

Besides that, based on the TAPs obtained, participant P seemed to have faced difficulty in choosing an appropriate word to express the desired meaning. For example, the participant is uncertain of the correct spelling of the word “graffiti”, as shown in the transcript: “Is it **grativy [graffiti]** or gra... Is that grativy? Erm, I think it’s grativy, never mind.” (Appendix G3, Lines 43-44) Hence, lack of vocabulary is another factor found to be affecting the participant’s cognitive processes.

Finally, grammar mastery skill was also found to be another factor influencing the participant’s cognitive processes. The uncertainties of the correct grammar use caused participant P’s confusion and hesitation in composing, as illustrated in the example given below:

Err... I want to complain and indeed, “and indeed”, I had already err, err, made a complaint to err, relative authority about how dis... err... satisfied I was about the swimming pool... **has been using, has been used, “has been used”** for ten years already.

(Appendix G4, Lines 33-36)

The aim of the pilot study is to obtain some preliminary findings to verify the TAPs methodology and test if the procedure and results are sturdy enough for such a study to be carried out in this research project. The challenges and issues that emerged as a result of this pilot study have been used to further improve the actual study before it was implemented.

The next chapter will present the analysis and findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and findings of the study, that is, cognitive processes obtained from five participants during their formal and informal letter composing processes. The participants verbalise their inner thoughts into an audio-recorder, which was then transcribed, tabulated and coded into six writing categories. The following sections will answer Research Questions 1 (RQ 1), 2 (RQ 2) and 3 (RQ 3).

4.1 Participants' Cognitive Processes in Letter-Writing Tasks

This section presents the think-aloud protocols (TAPs) and analysis of the data collected from participants A, B, C, D and E while composing both formal and informal letters to answer the first research question:

RQ 1: What are the cognitive processes of ESL students related to writing, as they engage in formal and informal letter writing?

4.1.1 Participant A's Cognitive Processes

Participant A is a female undergraduate who is doing a degree, Bachelor of Information Technology (Multimedia) in University of Malaya. The following figure illustrates the frequency of writing categories while she is engaged in formal letter writing.

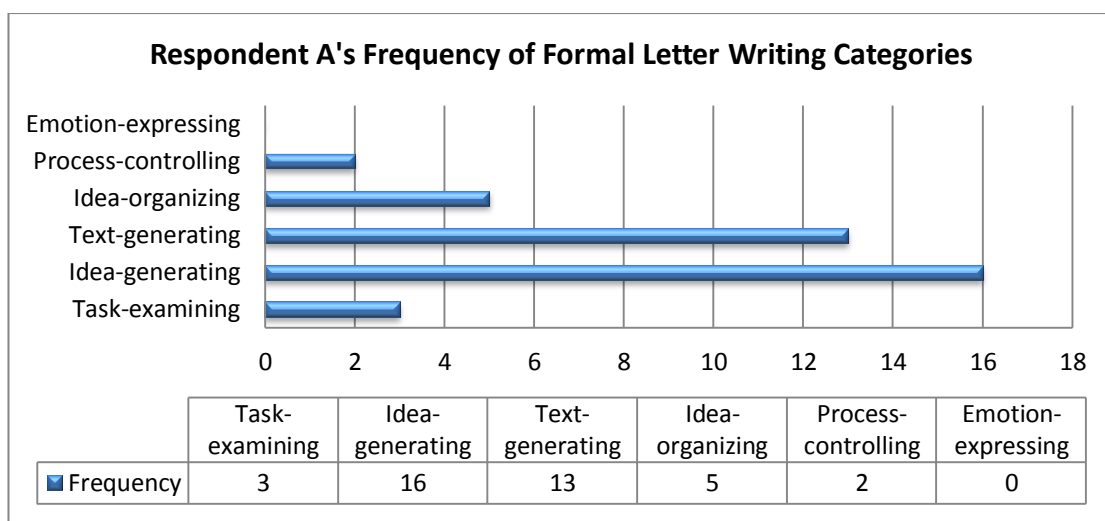


Figure 4.1: Participant A's Frequency of Formal Letter Writing Categories

As Figure 4.1 illustrates, Idea-generating appeared as the writing category in which participant A engaged in most as she composed a formal letter, that was, sixteen times throughout the composing processes. It was then followed by Text-generating, thirteen times; and Idea-organising, five times. Throughout the formal letter composing processes, Emotion-expressing did not occur at all. After reading the letter topic and examining the type of writing task, participant A started by imagining an essay outline in her mind, and this was observed in the following transcript where TAPs were taken:

“Ok, so first of all, I would like to... the point, state out the points first. So this one is a err... letter to suggest... suggestion for... solutions and improvement instead of complaint lar. I complain first, then I will suggest the solutions...

Erm... Ok, so formal letter be the err... format... format is... hmm... ok... address, top of left hand side. Then management err... ok, my address... ok, errr... state out the solutions...

Ok, first, 300 words, I would like to divide to erm to... three paragraphs, 100 each paragraphs something, ok... So, 100 something each paragraph...”

(Appendix A4, Lines 6 -15)

The above transcript showed the initial cognitive processes where participant A examined the formal letter format, brainstormed and organised her ideas to achieve the purpose of the writing task, and then she planned the words limit for each paragraph before she started writing. According to the *Information Processing Model* introduced by Ericsson and Simon (1987), this is a process where the relevant information or knowledge about letter composing tasks stored in Long Term Memory (LTM) is being retrieved and transferred to Short Term Memory (STM) before it is reported verbally. From here it was also observed that Task-examining, Idea-generating and Idea-organising occurred simultaneously. This finding concurs with Flower and Hayes (1981)'s study, which states that there are no clean-cut writing stages because writers are constantly planning and revising as they compose. Besides, Zamel (1983) also reiterates similar statement that composing process is a non-linear, exploratory and generative process.

After Task-examining, participant A proceeded to generate and organise the main contents she wanted to produce in the formal letter. At this stage, participant A planned the organisation of the main contents to be written, such as the idea on hygiene and security issues before she started to write the letter. Throughout the composing processes, participant A constantly questioned herself as she brainstormed for ideas or when she encountered doubts and uncertainties. This was shown in the example below:

“So the title. Err... What title that I want to give? A Complaint, complaint letter la... complaint and suggestion. Complaint and suggestion. Complaint la. Hygiene and security problems ok, in hostel. Complaint and suggestion, and solution. Complaint and solutions on hygiene and security problems in hostel. Ok.”

(Appendix A4, Lines 33-37)

The question asked (as underlined) served to allow time for the participant to think as she considered possible ideas on approaching the content of the letter. Usually, the answers to the questions would follow. Some similar examples could also be found in the following TAPs:

- (i) “With the above, the above reference, ok, I want to complaint, complaint what? Complaint hygiene and security problems.”

(Appendix A4, Lines 38-39)

- (ii) “The security level of hostel also very bad... which, very bad la... which, all the strangers may... ok, are able to enter to our hostel area, easily and unfortunately some stolen cases happen, had happen, had happen in this hotel, hostel area. Ok. What happen? Few laptops, laptop with ‘-s’, and some value stuffs, some of assets... and some value assets... some value belongings.”

(Appendix A4, Lines 57-63)

- (iii) “Next, for the security issue, ok, I kindly suggest, ok, suggest what? No, no non-residents are allowed to... to enter to the hostel area.”

(Appendix A4, Lines 86-87)

Based on the data obtained, it indicated that self-questioning allowed time for the writer to retrieve information from LTM and enabled the relevant information to be attended by the central processor, which was kept in STM (Ericsson & Simon, 1987). However, not all questions served the same purpose. A further discussion on this aspect is provided in section 4.2.1. The following paragraphs discuss about the data obtained during participant A’s informal letter-writing processes. Figure 4.2 represents the frequency of the writing categories while composing the informal letter.

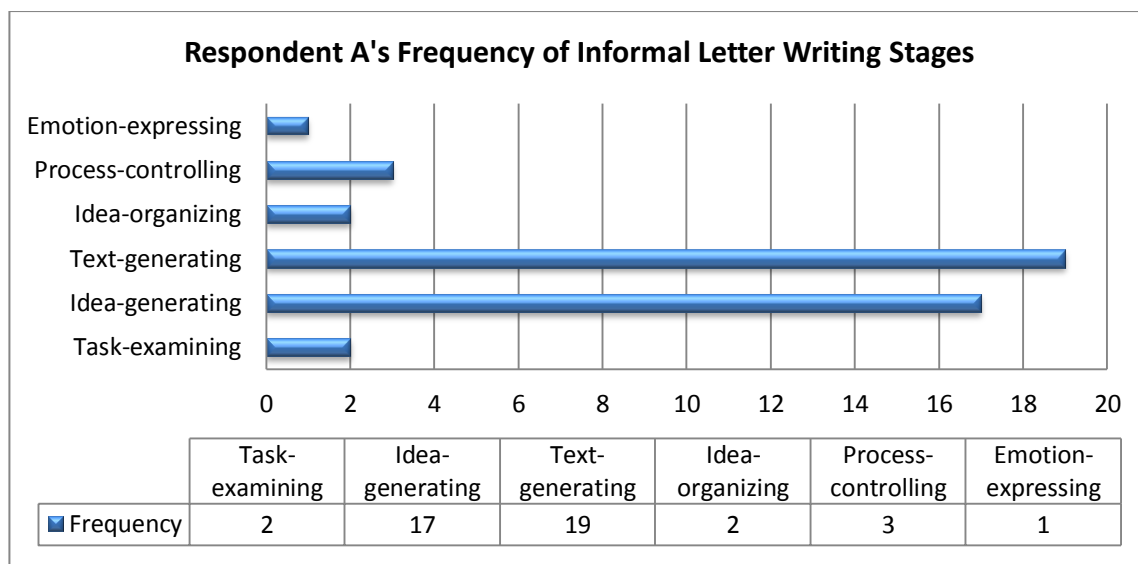


Figure 4.2: Participant A's Frequency of Informal Letter Writing Categories

In the informal letter, Text-generating and Idea-generating occurred most frequently, as compared to other writing categories. Contrary to the formal letter, Emotion-expressing occurred once in participant A's informal letter writing. As participant A had written the formal letter with the similar topic earlier, she seemed to need less effort in the Task-examining for informal letter-writing task. Evidence of this was found in the transcript below:

“Ok. My second topic. You are unsatisfied towards... same thing la... towards the hygiene level and security conditions ok... Write a letter about your dissatisfactions to your cousin. Ok, cousin. Cousin staying overseas. Ok, limit 300 words. Ok. Hmm, it's a letter la. Informal letter. My address... Seksyen 17, PJ, Selangor. Ok. So after that, should be... write the date... 29th September, September 2013. Ok.”

(Appendix A5, Lines 1-7)

Participant A was aware that although the topic was the same as the previous task, the letter format differed because the recipient was different. Quite contrary to formal letter writing, participant A proceeded to Text-generating without having much Idea-generating, Idea-organising and Process-controlling as what she did previously for the formal letter. She seemed to be more confident of the content

now. Therefore, she continued to write the address, date and greetings straightaway after Task-examining without much think aloud.

In informal letter writing, participant A wrote more smoothly and naturally compared to the formal letter-writing task. The researcher proposed that it might be due to the same topic, which had been composed in formal letter previously. Hence, the participant only needed to modify the content and format. Another interesting finding was found that the occurrence of Text-generating and Idea-generating in participant A's informal letter was higher than her formal letter. One of the reasons might be due to the longer length of her informal letter.

During the interview, participant A claimed that she preferred formal letter because there was a fixed format to follow, in which she thought would be easier to compose. Due to the lack of vocabulary, she added, it would be easier to construct some standard sentences, rather than to construct new sentences with 'flowery' words (Appendix F1, Lines 32-44). Hence, participant A tended to use lengthy words to convey her desired meaning which subsequently added to the length of the letter.

Nevertheless, problems and challenges were still evident throughout the composing processes, such as grammatical doubts. The next section will discuss participant B's cognitive processes during his writing duration. Participant B is a male undergraduate from University of Malaya who is pursuing his degree in Bachelor of Science (Biotechnology).

4.1.2 Participant B's Cognitive Processes

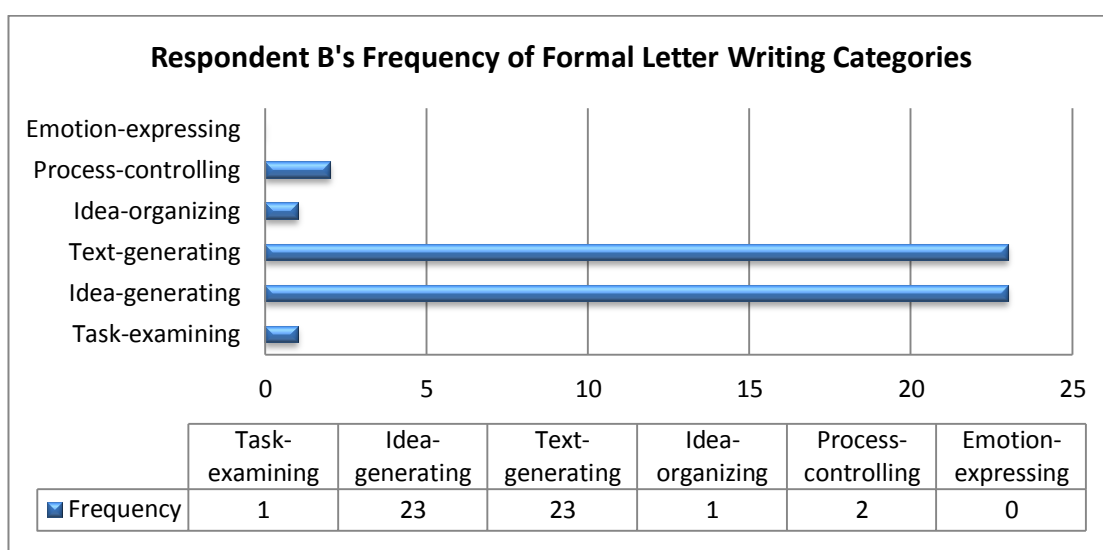


Figure 4.3: Participant B's Frequency of Formal Letter Writing Categories

As Figure 4.3 illustrated, both Text-generating and Idea-generating were most frequently used when participant B composed his formal letter, which recorded the highest compared to all the other writing categories. On the other hand Emotion-expressing was not present throughout the composing processes for the participant. Unlike participant A, participant B started to write without much hesitation after reading out aloud the title of the formal letter. He did not brainstorm or organise his ideas and contents before he started, instead he wrote while generating his ideas and contents simultaneously. One of the examples found from the transcript is as shown below.

Furthermore, “furthermore”... clothes are hanging... are hanging... clothes are hanged, in the toilet for drying. This... All, All these have disrupt[ed] the... “all these have disrupt[ed] the”... “have disrupt[ed] the living, have disrupt[ed]... All these have... disrupt[ed] the... all these have disrupt[ed]”, “All these” cause.... “All these have” caused... “caused” the students to live in an uncomfortable environment.

(Appendix B3, Lines 37-43)

The above transcript was coded under Text-generating and Idea-generating writing categories because the verbalisations intertwined with each other and were thus inseparable. The underlined words or word sequences marked the verbalisations made while participant B writes the sentences, whereas the words enclosed by quotation marks signal the writing prompts or the previously written text that the writer had read aloud. As shown in the transcript, Text-generating and Idea-generating occurred simultaneously.

On the other hand, Process-controlling occurred only when the participant realised the need to control his writing procedures. The first Process-controlling was found after greetings, address and date where the participant organised his ideas and contents (example (i)) while the second example was found when the participant planned to write the next paragraph (example (ii)).

- (i) Alright. Start with the first one. It will be hygiene level. The hygiene level of the hostel is unsatisfying... especially the hygiene of hostel toilet."

(Appendix B3, Lines 15-17)

- (ii) Besides that, poor sec... ooh, another paragraph.

(Appendix B3, Line 57)

The overall formal letter composing processes suggested that participant B was focused on the writing task and able to write as the ideas flow. Meanwhile, in his informal letter writing, Text-generating and Idea-generating remained as the writing categories that had been applied most frequently throughout the writing duration. However, as seen in Figure 4.4, the frequency of occurrence for the writing categories in the informal letter task was slightly different from that of the

formal letter, i.e. Emotion-expressing occurred once for participant B's informal letter writing whilst Process-controlling and Idea-generating did not occur at all.

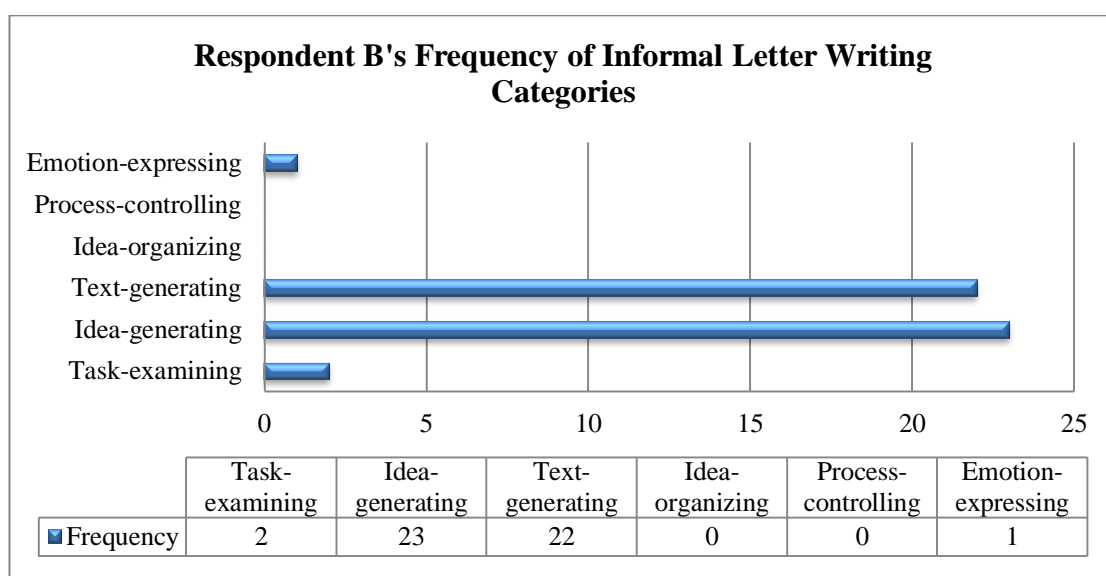


Figure 4.4: Participant B's Frequency of Informal Letter Writing Categories

At the beginning, participant B read aloud the essay topic and this marked the first occurrence of Task-examining. Then, he realised that although the topic of the second task was similar to the first, the format differed. The relevant transcript was seen below: “Ok, informal letter. Alright. Okay. Format is different. Address... 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.” (Appendix B4, Lines 6-7) During the interview session, participant B informed the researcher that he actually preferred to write formal instead of informal letter because the language style he needed to write the latter should be more expressive, in which he felt challenged. The occurrence of Emotion-expressing in his informal letter appeared when he encountered problems to find a suitable word to elaborate further on the laptop being stolen: “These are, I don’t know... hmm... *aiya*... [long pause]” (Appendix B4, Line 67).

The exclamation phrase '*aiya*' symbolised a feeling of being helpless and confused. This implies that his preference for the formal letter writing task makes him rather exasperated with the informal letter writing task and hence the expression of '*aiya*' is used (Appendix B4, Line 67). Other than that, Process-controlling and Idea-generating did not occur at all in this letter and this could be due to the fact that the topic was similar, as he had previously written for formal letter. Since he already had the main contents to be delivered, he did not spend much effort on the two writing procedures.

The next section proceeds with the cognitive processes involved of participant C, a male undergraduate who is pursuing his degree as Bachelor of Information Technology (Multimedia) in UM.

4.1.3 Participant C's Cognitive Processes

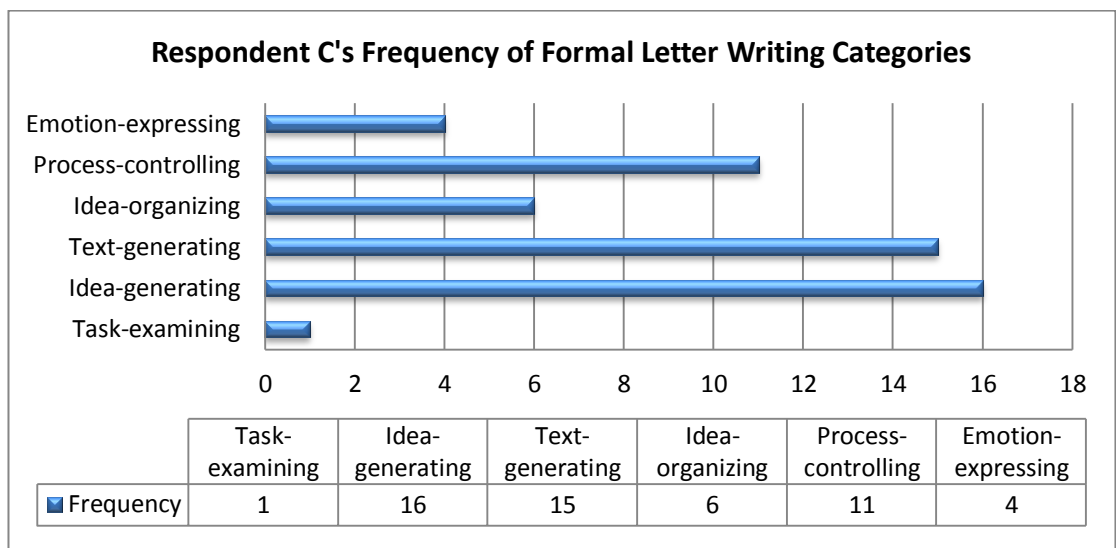


Figure 4.5: Participant C's Frequency of Formal Letter Writing Categories

Although both participants A and B had not applied Emotion-expressing in their formal letters, it was not the same case for participant C. As illustrated in Figure 4.5, participant C had applied all writing categories throughout the formal letter

writing processes. Among all writing categories, Idea-generating occurred most frequently, followed by Text-generating. Besides, even though participants A and B rarely used Process-controlling, participant C frequently used it, which was eleven times throughout the formal letter-writing task. During the interview, participant C stated that he disliked writing, either in formal or informal letter. This inevitably helped to explain the frequent use of Process-controlling as the participant composed. Another interesting finding was the use of Emotion-expressing as highlighted below.

- (i) Am I right? As in Malaysia, erm... I don't know how to say. Ok, as what we can concern about that, that Malaysia will... is like a very erm, how to say. The crime condition is very err danger... and it becomes a serious matter, so erm... I am hoping that this management, hoping that the security condition will upgrade like erm, you see the...

(Appendix C3, Lines 66-71)

- (ii) And I found out that the security doesn't care about like... who entering the college, and it's like anyone can enter the college and no one, no one is like... erm, even the thief also can... err... enter the college and simply err... steal the money... err... the laptop or some valuable things that the students who place it inside their hostel. So I hope that the conditions of the security should be upgrade and... Alright. Erm, ok, I'm just hoping that hmm... ok the first thing...

(Appendix C3, Lines 75-82)

In example (i), participant C stated his viewpoint based on his personal understanding towards the crime issue and real life situation in Malaysia when he tried to connect it with the security concerns in the hostel. And this occurred again when he mentioned the security issue in lines 75 to 82. In example (ii), he offered a narrative description to his readers, sharing his experience verbally until he realised he had gone too far and pulled himself back to the task. This was an interesting finding, which he disclosed during the interview session that he did not like writing very much, and he would prefer talking more. This inevitably helped to explain the frequent use of Process-controlling as the participant was composing.

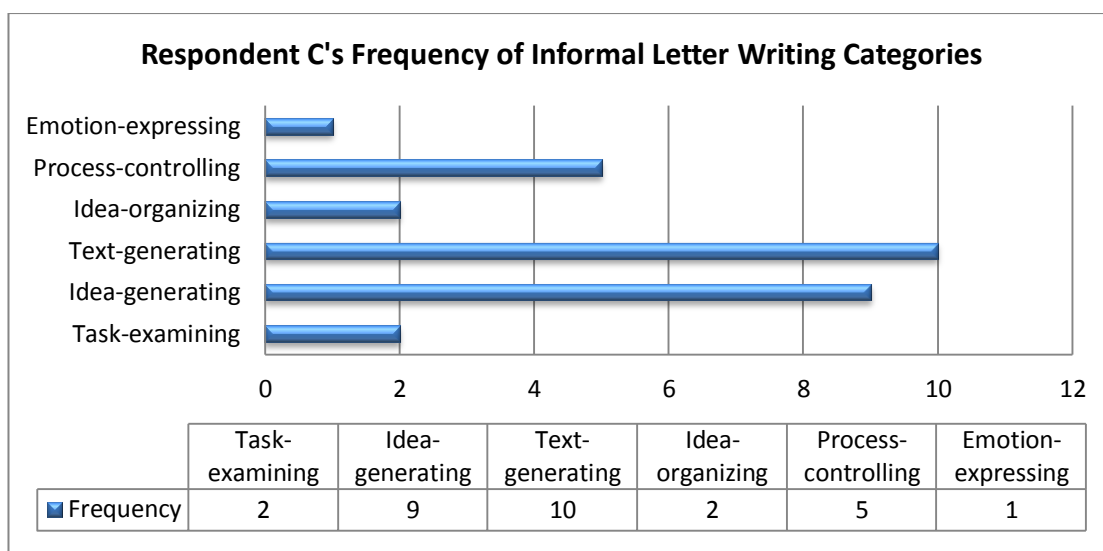


Figure 4.6: Participant C's Frequency of Informal Letter Writing Categories

Similar to the formal letter writing, all writing categories were applied in participant C's informal letter composing. The graph pattern illustrated in Figure 4.6 showed a similar trend where Text-generating and Idea-generating outnumbered all other writing categories. This was followed by Process-controlling with five occurrences; Task-examining and Idea-generating, both twice and lastly, Emotion-expressing only once. The example of Emotion-expressing was highlighted below.

What if a thief or any other strangers that entering into the college without asking and without registering their data, their information? They just simply enter, and just simply take all others valuable stuffs? So, what you can see is very terrible.

(Appendix C4, Lines 33-36)

Participant C tried to express his opinions regarding the security problems in the hostel before he continued to write. This situation was somewhat similar to what had been discussed in his formal letter-writing task. The occurrence of Process-controlling and Idea-organising for his informal letter is less than formal letter probably due to the same topic which he had composed earlier, thus, required less effort for both writing categories. Besides, there is comparably less occurrence of Idea-generating and Text-generating in informal letter than formal letter which

may be caused by the letter length that varied. Additionally, there is less Emotion-expressing occurrence in his informal letter too. It is assumed that while composing the formal letter earlier on, the participant's emotions had been released and thus, became less 'aggressive' in writing the informal letter.

Next, participant D's cognitive processes in her formal and informal letters will be discussed. Participant D is a female UM undergraduate who is doing her Bachelor of Laws (LLB).

4.1.4 Participant D's Cognitive Processes

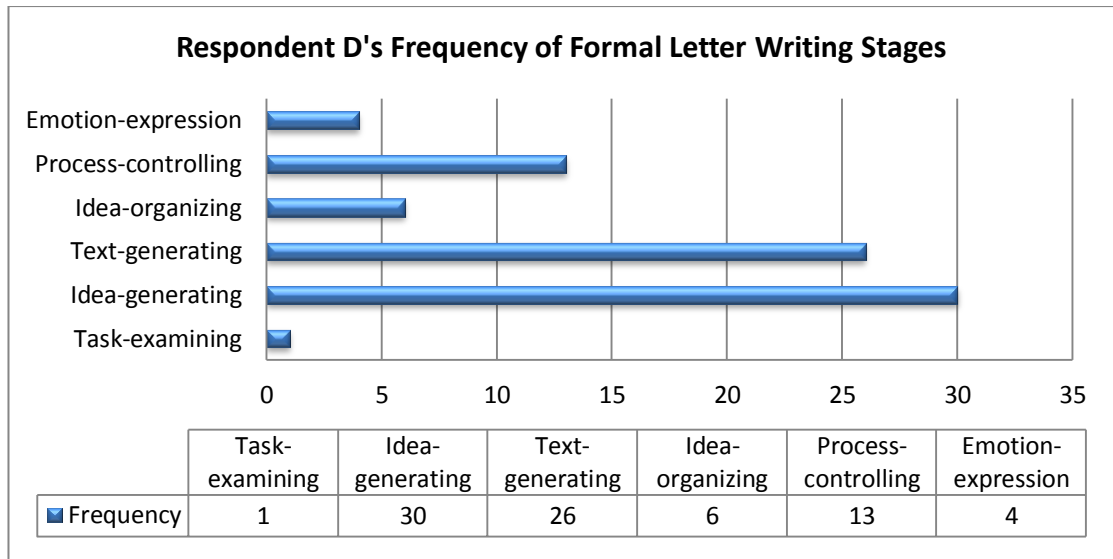


Figure 4.7: Participant D's Frequency of Formal Letter Writing Categories

As the above figure shows, it was Idea-generating and Text-generating, which recorded the highest frequency of occurrence in participant D's formal letter composing, that was, thirty times and twenty-six times respectively. It was observed that the number of Idea-generating occurrences in participant D's formal letter was the highest among all the other participants' records. This implied that participant D engaged most frequently in retrieving information stored in LTM and attended to information in STM. It was also noted that Idea-generating and Text-generating often occurred simultaneously, in other words, participant D wrote as she generated ideas at the same time. For instance,

And this has actually erm... lead to so much trouble for the rest of us as they always err... leave err the residue of the dishes erm at the err... at the sink of toilet erm... There [that] is... the place suppose to wash erm... hands only but erm... they had make [made] it a place to wash their plates erm... etc etc.

(Appendix D3, Lines 74-78)

Similar to participant C, participant D had also applied all writing categories in her formal letter writing, with different frequency of occurrence, however. In participant D's formal letter, Process-controlling recorded the third highest of occurrence throughout the writing processes, that is, thirteen times. Meanwhile, Emotion-expressing occurred four times. This finding was slightly different from her informal letter writing, which would be discussed in next paragraph.

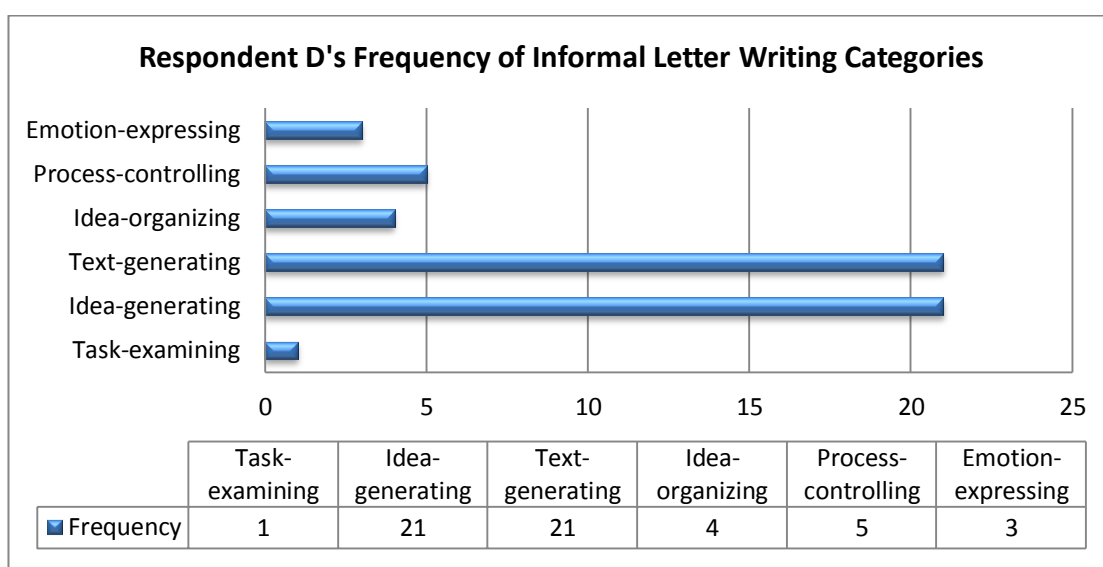


Figure 4.8: Participant D's Frequency of Informal Letter Writing Categories

As illustrated in Figure 4.8, participant D's frequency of informal letter writing categories reflected a similar pattern as in the formal letter writing. Both Text-generating and Idea-generating occurred the most, which was twenty-one times throughout the informal letter writing duration. In spite of this similarity, the

occurrence frequency of Emotion-expressing in the formal letter writing was slightly higher than that in the informal letter writing, i.e. four times and three times respectively during the writing duration. The finding also indicated that participant D had applied Emotion-expressing in both formal and informal letters, almost at equal frequency of occurrence although during the interview session, the participant stated that she preferred informal letter writing than formal letter writing because she felt more comfortable with the former as if she was talking with a friend. This was probably due to her personal writing preference and her expressive nature. However, the occurrence of Process-controlling was much less in her informal letter than in formal letter, probably due to her individual preference on writing informal letter, where she could write more naturally. Otherwise, it could also be because she was more familiar with the topic since she had already written in the formal letter.

Besides the abovementioned differences, the data collected from participant D's informal letter writing processes did not vary much from the formal letter writing. This data outcome concurs with *Communication Theory*, which states that different discourses serve different communicative goals; similarly, when the recipient of letter differs, the writing style varies too.

Besides, Idea-generating and Text-generating in formal letter writing recorded higher occurrence than in informal letter writing too. This was due to the longer letter length of the formal letter, which contained 528 words whereas the informal letter contained only 432 words. The next section of this chapter proceeds to the final participant's cognitive processes while he was engaged in writing tasks.

Participant E is a male UM undergraduate who is pursuing his degree in Bachelor of Science (Hons) Bioinformatics.

4.1.5 Participant E's Cognitive Processes

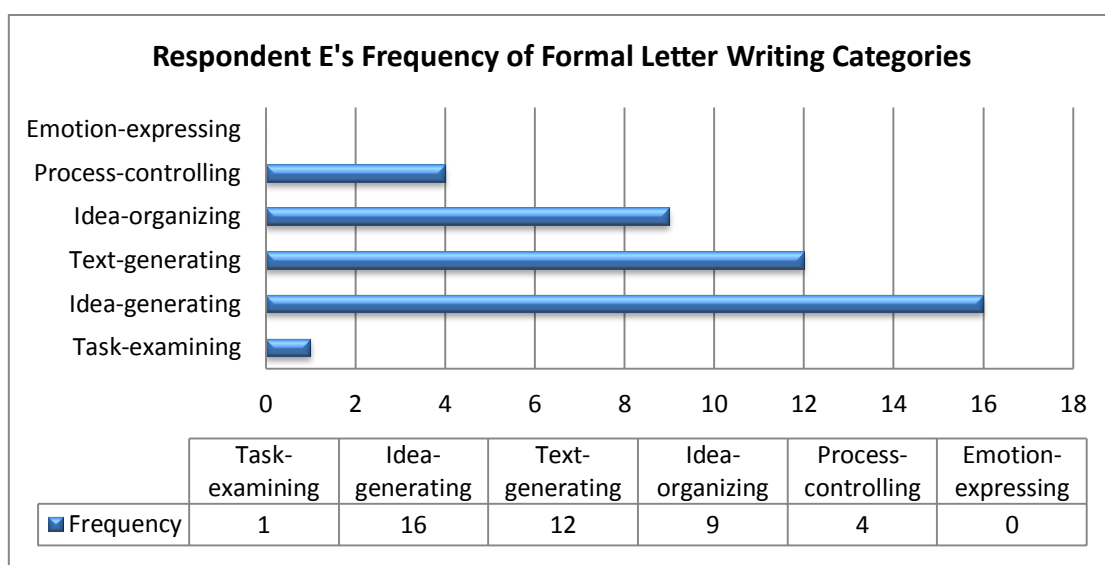


Figure 4.9: Participant E's Frequency of Formal Letter Writing Categories

Figure 4.9 showed that the highest occurrences of participant E's formal letter composing processes were Idea-generating and Text-generating, which were sixteen times and twelve times respectively; followed by Idea-organising, nine times. However, Emotion-expressing did not occur at all throughout the whole writing process. Similar to the previous participants, Idea-generating and Text-generating occurred almost simultaneously for participant E in his formal letter.

Although the overall results showed a similar trend to the other four participants, it was noteworthy that participant E was the only participant who uses Mandarin to verbalise his thoughts during the writing duration. During the training session, all participants were instructed to use any language they felt comfortable with while performing the think-aloud and writing tasks simultaneously. Hence, it might be concluded that participant E felt more comfortable verbalising his

thoughts in Mandarin instead of English. And therefore, the contents delivered were much influenced by the Mandarin language pattern and words choice. Some instances were found from the following transcripts:

- (i) That... condition... hmm... 就讲太过潮湿，潮湿怎样讲？Hmm...
err...
That... condition... hmm... Let's say it's too 'damp', how to say 'damp'? Hmm... err...

(Appendix E3, Line 30)

- (ii) Another issue I want to complain, 我要投诉，在……曾经……被人
家偷过东西，不是属于那宿舍的人走进 go into hostel 不知道是做什么。

Literal translation:

Another issue [that] I want to complain, I want to complain, at... was once... things being stolen by others, people who don't belong to the hostel go into the hostel don't know doing what.

Context translation:

Another issue [that] I want to complain, I want to complain, is... that was once... things being stolen by others, people who are not residents of the hostel go into the hostel and I don't know what they want to do.

(Appendix E3, Lines 35-36)

- (iii) 首先就讲被偷的东西先... is the security problem... My room was... 被人家闯进来，“闯”用英文怎样讲？rob in, rob in... break in. ...got break in last week.

Literal Translation:

First talk about things being stolen... is the security problem... My room was... dashed in by others, how to say 'dash' in English? Rob in, rob in... break in... got break in last week.

Context Translation:

First, let's talk about things being stolen... is the security problem... My room was... dashed in by others, how to say 'dash' in English? Rob in, rob in... break in... got break in last week.

(Appendix E3, Lines 37-39)

As shown in the above example, participant E intended to translate the Mandarin words 'damp' and 'dash' (in first and third example) into English but had problems to find the suitable words choice. They were evidence of how L1

influenced the word choice and it showed that participant E was thinking in L1 before he translated his thoughts into English as he composed. In the second example, it portrayed how the participant formulated his ideas in Mandarin before he wrote and this ultimately had affected his English sentence structure in the letter.

Furthermore, participant E was the only one among the other participants who did not read aloud the essay topic, instead he read the topic silently. After Task-examining (silence reading), participant E began by stating:

“Now... how to say... Ok, 就写我以前住过的 Fourth College, University... UM 咯.”

[Now... how to say... Ok, I'll write the hostel I used to stay before, Fourth College in University of Malaya (UM)]

(Appendix E3, Lines 5–6)

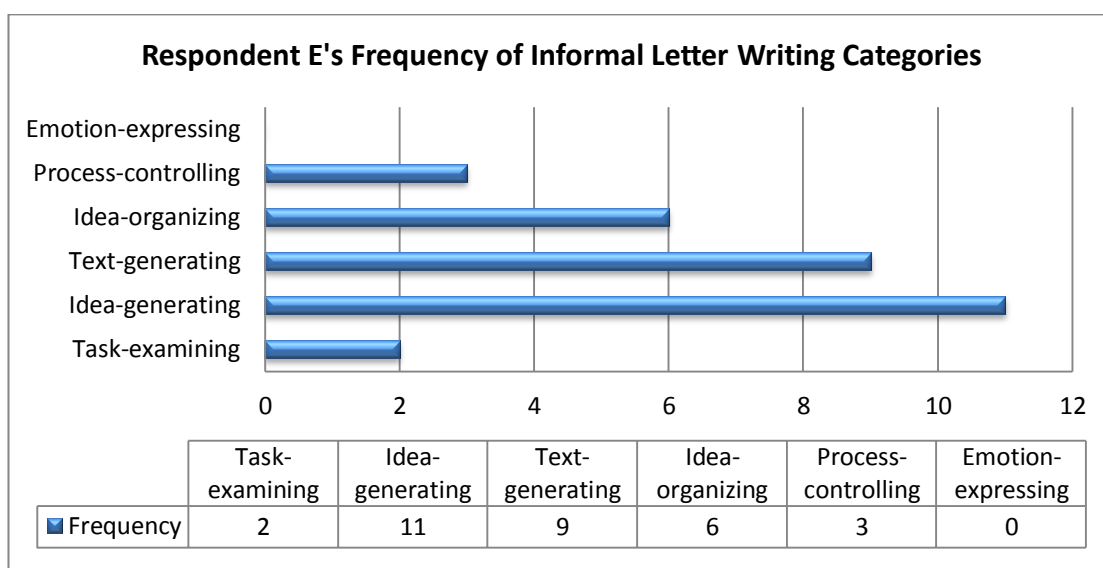


Figure 4.10: Participant E's Frequency of Informal Letter Writing Categories

Similar to formal letter, participant E verbalised his thoughts mainly in Mandarin for his informal letter too. One of the most obvious examples illustrating the direct translation from Mandarin to English was highlighted below.

离开家, 跟想象的完全不同。 It was totally different than my imagination.
它没有象电视机上看的这样漂亮, 这样美好。 It doesn't look as
beautiful as in television, especially in Malaysia.

Leaving home, is totally different from the imagination. It was totally
different than [from] my imagination. It is not as beautiful as it is shown on
the television, so wonderful. It doesn't look as beautiful as in television,
especially [not] in Malaysia.

(Appendix E4, Lines 11-13)

Interestingly, as illustrated in Figures 4.9 and 4.10, Emotion-expression did not occur at all in participant E's formal and informal letters but participant E held the highest frequency of Idea-organising occurrence, in both formal and informal letter composing. As mentioned earlier, participant E is a Bioinformatics undergraduate and based on the researcher's understanding on his personality, he is a rather quiet, calm and well-organised person. This might be one of the reasons to explain why Emotion-expressing did not occur at all for his formal and informal letters while having the highest frequency of occurrence of Idea-organising than other participants. The occurrence of all writing categories in formal and informal letters was almost identical as the results portrayed. The participant's writing style or behavior for both letters were also quite similar, though participant E indicated that he preferred to write informal letter.

Despite the similarities that all participants shared in common, there were some differences and this could be due to individual differences in terms of characteristics, language styles and the thinking patterns. Some participants were more emotionally driven whereas others were more focused and calm during the writing process. The next section provides a discussion on the factors found to have affected the participants composing processes for both formal and informal letters.

4.2 Factors Affecting the Cognitive Processes in Formal and Informal Letter-Writing Tasks

This section provides a discussion on the factors which influenced the participants' cognitive processes while they were engaged in both formal and informal letter composing tasks. It serves primarily to answer:

RQ2: What are the factors affecting the cognitive processes of ESL students while they are composing?

4.2.1 Factors Affecting Participant A's Cognitive Processes in Formal Letter Writing

As mentioned earlier in Section 4.1.1, participant A asked questions directed to herself when she was brainstorming for ideas but not all questions serve the same purpose. There were some questions found in the transcript, which indicated the participant's uncertainties and doubts in the area of grammar. For example:

- (i) "they throw all the rubbish, instead ne [a Chinese modal particle], all the rubbish, with 's'? Rubbishes... rubbish?"

(Appendix A4, Lines 45-46)

- (ii) "Some value stuffs, some value belongings, some value belonging, '-ings', had missing, had... with '-ing' la, had missing, had lost. Few laptops and some value belongings had lost, had missing... miss or missing? Had missing."

(Appendix A4, Lines 63-66)

As illustrated in the transcripts above, participant A was confused with the use of plural and singular form of certain words i.e. 'rubbish' in example (i) and 'belonging' in example (ii). Furthermore, participant A also encountered problem with the use of the perfect tense i.e. 'had miss' or 'had missing' in example (ii).

Some other examples also indicated that the participant had problems with some basic grammatical rules, particularly the subject-verb agreement:

- (i) "...the hygiene awareness are [is] so, so, so, so poor..."
(Appendix A4, Line 42)
- (ii) "Security level are [is] low, security level bad or low?"
(Appendix A4, Lines 56-57)

Besides this, participant A also encountered challenges to find suitable lexical items to describe certain things. Some examples were highlighted below:

- (i) "Security level are low, security level bad or low?"
(Appendix A4, Lines 56-57)
- (ii) "The sinks are so, so... dirty also, also, are also full... Full of the hairs. Hairy hairs, full of hairy hairs... and food which... which they all wash, wash their plates, ok which the food, which all the oily food are prohibited clean in the place."
(Appendix A4, Lines 50-53)
- (iii) "security guards should take their responsibility... responsible or responsibility?"
(Appendix A4, Lines 88-89)

In example (i), participant A faced the problem of choosing a correct adjective to describe "security level". The word choice was 'bad' and 'low' but neither one was appropriate. Similarly, the use of the word 'take' in example (iii) also implies that participant A had a limited vocabulary repertoire. Another possible indication to show that participant A lacking vocabulary was seen in the way she used lengthy descriptions to convey a desired meaning, as in example (ii). By observing the descriptions used by participant A, it was concluded that 'food

remnants' was the target word participant A wished to use. However, due to the lack of vocabulary, she used some other words to describe it: "...and food which... which they all wash, wash their plates, ok which the food, which all the oily food..." (Appendix A4, Lines 51-53).

4.2.2 Factors Affecting Participant A's Cognitive Processes in Informal Letter Writing

One of the most significant factors found to influence the participant's thinking processes in the informal letter writing was similar to what had been observed in the formal letter task. Participant A was found to have problems with the use of the perfect tense, i.e. the verb form used after 'have', 'has', and/or 'had'. For example: "I have just move in, move into the hostel... in err... hostel of University... University Malaya..." (Appendix A4, Lines 17-18). Besides the perfect tense, participant A was also uncertain with the use of preposition 'in' and 'into'.

Furthermore, participant A had also encountered problems with the subject-verb agreement and the use of past participle verb form, as seen in the examples below:

- (i) "The cleaner... doesn't... do not, do not... cleaners do not... the cleaners do not do their duty on time also err..."
(Appendix A5, Lines 41-42)
- (ii) "Currently... some security, security issue also rise up, 'rised', 'some' is 'rise'... the crime... rate... crime cases... are keep rising, are keep rising..."
(Appendix A5, Lines 49-51)

Apart from the problems from the grammatical aspect, participant A also faced difficulties in word choice in informal letter composing. Some of the examples found are highlighted below:

- (i) The hygiene problem, the hygiene problem... always annoyed... and disturb my life of the days. Annoyed... always annoying my days in UM.

(Appendix A5, Lines 25-28)

- (ii) The hygiene awareness... hygiene awareness of residents are so bad, so poor. They just like to throw the rubbish outside of the dustbin... of the provided dustbin... so bad... ok.

(Appendix A5, Lines 29-31)

- (iii) Sinks are always full of hairs and oily food. Hmm... are always full of hairs and oily food... this make... this make it... err... ok... tersumbat (*clogged*)... make it... err... Call what ahh? This make it... err... stuck, dogged... this make it dogged, stuck... This make the pipe dogged, the water even will flow back up to the... surface. Ha... so bad.

(Appendix A5, Lines 32-37)

In example (i), participant A was confused with the use of the words “annoy” and “disturb” when she intended to describe how the hygiene problems have affected her. Whereas in example (ii), participant A was uncertain towards the appropriate word choice used to describe hygiene awareness. Interestingly, example (iii) showed the participant’s struggle to find an appropriate English word to convey her original meaning, which derived from a Malay word, “*tersumbat*”. Participant A was confused between the words ‘stuck’ and ‘dogged’ to replace the Malay word. This finding illustrated clearly the interference of the Malay language (the official language of Malaysia), and it concurred with the finding obtained in the study conducted by Ghabool, Mariadass and Kashef (2012) who found that “Bahasa Malaysia interference is like a hindrance in the English literacy achievement among secondary school students.” (p. 134)

Next, this chapter continues to provide the explanation on participant B's formal and informal letter composing processes and the factors, which influence his thinking.

4.2.3 Factors Affecting Participant B's Cognitive Processes in Formal Letter Writing

Similar to participant A, the Malay language had an impact on participant B during the composing processes. As he wrote about the hygiene level in the hostel's toilets and wanted to mention about food waste being poured into the sink (Appendix B1, Line 27), "*sisa-sisa*" (waste) was the first word that came to his mind. Throughout the formal letter composing processes, it was observed that besides his mother tongue, i.e. Mandarin, the Malay language also interfered with his composing processes.

This finding showed that different language and cultural backgrounds did influence a writer's thinking and production of English written texts, as described in the *Contrastive Rhetoric Theory*. Research based on this theory had examined the distinctions between English written texts by its native and non-native speakers, as well as to relate these textual differences to cultural differences in rhetorical expectations and conventions (Mu, 2005). This theory claims that people speaking of different languages and from different cultural backgrounds yield different writing styles. Although present study did not compare between native and non-native speakers, it somehow portrayed similar viewpoint proposed by this theory that culture and language background did impact the writing styles because written works were the products of thinking. Different thinking patterns affect the way we write. However, this might also due to the participant's

weakness in English writing, particularly because of the lack of vocabulary, thus, he resorted to Malay in order to help in his composition processes.

In comparison to participant A, B faced less grammatical challenges but a common problem encountered by both participants was the use of the perfect tense, i.e. the verb form after 'have', 'had' and 'has'. The following were some of the examples found in the transcript.

“This... All, all these have disrupt the... all these have disrupt the... have disrupt[ed] the living, have disrupt... All these have... disrupt the... all these have disrupt, all these cause.... All these have caused... “caused” the students to live in an uncomfortable environment.”

(Appendix B3, Lines 39-43)

“Thus, it affects, “thus... All these have... lead the students to live in an uncomfortable environment.”

(Appendix B3, Lines 44-45)

From the above transcripts, it showed that participant B had doubts about the verb form 'disrupt', 'cause' and 'lead' after 'have'. Furthermore, the participant had problems in using prepositions 'on' and 'in', as seen in the example below:

“Thus it, it caused students unable to focus on, focus in, focus on their study.”

(Appendix B3, Lines 45-46)

Other grammatical errors were also spotted especially in the sentence structure. This finding had again concurred with *Contrastive Rhetoric Theory*, which stated that the writing style was greatly influenced by the writer's language and cultural backgrounds. Participant B was doubtful and confused with the word order in the sentence, and so he repeated the same phrase over and over again. One of the examples was as follows:

“Even worse... This might also, this might also be one of the unforeseen factors that, which, which, this might also, this might also... this might be, this might be also, this might be also, this also might be, this also might be, one of the unforeseen factors which, which... which... which... result, results in... this is also might be of... this also might be one of the unforeseen factors which...”

(Appendix B3, Lines 47–53)

Different languages have their unique language systems and word order. Li (1998) proposes that the difference of word order between English and Mandarin lies in their positions of attributives (modifier of noun or pronoun) and adverbials (Eg. preposition). The basic word order for both languages is similar but these are the two elements that make English and Mandarin so different from each other. Besides grammatical challenges, participant B also had the problem of a lack of vocabulary. One of the examples found was given below:

unidentified, “unidentified, unidentified, unidentified” personae... non... of the member of the school, unidentified individuals often seen to be linger in campus area.

(Appendix B3, Lines 70–73)

4.2.4 Factors Affecting Participant B’s Cognitive Processes in Informal

Letter Writing

Based on the obtained data, one of the similar challenges found in participant B’s informal letter writing is difficulty in finding suitable words to express the desired meaning. Some examples were as follows:

- (i) there are... some troubles, there are some, there are some... there are some... there are some... there are some... inadequacies... There are some... there are some... issues. There are some issues, there are some issues concern... there are some issues, there are some issues for the my concern... There are some issues concerning the hostel hygiene level and... and security conditions.

(Appendix B4, Lines 20 – 26)

- (ii) Furthermore, the sinks of the toilet in hostel... in the hos... in the hostel become... become... Furthermore, the sinks of the toilet become... become... the channel... for the food remains... becomes... found themselves.... Furthermore the sinks of the toilet in hostel becomes.... The sink of the toilet in hostel becomes... the sink of the toilet is, is... where food remains are discarded, discarded. Eventually, the... the... pipe is clogged and unpleasant or rotting smell... arises from there and linger around the hostel.

(Appendix B4, Lines 37 – 45)

- (iii) These are, I don't know... hmm... aiya... [long pause]

(Appendix B2, Line 67)

- (iv) Hmm... These are the challenges, “these are the... these are the... hmm... these are the... hmm... these are the... stepping stone... these are the 绊脚石 (*stumbling stones*)... these are the... these are the... concern, concerns... in my life... in... these are the concerns for me to stay in hostel.

(Appendix B4, Lines 68 – 72)

In example (i), participant B was confused with word choice; for example words like ‘troubles’, ‘inadequacies’ and ‘issues’ to refer the subject matter. Whereas in example (ii), as participant B found it hard to think of an appropriate word, he constructed another sentence by using other words instead to explain his meaning. This scenario was similar to that of participant A’s TAP, where the participant used longer phrases and sentences to express the desired meaning.

Example (iv) was an instance to illustrate the problems faced by participant B due to the lack of vocabulary. In this example, participant B found a suitable English word to convey his desired meaning which originates from a Chinese phrase ‘绊脚石’, which means ‘stumbling stone’. This finding concurred with Silva’s (1992) statement, which suggests that ESL students think primarily in their first language and translate into the target language later on. Thinking in first language may help

at brainstorming stage but if learners construct sentences using first language, it may cause grammatical problems.

4.2.5 Factors Affecting Participant C's Cognitive Processes in Formal Letter Writing

From the analysis of the data obtained, the findings revealed that participant C encountered grammatical challenges very frequently. For instance, participant C encountered problems with the use of relative pronouns 'who' and 'which' as seen in the example here: "the terrible... matter of the hygiene level which all the male hostel, male students which using the toilet and did not clean up." (Appendix C3, Lines 48 – 51) More examples found in the transcript were given below:

- (i) "Alright, after that I'll be continue [I'll continue] to the second point, which with spacing and I need to write at third paragraph which... and will be making a spacing at the front and continue with the next point which is the security condition is so... dangerous."

(Appendix C3, Lines 62 – 65)

- (ii) "So I hope that the conditions of the security should be upgrade [upgraded]..."

(Appendix C3, Lines 80 – 81)

- (iii) I am very disappoint [disappointed] towards the management security system.

(Appendix C3, Lines 84 – 85)

The phrases "I'll be continue..." and "the security should be upgrade..." were not part of the written product but both are articulations from the TAP as participant C brainstormed and organised his ideas. These short phrases indicated that the participant had problems with some basic grammatical rules such as the use of active and passive voice. Moreover, when participant C used 'dangerous' to

describe the ‘security condition’ and ‘disappoint’ as adjective, it implied that he had problems with word choice too. This finding concurred with Roszanaliza (2006)’s research, which had also identified that the lack of vocabulary was one of the factors affecting the cognitive processes of the ESL students.

4.2.6 Factors Affecting Participant C’s Cognitive Processes in Informal Letter Writing

Throughout the composing processes, similar to participant B, participant C encountered several major problems in the aspects of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure in his informal letter writing. Some of the relevant examples were as shown below:

- (i) Hello Eunice. How are you? I am writing, I am trying to complain, I’m trying to share with you...
(Appendix C4, Lines 16 – 17)
- (ii) Students did not obey the rules, obey the instructions... of staying... inside the... hostel.
(Appendix C4, Lines 24 – 25)
- (iii) The condition of hygiene level and the security system that did not manage well by the management of Residential, of the Third Residential College of my university.
(Appendix C4, Lines 17 – 20)
- (iv) And I continue with the second paragraph which talking more details about the hygiene level and the security system.
(Appendix C4, Lines 21 – 22)
- (v) Students like to cook... inside their room and wash away all the dishes which did not clean at all...and... left some leftover foods inside the toilet.
(Appendix C4, Lines 26 – 28)

- (vi) Student is so... unconsiderate [inconsiderate] towards others peoples view.

(Appendix C4, Lines 28 – 29)

Examples (i) and (ii) illustrated the challenges faced by participant C where he had to choose the appropriate words to express his meaning, i.e. ‘complain’ and ‘share’ in the first example; ‘rules’ and ‘instructions’ in the second example. Besides, examples (iii), (iv), and (v) showed that participant C also encountered problems with grammar. As evident from the extracts of the transcripts, participant C was weak with the use of active and passive sentences (example iii), the use of relative pronouns / Question marker ‘which’ (examples iv & v), and the correct negative form of the adjective ‘considerate’ (example vi).

This finding concurred with Silva (1992)’s study where the students’ perception on ESL graduates on L1 and L2 writing was examined. The findings obtained from Silva (1992)’s study suggested that ESL students tended to have lower confidence on the aspects of vocabulary and word order. Therefore, they would focus more on these aspects while reviewing their L2 written products.

4.2.7 Factors Affecting Participant D’s Cognitive Processes in Formal Letter Writing

In general, the factors encountered by participant D in formal letter composing could be categorised into two major aspects, namely, grammar and vocabulary, which were also similar to participants A, B and C’s problems. In terms of grammar, participant D faced difficulties with the use of singular and plural forms, for example, ‘stark detail’ or ‘stark details’ (Appendix D3, Lines 29 – 33). Besides, participant D also had problems choosing the correct word such as the

adjective ‘unpleasant’. Instead of ‘unpleasant’, she used ‘unpleasable’ to describe the hygiene condition in the hostel toilet. She was also confused with the perfect tense. Some relevant examples from the data were provided below:

- (i) Erm... although this has erm, this is... although this has erm... break ah, or broke? Although this has erm, broken the rules of residential college...

(Appendix D3, Lines 57 – 58)

- (ii) There [that] is... the place supposed to wash erm... hands only but erm... they had make it a place to wash their plates...

(Appendix D3, Lines 82 – 84)

- (iii) I err... personally hmm do not think they... they... they have carry out their job properly.

(Appendix D3, Lines 127 – 128)

Apart from grammar, participant D also encountered difficulties with vocabulary.

Some of the examples found were highlighted below:

- (i) So first of all, we got a, we got... we got... some portion of residents err... had make our... ok this is past tense right, had made our...had made our staying err... had made our staying here erm... not enjoying ah, how to say?

(Appendix D3, Lines 49 – 52)

- (ii) So, erm... this erm has make [made] the sink 塞住 (clogged). This has made the sink not that... how to say har? This has make the sink erm... hmm... This has made the sink err... ohh! I forgot... There is the place suppose to wash hands only, there is the place suppose to wash hands only but they... wash... their plates ahh... etc, so this has make [made] the sink erm... flooded with all these disgusting residue and... and... the water can't... cannot erm, cannot go down.

(Appendix D3, Lines 78 – 87)

- (iii) Therefore, we can study well without worrying, without worrying about our safety and any other unnecessary erm... 打扰 (interruption), unnecessary interruption.

(Appendix D3, Lines 145 – 147)

As observed from the examples above, all except example (i) showed that participant D had difficulty expressing the desired word or meaning which first appeared in her mother tongue, Mandarin. In both examples (ii) and (iii), participant D was confused with vocabulary choice, and the example was seen in the word ‘clogged’ and the Mandarin word is “塞住” as found in example (ii) and the word ‘interruption’ “打扰” in example (iii). This finding concurred with Silva (1992) who stated that ESL students think primarily in their first language and translate into target language later on.

Nevertheless, the lack of vocabulary was not the only reason to explain a situation when the participant faced difficulty to find suitable English words to substitute or translate Mandarin words. In fact, idioms and parables are used quite frequently in Mandarin to explain some complicated meaning or situation. Therefore, it is difficult to translate it in English. For example,

“although this has broken the rules of residential college, but since there are not enough spot check carry out regularly, so indirectly they... this type of cases increase lah. How to say? So indirectly... err... hmm... make them... err make them... 变本加厉 (*worse than original condition*) so indirectly make them... do it without... do it without caution.”

(Appendix D3, Lines 61 – 66)

As shown in the example above, the Chinese idiom “变本加厉” means worse than the original condition. In this context, participant D wanted to say that due to the loose rules and regulations of the hostel and the lack of spot checks by the authorities, residents did not seem to be afraid to break the rules. This finding showed that the problem faced by the participant was due to the lack of vocabulary in English to convey her desired meaning in Mandarin. Besides, we

could also say that participant D seemed to think from her mother tongue before translating it into English.

4.2.8 Factors Affecting Participant D's Cognitive Processes in Informal

Letter Writing

Throughout the informal letter composing processes, participant D encountered challenges in the vocabulary aspect and the following were two examples highlighted from the transcript:

- (i) “However, the... there has been something hmm... something hmm something... err... something... err... something how to say ah? However, there has been something... err... something unpleasable la. Ok, something unpleasable thing, things happen.

(Appendix D4, Lines 40 – 44)

- (ii) The janitors did not err clean up the toilet erm frequently and and erm... and residues of food often makes the basin stuck and flooded, as water err... as water as water could not erm could not, could not go down. Hmm...

(Appendix D4, Lines 62 – 66)

The first example was a repeated mistake as observed in participant D's formal letter-writing - the adjective ‘unpleasable’, in which the desired word was probably ‘unpleasant’. In example (ii), it was noted that participant D tried to find a word to describe how the food residues had blocked water from flowing down to the drainage. Instead of stating as ‘flowing down’, participant D used ‘water could not go down’, which was less appropriate. This example indicated that lack of vocabulary was evidently a problem faced by participant D.

Additionally, weakness in grammar was another factor, which contributed to the problems faced by D in composing the informal letter. Examples were as given below:

- (i) “Hello Lily. I hope you are... well at Australia since” your semester have just started. Ok. err... it is have la, it is not has. “Hello Lily. I hope you are now doing well at Australia since your semester have just started.”

(Appendix D4, Lines 20 – 24)

- (ii) “...it is pretty fun erm for my life I have experienced erm in University of Malaya as I got the erm course I wanted so badly and now, I manage to get a bunch of lovely friends... and hmm... this has erm... enriching my life too.”

(Appendix D4, Lines 32 – 35)

Again, the mistakes done were similar to that found in the formal letter, i.e. the mastery of the perfect tense. Both examples showed that participant D was uncertain towards the use of ‘has’ and ‘have’, and the verb forms to be used after it. In example (i), instead of saying ‘your semester has just started’, participant D wrote as ‘your semester have just started’; whereas in example (ii), although the first part of the sentence showed a correct use of ‘have experienced’, participant D was confused in the second part of the sentence, i.e. ‘...this has enriching my life too’. It was observed that participant D had tendency to translate word order directly from Mandarin. It could be seen from the use of ‘have’ in the following sentence:

“However, [sigh] there also have something bad happen la. That’s impossible to have perfect la in... ok. For everything.”

(Appendix D4, Lines 37 – 38)

The presence of ‘have’ here made the sentence awkward. But in Mandarin, the use of the word ‘have’ in the same sentence and context is appropriate, as shown in the sentence below:

Mandarin: 但是，也有不好的事情发生啦。不可能什么事都完美。

Literal translation: However, also have bad things happened la. Nothing is perfect.

Due to his familiarity in using Mandarin, participant D had tendency to insert the word ‘have’ into his sentences, including when he composed in English. Hence, it was an evidence to show that participant D also tended to translate his thoughts from Mandarin to English in composition, such situation was similar to participant E (to be discussed in next section) too.

4.2.9 Factors Affecting Participant E’s Cognitive Processes in Formal Letter Writing

Based on the transcripts obtained, the greatest difficulty encountered by participant E in composing the formal letter is in grammar aspect. Some of the examples were highlighted below:

- (i) There was rubbish... all around the corridor... and outside... the door. The rubbish bin was always get full easily... So it... hmm... so the rubbish... was fall on the floor as the bin is full...

(Appendix E3, Lines 25 – 28)

- (ii) The cloth that was hanging inside the washroom... has been there for..... the cloth that was hanging inside the washroom... has been there for... quite a time. It started getting smelly.

(Appendix E3, Lines 31 – 33)

- (iii) My purse... aiya... my wallet, hand phone... and external hard disk has been stolen.

(Appendix E3, Lines 40 – 41)

(iv) I am sure that they belong, didn't... belong in here.

(Appendix E3, Line 45)

(v) problem can be solve as soon as possible...

(Appendix E3, Line 47)

As observed from the above examples, participant E did not know the correct use of the auxiliary verb such as 'was' in example (i). In fact, 'was' should be eliminated from the sentence. Besides, participant E also encountered problems with the use of active and passive sentences, as illustrated in examples (ii) and example (v). Instead of 'The cloth was hanging inside the washroom', the correct form of the sentence should be 'The cloth was hung inside the washroom'; instead of 'can be solve', the correct form should be 'can be solved'. This was probably because in Mandarin (the language that the participant was more familiar with) did not have different verb forms for active and passive voice sentences.

Moreover, participant E had problems with the subject-verb agreement. As shown in example (iii), the verb-to-be 'has' should be replaced by 'have' because the subject of the sentence is plural. Apart from what had been mentioned above, participant E also faced difficulties in using preposition, for instance, the preposition 'in' should not be used after the verb 'belong' in the sentence as shown in example (iv).

Besides grammar, another major problem encountered by participant E was lack of vocabulary. Two examples were as shown below:

(i) That... condition... hmm... 就讲太过潮湿，潮湿怎样讲？Hmm...
err... [That... condition... hmm... Let's say it's too 'damp', how to say
'damp'? Hmm... err...]

(Appendix E3, Line 30)

- (ii) 首先就讲被偷的东西先... is the security problem... My room was... 被人家闯进来, “闯”用英文怎样讲? Rob in, rob in... break in. ...got break in last week.

Literal Translation:

First talk about things being stolen... is the security problem... My room was... dashed in by others, how to say 'dash' in English? Rob in, rob in... break in... got break in last week.

Context Translation:

First, let's talk about things being stolen... is the security problem... My room was... dashed in by others, how to say 'dash' in English? Rob in, rob in... break in... got break in last week.

(Appendix E3, Lines 37 – 39)

Based on the transcripts obtained, the examples above illustrated an obvious situation of how a Mandarin speaker thinks in L1 and then translates it into L2 (English), including not only the vocabulary but also the sentence structure. The data obtained from participant E was a strong evidence to show the patterns as described in *Contrastive Rhetoric Theory*. When learners are from different cultural and language background, their writing styles vary accordingly. Most of the times, the influence is greater from the language, which we are more familiar and confident with. Like in the case of participant E, he was more comfortable with the use of Mandarin, so he tended to use Mandarin for brainstorming as well as to construct sentences.

4.2.10 Factors Affecting Participant E's Cognitive Processes in Informal Letter Writing

In the informal letter composing, participant E encountered some similar challenges in the grammar aspect as discussed in Section 4.2.9. The following

were some examples, which were not discussed in formal letter writing and would be used here to illustrate the point:

- (i) I was shock by the environment at the first day, the first step... when I walk into my hostel. It looks like a haunted house. You can imagine, imagine... the room is full of spider web and dust. It was like snowing when you open the fan.

(Appendix E4, Lines 16 – 20)

- (ii) You can imagine how it is, how it was, how it is.

(Appendix E4, Line 25)

From example (i), besides problems found in the active and passive voice of the sentence, participant E encountered difficulty in choosing a suitable word to substitute the word ‘open’ [*‘open’ is direct translation from Mandarin, it refers to ‘switched on’*]. Besides, participant E was also confused with the use of present and past tense, as he was uncertain when to use the tense in context. The overall results for both formal and informal letters portrayed that participant E had problems particularly in words choice, tenses and sentence structures, in which were primarily due to his first language interference during the composing processes.

In conclusion, it was inevitable that the lack of English vocabulary, poor grammar mastery and other language interference were among the major factors, which influenced the participants’ cognitive processes. Nevertheless, the type of writing task also affected the writers’ cognitive processes because this was linked to their personal preference. For instance, participants A and B preferred to write formal letters while participant D preferred the informal, and the results showed that there was more frequent use of Emotion-expressing in the preferred letter compared to the non-preferred letter.

With regard to other language interference, the findings illustrated that all the participants, especially participant E, who generated ideas in Mandarin, and they tended to use Malay or Mandarin words that came to their minds and it had influenced their word choice and sentence structure as they composed the letters. Furthermore, all five participants had stated during their interview session that they tended to think in their mother tongue, Mandarin first before they wrote in English. The tendency to translate ideas from Mandarin into the target language, English, had caused difficulties in producing English written products especially in grammatical aspects.

As translation research suggests, translation is not only a matter of linguistic transfer, but also involves cultural transfer. For translation to take place, the translator needs to have intercultural competence to do accurate translation because texts are shaped distinctly by their source culture at various levels such as text-type conventions, pragmatics, content or lexis (Olk, 2002). Therefore, it creates problems if students translate L1 to L2 without adequate and professional language skills. Thinking in first language may help at brainstorming stage but if learners construct sentences using first language, it may cause grammatical problems.

4.3 Differences of Cognitive Processes between Formal and Informal Letter-Writing Tasks

After answering RQ 1 and RQ 2, Section 4.3 will discuss the differences between the two composing tasks, i.e. formal and informal letter based on the data findings obtained from the five participants in order to answer:

RQ3: Is there any difference between cognitive processes in formal and informal letter writing while the ESL students think-aloud? If yes, how do they differ?

The frequency of occurrence of writing categories for all five participants in both formal and informal letters was summarised and tabulated in the following figures (4.11 and 4.12).

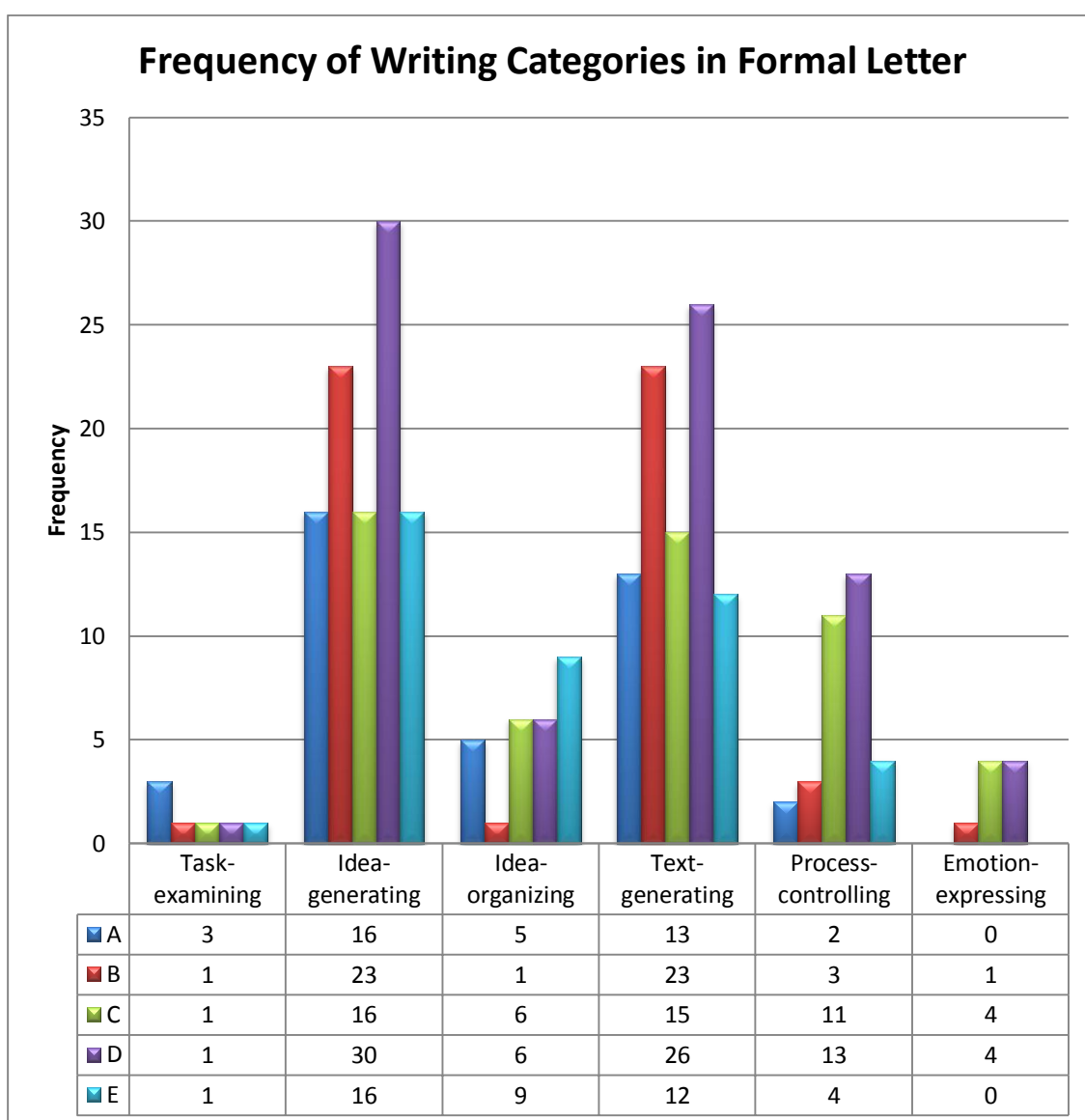


Figure 4.11: Frequency of Formal Letter Writing Categories for All Participants

By comparing the formal and informal letters, there was no stark difference between the two writing tasks except in three writing categories: Idea-organising, Process-controlling and Emotion-expressing. The frequency of occurrence for Idea-organising in formal letter in all five participants was higher than that found in the informal letter composing. During the interview, it was reported by all participants that formal letter required more standard and fixed flow of content. On the other hand, informal letter was more flexible and expressive. Besides, formal letter was written prior to the informal letter. Hence, participants were not familiar with the topic in composing the formal letter and thus, spent more effort in generating and organising their content. That explained the higher occurrence of Idea-organising.

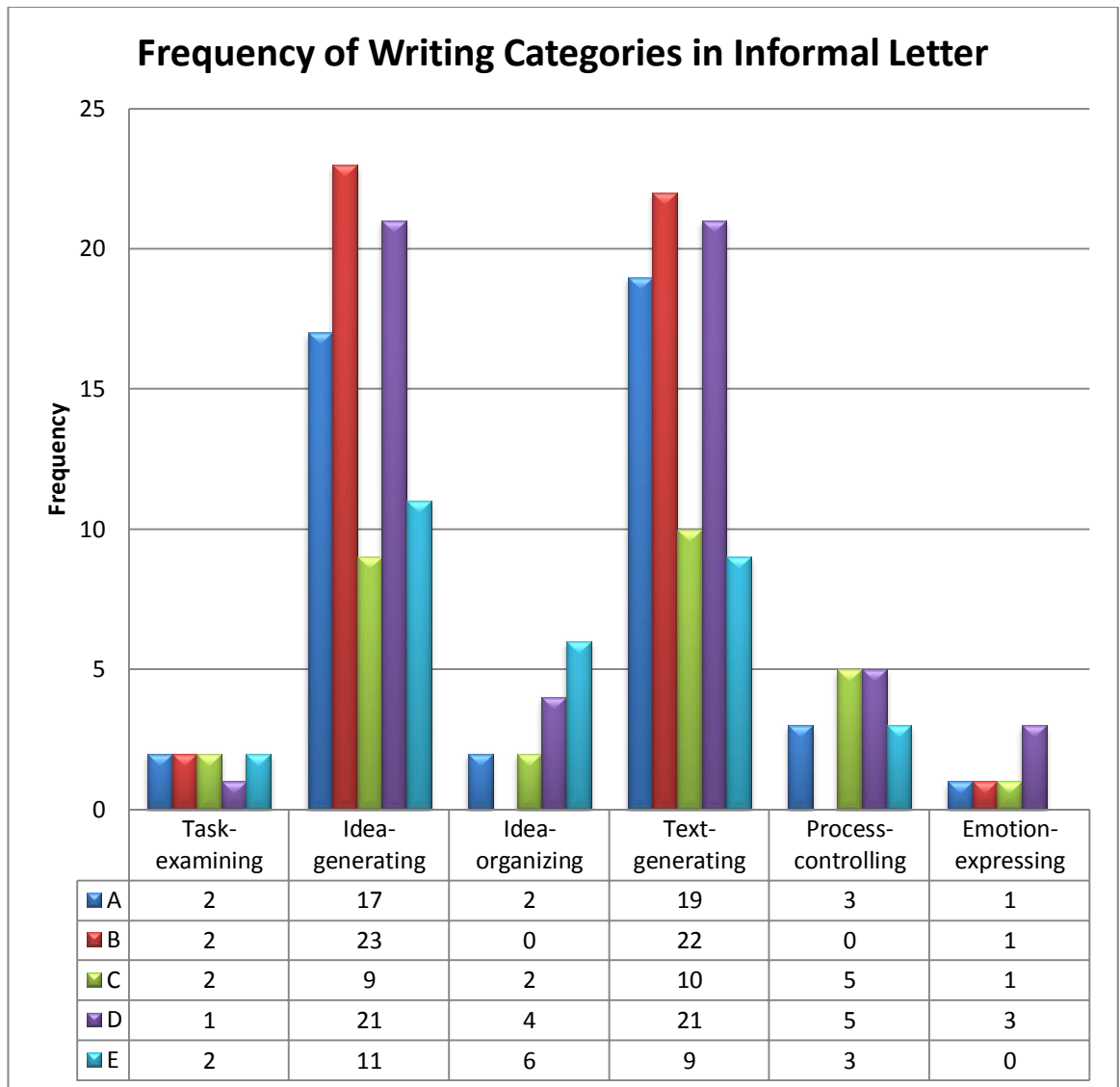


Figure 4.12: Frequency of Informal Letter Writing Categories for All Participants

Furthermore, four participants applied more Process-controlling in their formal letter except participant A. These findings implied that a majority of the participants organised their ideas and control their writing procedures more often while engaged in formal letter writing than in informal letter writing. Whether the participants preferred to write the formal or informal letter, the results showed that they tended to spend more effort in Process-controlling and Idea-organising. Another reason which might have caused this was that formal letter was the first writing task assigned to the participants, therefore, they were not as confident and

familiar with the topic as they were when they composed informal letter, which was the second writing task.

Apart from that, it was interesting to note that even though it was assumed that there would be more frequent use of Emotion-expressing in the informal letter writing, the findings indicated that it was not true. The findings showed that only participants A and B applied more Emotion-expressing in their informal letter whilst participants C and D recorded more Emotion-expressing in their formal letter instead. However it was observed that participant E did not use Emotion-expressing at all, either in formal or informal letter throughout the composing processes.

Besides the differences mentioned above between the participants cognitive processes, factors which influenced the cognitive processes were similar for both formal and informal letters, which were the five major factors below, as mentioned in Section 4.2.

- (i) Lack of English vocabulary
- (ii) Poor Grammar Mastery
- (iii) Type of Writing Task
- (iv) Other Language (Mandarin/Malay) Interference
- (v) Personal Preference

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a conclusion of the present study by summarising the main findings, which answers the three research questions framed for this research. For easy reference, the three questions are given here, and they are:

- (i) What are the cognitive processes of ESL students related to writing, as they engage in formal and informal letter writing?
- (ii) What are the factors affecting the cognitive processes of ESL students while they are composing?
- (iii) Is there any difference between cognitive processes in formal and informal letter writing while the ESL students think-aloud? If yes, how do they differ?

The chapter also includes a discussion on the contribution of this study for pedagogy and ends with some suggestions for future research.

5.1 Participants' Cognitive Processes in Formal and Informal Letter Writing

Tasks

While engaging in the formal writing task, the results showed a common trend for all participants whereby Idea-generating and Text-generating comprised the highest frequency of occurrence throughout the composing processes. These two writing categories often occurred simultaneously as the participants composed. The frequency of occurrence depends highly on the length of the written product, i.e. the longer the

essay, the higher the frequency of occurrence of Idea-generating and Text-generating. Meanwhile, Task-examining occurred at least once for all participants before they wrote the letters and it was only applied at the initial stage of writing. All participants in this study did not encounter problems in understanding the purpose of the writing tasks assigned to them.

Besides Text-generating and Idea-generating, Process-controlling and Idea-organising often occurred at the same time too, especially when the participants composed the formal letter. It appeared that if the frequency of Process-controlling occurrence was high, the frequency of Idea-organising occurrence would be high too. This seemed to imply that the frequent use of these two writing categories enabled the participants' minds to be more focused in achieving the purpose of writing.

Lastly, Emotion-expressing, a new term coined as a result of what was observed from the data, was the additional writing category revealed in this study. While various studies on TAP have always discussed only four categories, Emotion expressing was found to emerge from participants who expressed their emotions openly in their TAPs. This was a small but new contribution to the field. Based on the data, the results show that the frequency of its occurrence was higher for the preferred writing task because the participants felt more comfortable when expressing themselves as they composed the preferred letter type. Hence, more emotional expression and personal comments related to the subject matter were found during the process of writing.

5.2 Factors Affecting the Cognitive Processes in Formal and Informal Letter

Writing Tasks

After examining and analysing the data obtained from TAPs and interview sessions, the main factors found to have influenced the participants cognitive processes while composing formal and informal letters are lack of English vocabulary, poor grammar mastery, type of writing task, other language (Mandarin/Malay) interference, and personal preference.

Due to the lack of English vocabulary range, the participants often faced problems when choosing a suitable English word to convey their desired meaning in the letters. Sometimes, they translated from other languages such as Mandarin and Malay; sometimes, they constructed another sentence by using other words to express the meaning. Although the participants were aware that they should not think in Mandarin and then translate to English or think of ideas in other languages, they did not seem to be able to function in English only. This was probably because they had no sufficient “English” resource in their minds and therefore have no choice but to resort to the use of L1 or another language that they are more familiar with.

Also, some participants had voiced that they were not motivated to learn and improve their English skills simply because they were not interested to do so. They learned for the sake of passing examination and to fulfill the course requirement. Hence, this may be an area where the teaching and learning of English may need to be addressed, both from the instructors and learners perspectives. Learners need to be self-motivated to learn in order to improve. In this respect, some pedagogical implications may be offered.

5.3 Differences between Cognitive Processes in Formal and Informal Letter

Writing Tasks

Although no stark difference was found between the cognitive processes in formal and informal letter writing tasks, it was noticed that Idea-organising and Process-controlling occurred more frequently in the formal than the informal letter writing. There were two possible reasons for this situation, firstly, the participants were more focused and organised when they wrote the formal letter. Secondly, the formal letter was the first writing task, and thus the participants were not familiar yet with the way of writing and how to go about it. Besides, Emotion-expressing occurred most for the participants' preferred writing task, be it for the formal or informal letter. Apart from those mentioned above, there was no major difference between the two tasks.

5.4 Contribution of Study on Pedagogy

The current study revealed that five major factors had influenced the participants' writing when composing formal and informal letters. The factors had to do with vocabulary, grammar, nature of task, L1 interference, and finally personal preferences. This leads to the root of the matter, which could be traced to the very notion of language acquisition and how people pick up language. In Malaysia, English is officially taught as a second language beginning from the time a child enters the education system at age seven. For those who attend pre-school, English is already taught to them much earlier. Yet after thirteen years of mastering English through primary and secondary school, many Malaysian students still grapple with the basic concepts of grammar and lexis. From this study a few suggestions may be offered for the pedagogy of the teaching and learning of English.

In order to deal with the lack of vocabulary issue, English instructors could introduce more creative ways to motivate ESL learners with new English vocabulary to enhance their ability. The traditional way to improve the learning of English vocabulary is through reading and memorising new words. This method is undeniably able to help some learners acquire new English words but in order to increase its efficiency rate, the instructors may take more innovative and creative approaches and design more interesting teaching methods and materials to enable learners to acquire and use more English words. In fact, creative teaching methods also help to satisfy different individual because every individual's needs vary (Ellis, 2005).

Furthermore, English instructors play a significant role in the lives of learners as they are the role models. Therefore, they may have to avoid teaching English using other languages such as Mandarin and Malay, as this is found to be quite common in Malaysian schools. ESL learners should be encouraged to communicate in English either within or outside the classroom setting so that the language use is done in more natural settings. As proposed in Krashen (1981)'s Affective Filter Hypothesis, the learners' emotional variables such as anxiety, self-confidence, motivation and stress may influence the language acquisition too. Therefore, when students feel comfortable to use English and self-motivated to improve their English competence, it will help in the process of language acquisition.

Another suggestion for improving the pedagogy of teaching and learning of English could be that before assigning writing tasks to ESL learners, the English instructors could provide some brief background information or suggest a peer discussion platform on the subject matter. By doing so, it may assist the learners to draw an outline of the relevant writing tasks and thus, they may be able to write more effectively.

Learning language has always been a challenging endeavor and learners who wish to acquire a certain level of competence in all four skills would have to work hard and stay focused. Of the four language skills, writing is the most difficult. Hence the learners would have to acknowledge that if they wish to be proficient writers, it is not good enough to just master vocabulary and grammatical structures but to read widely and think more critically. In order to achieve this, ESL learners themselves need to be self-motivated and interested to improve their English competence either inside or outside classroom.

In brief, there is a need for more research to be done in the area of writing and to see what ways may be most effective in the teaching and learning of this highly challenging skill. The next section will therefore offer some suggestions for future research in this area.

5.5 Suggestions for future research

The present study obtained data from five participants focusing only on one genre of writing task, which is composing letters. Comparison was made between the writing of a formal and informal letter. The participants belong to one particular ethnic group, in this case the Chinese who are undergraduates pursuing their first degree from a local tertiary institution. The participants were selected based on their level of English proficiency, i.e. they all obtained a Band Three in MUET. This is therefore, a small scale study and its findings cannot be generalised to the general population. Hence, there is potential for more research in this area, which is composing processes in writing and TAPs.

For those interested in looking at writing, TAPs is a method that allows researchers to probe into the minds of writers and try to gain some insights into how their thinking affects their writing. Below are a few possible studies that may be carried out:

1. to use TAPs with high proficiency learners (for example MUET Band 5 – 6 achievers) and make a comparison to the present study if the ethnicity is maintained
2. to compare learners from different ethnic backgrounds as Malaysian students consists of not just the Chinese, but the Malays, Indians, Kadazans, Ibans and Eurasians
3. to describe composing processes and TAPs on different writing genre (such as argumentative, narrative and expository essays)
4. to consider a longitudinal study with TAPs where learners are trained at the beginning of a semester when they begin a certain writing task and compare their TAPs at the end of the semester (pre and post feedback).

The above ideas may reveal some interesting and insightful findings and contribute towards better teaching and learning of writing among ESL instructors and learners.

5.6 Conclusion

The research carried out in this study is a small scale and specific project dealing only with writing among a small group of participants. In spite of this, the findings did reveal some useful insights that could contribute to the area of writing and the composing process. TAPs continue to remain as a significant tool to use in such research.

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APPENDIX A1 (Participant A's Formal Letter)

33 , Jalan 11/20B,
Seksyen 17, 46400 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Management Office of Third Residential College,
University of Malaya,
50603 Kuala Lumpur.

27 September 2013

Sir,

Complaint And Solutions On Hygiene and Security Problems in Hostel

With the above reference, I want to complaint the hygiene and security problems in the hostel that I am staying. They hygiene awareness are so poor especially in the bathrooms. The dustbin provided are not fully used by the residents instead all the rubbish such as shampoo bottles and cottons are thrown everywhere in bathroom. The sinks are also full of hairs and foods which all the oily foods are prohibited clean in the place.

2. Besides that, the security level of hostel also very bad which all the strangers may able to enter to our hostel area easily and unfortunately, some stolen cases had happen in this hostel area, few laptops and some value belongings had missing. We as the residents are so concerning on this issue since the crime rate is rising, we especially the girls are in the danger.

3. Here I would like to give some suggestions in order to help solving these problems. For hygiene issue, some new rules should be executed such as list down some specified don'ts and dos in the bathroom, and make sure there are some authorized student leader keep an eye on that. Moreover, make sure the cleaner accomplish their duty on time.

Next, for the security issue, I kindly suggest no non-residents are allowed to enter the hostel area. The security guards should take their responsibility to make sure the security check up are perfect and done properly.

Thank you.

Your sincerely,

Amanda

(Student of University of Malaya)

APPENDIX A2 (Participant A's Informal Letter)

33 , Jalan 17/13, Seksyen 17,
46400 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor Darul Ehsan.

29 September 2013

Dear Jayne,

How are you getting on? Wish you are always pink in health and blessed.

I have just move into the hostel at University Malaya. I am doing course. I can't fully adapted into the hostel yet for the shared toilets and rooms are so dirty, the hygiene problem always annoying my days in UM. The hygiene awareness of residents are so poor, they just like to throw the rubbish outside of the provided dustbin. Sinks are always full of hairs and oily foods, this made the pipe clogged, the water even will flow back up to the surface. The cleaners do not do their duty on time also even allow the hygiene problem getting worst. I really can do nothing on cleaning up the toilets since it is shared by all residents.

Currently, some security issue also rise up. The crime cases are keep rising which few of the laptops had been stole. To avoid this happen, I will try to bring out all the value belongings together when I am not in the room. I think this might because of the strangers who able to enter to our hostel area. The security guard never done the security check up properly. We, the girls are so concern on this for they might put us under the danger. Sigh.

I had just wrote a complaint letter to our residential management office to voice out these problems and provide them some solutions. I wish that some actions will be taken and improvement can be seen. These are my update for you. Wish to hear from you soon. Bye.

Lilian

APPENDIX A3 (Transcription Conventions)

	Description	Example
1	A series of three consecutive dots denotes a noticeable pause in the writer's verbalisation.	Ok my topic is... ok...
2	Underlined words or word sequences mark the verbalisations made while the writer is writing the text.	<u>... the management address, management office better la... of... the third residential college, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.</u>
3	Words enclosed by quotation marks signal the writing prompt or the previously written text that the writer reads aloud.	<u>Although rubbish bin, “rubbish bins” are provided... sufficiently, within our reach.</u> “sufficiently... are provided sufficiently around the hostel, although rubbish bins are provided sufficiently around the hostel”
4	Comments/corrections the researcher makes to clarify what is happening at a particular point are enclosed by square brackets.	a) <u>all these have disrupt the... have disrupt[ed] the living.</u> “have disrupt[ed]... All these have... disrupt[ed] the... all these have disrupt[ed]”... b) “Should take their responsible” to... make sure, <u>to make sure all the security check up... are perfect and [is] done properly.</u>
5	Translations that the researcher makes of the L1/other language thinking (Chinese/Malay/others) used in the writer's verbalisation are italicized.	a) <u>The conditions in hostel toilets are... are... even unacceptable, as left over of food, sisa-sisa (waste)... as... traces... as food remains are found in the sinks.</u> b) hmm... stepping stone... “these are the” 绊脚石 (<i>stumbling stones</i>)...

APPENDIX A4 (Transcript of Participant A's Formal Letter Writing)

Topic: *You are unsatisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel where you stay in university campus. Please write a complaint letter to the management office to seek for solution and improvement. Limit your letter at 300 words.*

- a) Task-examining: Analysing the writing prompt (examine the purpose of writing, the topic, and the instructions)
- b) Idea-generating: Planning the content and evaluating it
- c) Idea-organising: Planning of content organization and evaluating it
- d) Text-generating: Producing and reviewing the text
- e) Process-controlling: Controlling the writing procedures, words, time limit, etc.
- f) Emotion-expressing: Expressing emotion or personal comment(s) that is not written down as part of end written product during the composing process.

Line	Utterance	Remark (Writing Stages)
1	Ok my topic is... ok... You are unsatisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel where you stay... ok... Please write a letter about your dissatisfactions to the management office to seek for solution and improvement. Limit your letter at 300 words.	Task-examining
5	Okay... So, it should be... hmm... the complaint letter lah, formal complaint letter to the management office. Ok, so first of all, I would like to... the point, state out the points first. So this one is a err... letter to suggest... suggestion for... solutions and improvement instead of complaint lar. I complain first, then I will suggest the solutions.	Task-examining, Idea-generating, Idea-organising
10	Erm... Ok, so formal letter be the err... format... format is... hmm... ok... address, top of left hand side. Then management err... ok, my address... ok, errr... state out the solutions...	Task-examining, idea-generating
15	Ok, first, 300 words, I would like to divide to erm to... three paragraphs, 100 each paragraphs something, ok... So, 100 something each paragraph...	Process-controlling
20	And then ok, my solutions for the... first, the hygiene level... to stricthen la, the rules, maybe can list down some do... do's and don'ts... and make sure someone ahh... assigned la... to... err... to... to... some authorized people, maybe I think student leader should be ohh... should be better to make sure that the rules is, ahh... the rules are followed, by the residents. Ok, and also ahh... make sure the cleaner ahh... do the job la. Do their duty on time.	Idea-generating, Idea-organising

25	Ok, so second for the, the solution for the security is to stricthen la, stricthen the rules also la, to make sure they check, errr... the check up, security check up is good la, properly la, follow the schedule. Make sure they accomplish la, their duty also. Make sure the security guard do their job. Ok.	Idea-generating, Idea-organising
30	Hmm... so now coming to... write the address, so my address... top left hand side. <u>Seksyen 17, PJ, Selangor. Then I draw a line. K, their address. Ok, the management address, management office better la... of... the third residential college, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.</u> Ok. <u>The date, 29th ok... 2013. Ok.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
35	So the title. Err... What title that I want to give? A Complaint, complaint letter la... complaint and suggestion. Complaint and suggestion. Complaint la. Hygiene and security problems ok, in hostel. Complaint and suggestion, and solution. <u>Complaint and solutions on hygiene and security problems in hostel.</u> Ok.	Idea-generating, Text-generating
40	<u>With the above, the above reference, ok, I want to complaint, complaint what? Complaint hygiene and security problems. Err... complaint, ok, problems, in the hostel, that I am staying la. So you know la, it's the Third Residential College.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
45	Ok, so... <u>the hygiene awareness are so, so, so, so poor, ok, especially in the bathrooms, rooms... ok, yes, the dustbin are provided la, dustbin provided are not, not fully used... fully used by... by the students la, by the residents la, instead ne... they throw all the rubbish, instead ne, all the rubbish, with 's'? Rubbishes... rubbish? Ok, such as shampoo bottles and some cont... cottons... Ok, are thrown. Instead ne, "all the rubbish such as shampoo bottles and cottons are thrown" everywhere, everywhere in the bathroom.</u> Ok.	Idea-generating, Text-generating
50	Let's talk about the sinks also. <u>The sinks are so, so... dirty also, also, are also full... Full of the hairs. Hairy hairs, full of hairy hairs... and food which... which they all wash, wash their plates, ok which the food, which all the oily food are prohibited clean in the place.</u> So, ok. This is the problem.	Idea-generating, Text-generating
55 60	Next, besides, besides that, besides that, err... in addition, besides that... ok. <u>The security level, of the hostel also very low. Security level are low, security level bad or low? The security level of hostel also very bad... which, very bad la... which, all the strangers may... ok, are able to enter to our hostel area, easily and unfortunately some stolen cases happen, had happen, had happen in this hotel, hostel area.</u> Ok.	Idea-organising, Idea-generating, Text-generating
	What happen? <u>Few laptops, laptop with '-s', and some value stuffs, some of assets... and some value assets... some value belongings. "Some value stuffs, some value belongings, some value belonging", '-ings', had missing, had... with '-ing' la, "had missing", had lost. "Few</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating

65	laptops and some value belongings had lost, had missing..." <u>miss or missing? Had missing.</u>	
70	<u>We as the residents, are so concerning, so... are concerning, are so... concerns, concerns, concern... no '-s'... residents are so concern, concerning... 'are'... of the are '-ing'... on this issue since the crime rate, rate... is rising. Keep rise, keep rising, is rising. Ok... We especially the girls are in the danger... danger or dangers? Danger.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
75	Ok. Here I would like to give some suggestions. Ok. In order... ok, why I give suggestion? In order to help solving these problems. <u>For the hygiene issue, ok, list down some specific rules, some new specific rules... err...should be executed... ok wait... with some new rules should be executed.</u>	Process-controlling Idea-organising, Text-generating
80	<u>Ok, such as list down some specified don'ts and do's... do not... cannot use apostrophe. Errm... "some specified..." do not... haih... "some specified..." don't la, don'ts and do's... in the bathroom... and make sure there are some authorized, "there are some authorized" student leader, ok, keep an eye on that, to make sure they execute la. "Keep an eye on that."</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
85	<u>Moreover, "moreover"... make sure... in addition... "make sure" the cleaner, accomplish their duty. "Their duty" or duties? "Accomplish... accomplish their duties, their duties" on time... duty... duty... ok.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
	Next, for the security issue, ok, <u>I kindly suggest, ok, suggest what? No, no non-residents are allowed to... to enter to the hostel area.</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating
90 95	<u>The security guard, ok, "security guards", with '-s'... should... "security guards should" take their responsibility... responsible or responsibility? "Should take their responsible" to... make sure, to make sure all the security check up... are perfect and done properly. Ok. "should take their responsibility, to make sure"... responsibility la... "to make sure, the security check up are perfect", perfect huh? "Are perfect and done properly." Ok, thank you. Yours sincerely, ok, Amanda. Student, student of UM. Ok.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating

APPENDIX A5 (Transcript of Participant A's Informal Letter Writing)

Topic: *You are unsatisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel where you stay in university campus. Please write a letter about your dissatisfactions to your cousin staying overseas. Limit your letter at 300 words.*

- a) Task-examining: Analysing the writing prompt (examine the purpose of writing, the topic, and the instructions)
- b) Idea-generating: Planning the content and evaluating it
- c) Idea-organising: Planning of content organization and evaluating it
- d) Text-generating: Producing and reviewing the text
- e) Process-controlling: Controlling the writing procedures, words, time limit, etc.
- f) Emotion-expressing: Expressing emotion or personal comment(s) that is not written down as part of end written product during the composing process.

Line	Utterance	Remark (Writing Stages)
1 5	Ok. My second topic. You are unsatisfied towards... same thing la... towards the hygiene level and security conditions ok... Write a letter about your dissatisfactions to your cousin. Ok, cousin. Cousin staying overseas. Ok, limit 300 words. Ok. Hmm, it's a letter la. Informal letter.	Task-examining, Process-controlling
	My address... <u>Seksyen 17, PJ, Selangor</u> . Ok. So after that, should be... write the date... <u>29th September, September 2013</u> . Ok.	Text-generating, Idea-organising
10	Ok. <u>Dear...</u> this is informal letter, so should be "Dear"... Ok, my cousin, simply put a name la. My cousin, ok... "Dear" <u>Jayne</u> ... ok, "dear Jayne"... ok, should... should... greeting first.	Task-examining, Text-generating, Idea-organising
	"Dear Jayne", <u>how are you? How are you getting on?</u> Erm... <u>Wish you are always blessed and...</u> "Wish you are always blessed", wish, wish... you stay, <u>wish you are always stay in health and blessed, stay pink in health, "pink in health"...</u> and "blessed".	Text-generating, Idea-generating
15	Ok...So should be... to the next paragraph I think. Ok, "blessed"... ok...	Process-controlling, Text-generating

20	Here... err... I have err... just err... ok... I have... <u>I have just move in, move into the hostel... in err... hostel of University... University Malaya... I am now doing my course... I am doing the course... ok...</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	So after that... hmm... ok... so after that... <u>the hostel are so bad... I feel... arr... I can't, I can't really, fully... I can't fully adapted... "fully adapted" into the... hostel yet... for the toilet... the shared... "the shared" toilets and rooms are so dirty...</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating
25	<u>The hygiene problems always annoyed, annoying me... "always"... "always... annoyed". "The hygiene problem, the hygiene problem... always annoyed"... and disturb my life of the days. "Annoyed... always annoying my days" in UM.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
30	<u>The hygiene awareness... "hygiene awareness" of residents are so bad, so poor. They just like to throw the rubbish outside of the dustbin... "of the" provided "dustbin"... so bad... ok.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
35	<u>Sinks are always full of hairs and oily food. Hmm... "are always full of hairs" and oily food... this make... "this make" it... err... ok... tersumbat (clogged)... "make it"... err... Call what ah? "This make it"... err... stuck, dogged... this make it dogged, stuck... "This make" the pipe dogged, the water even will flow back up to the... surface. Ha... so bad.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
40	I am so suffering and... Ok... err... err... I just can't understand why. How can they do that? Ok, the water even will flow back up to the surface.	Emotion-expressing
45	<u>The cleaner... doesn't... do not, do not... "cleaners" do not... "the cleaners do not" do their duty on time also err... even err... "even... even..." create... create trouble... "even"... err... err... "even" allowed also, allow... "even allowed... allowed... allowed" the, the problems getting worse. The hygiene problem "getting worse", hygiene problem. Ok.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>I really can do nothing. "I really can do nothing..." on cleaning up the toilets since almost... since it is shared by all residents.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating

50	<u>Currently... some security, security issue also rise up, 'rised', 'some' is 'rise'... the crime... rate... crime cases... are keep rising, are keep rising. Ok... err... which few of the laptops had been stole.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
55	<u>To avoid... "to avoid..." this happen, I will try to bring out all the value, value stuff, "all the value..." all my belongings, all my value belongings together when I am not in the room.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>I think this might, this happen, "this might" because of the strangers who able to enter to our hostel area.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
60	<u>The security guard... never err... done the check up, secure... security check up... properly. "Check up properly." "The security guard [have] never done their security check up properly."</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>We... I... We, the girls... are so concern on this for they might put us under the danger. Haih... sigh.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
65 70	<u>I had... ohh... too many... 300 words... I had, I had... I had just wrote [written] letter... a complaint, a complaint, not complaint only la... a complaint... with '-s' or not? Err... a complaint... "I just wrote, just wrote" a complaint letter to our err... Residential depart... to our residential management office... to state, to voice out, to voice out this problem, these... problems, problems... and provide them some err... solutions. Ok. "Provide them some solutions, ok some solutions."</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>I wish that it can be err... I wish that some actions will be taken and improvement can be seen, be seen... ok.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>These are... These are my err... update for you. Wish to hear from you, to hear from you soon. Bye. Ok. Lilian. Lilian. Ok. Done.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating

APPENDIX B1 (Participant B's Formal Letter)

No. 29, Jalan 11/21C,
Seksyen 17, 46400 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor Darul Ehsan.

The Management Office
Third Residential College,
University of Malaya,
50603 Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia.

28 SEPTEMBER 2013

Dear Sir,

LOW HYGIENE LEVEL AND POOR SECURITY CONDITIONS OF HOSTEL

The hygiene level of the hostel is unsatisfying, especially the hygiene of hostel toilet. Although rubbish bins are provided sufficiently around the hostel, trash still can be found on the floor and walkways. This is most probably due to the poor hygiene awareness of hostel residents. The condition in hostel toilets are even unacceptable, as food remains are found in the sinks. Consequently, the pipe is clogged and eventually unpleasant smell arises from toilet and affected the living of residents. Furthermore, clothes are hanged in the toilet for drying. All these have lead students to live in an uncomfortable environment. Thus, it caused students unable to focus on the study. This also might be one of the unforeseen factors which causes lower academic performance of students.

2. Besides that, poor security level of the hostel has to be improved. There are several cases of stolen computers. This is a big lost for a student who is mainly living on study loan. Therefore, this problem imposes adverse effects on students financially and emotionally. As for female residents, they are facing greater treat. It is because unidentified individuals often seen to be linger in campus area. As the crime rate is

rising, the concern of female residents is highly acceptable. This appears to be a great treat and problem to all hostel residents.

3. There are some suggestions from students to solve the problems mentioned. One of them is by holding hygiene awareness campaign among the hostel residents. Moreover, new rules should be implemented to maintain good or even excellent hygiene level in the hostel. This surely will solve the issue of unpleasant smell from toilet and clogging of pipe. These are some of the measures can be taken by Management Office. Hope management will provide solutions to solve the problems faced by students.

Thank you for reviewing!

Your sincerely,

Bruce

BRUCE PANG

(Student of University of Malaya)

APPENDIX B2 (Participant B's Informal Letter)

Third Residential College
University of Malaya
50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

29 SEPTEMBER 2013

Dear Samantha,

How are you? It has been a while since I wrote letter to you. Hope aunty and uncle are fine too.

Currently, I just entered into the first year of my degree life in University of Malaya. It has been an exciting and challenging journey so far. Besides, as a new member of the university, I have the privilege to stay in the hostel provided by university. However, there are some issues concerning the hostel hygiene level and security conditions.

Apparently, some of the hostel residents show low level of hygiene. Although rubbish bins are provided adequately in the campus area, rubbish still can be found everywhere. Personally, I think we are lacking of awareness towards hygiene. Furthermore, the pipe is clogged and unpleasant or rotting smell arises from there and linger around the hostel. This has been a disturbing issue for me whenever I am in the hostel. Nonetheless, clothes are hanged in the toilet for drying. This could be the symptoms for insufficient facilities provided for residents in the hostel.

Meanwhile, I am also worry about the low security level of the university. It is often that unidentified individuals appear in campus. At the same time, crime rate is shooting high, therefore this increases the sense of insecurity in me and among the students. There are even cases of laptop being stolen in the hostel. I could not imagine that happens on me. These are the concerns for me to stay in hostel. That is all from me now. Hope to receive your reply soon. Take care Samantha!

Peter

APPENDIX B3 (Transcript of Participant B's Formal Letter Writing)

Topic: *You are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel you are staying now at the university campus. Please write a complaint letter to the management office to seek for a solution or some improvement. Limit your letter to 300 words.*

- a) Task-examining: Analysing the writing prompt (examine the purpose of writing, the topic, and the instructions)
- b) Idea-generating: Planning the content and evaluating it
- c) Idea-organising: Planning of content organization and evaluating it
- d) Text-generating: Producing and reviewing the text
- e) Process-controlling: Controlling the writing procedures, words, time limit, etc.
- f) Emotion-expressing: Expressing emotion or personal comment(s) that is not written down as part of end written product during the composing process.

Line	Utterance	Remark (Writing Stages)
1 5	You are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel you are staying now at the university campus. Please write a complaint letter to the management office to seek for a solution or some improvement. Limit your letter to 300 words.	Task-examining
10	Alright. Hmm. My address... <u>Jalan 11/21C, Seksyen 17, 46400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.</u> For writing to... management office... where it will be... <u>Third Residential College, University of Malaya, 50603 KL... Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.</u> Then it will be the date. Capital letter. Let's assume it to be today, <u>28 September 2013.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	Dear Management... or... <u>Dear Sir.</u> My title for the letter. <u>Low hygiene, low hygiene level and poor security conditions of hostel.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
15	Alright. Start with the first one. It will be hygiene level.	Process-controlling
20	<u>The hygiene level of the hostel is unsatisfying... especially the hygiene of hostel toilet. Although rubbish bin, "rubbish bins" are provided... sufficiently, within our reach, "sufficiently... are provided sufficiently around the hostel, although rubbish bins are provided sufficiently around the hostel", trash, trash are... are still, still are, still observe, are still... are still can be found on the floor, "still can be found on the floor"... and... and walkways. This is most probably due to the poor hygiene awareness of... hostel residents.</u>	Idea-organising, Idea-generating, Text-generating

25	hmm... it's unacceptable, it's unacceptable. <u>The conditions in hostel toilets are... are... even unacceptable, as left over of food, sisa-sisa (waste)... as... traces... as food remains are found in the sinks.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
30 35	<u>Consequently, the toilet, "toilet... the toilet..." "consequently, the toilet", the piping... pipe, the toilet, toilet, the sink, the pipe, the pipe is clogged and eventually and eventually, bad odour, eventually bad odour, of... of... eventually bad odour arises from toilet and... "arises from the toilet and..." "bad odour arises from toilet and..." the hostel is, the hostel... and eventually, "unpleasant smell arises from toilet and..." affected the living of residents.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>Furthermore, "furthermore"... clothes are hanging... are hanging... "clothes are" hanged, in the toilet for drying.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
40	<u>This... All, all these have disrupt the... all these have disrupt the... have disrupt[ed] the living, "have disrupt[ed]... All these have... disrupt[ed] the... all these have disrupt[ed]", all these cause.... All these have caused... "caused" the students to live in an uncomfortable environment.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
45	<u>Thus, it affects, "thus... All these have..." lead the students to live in an uncomfortable environment. Thus it, it caused students unable to focus on, focus in, focus on their study.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
50 55	<u>Even worse... This might also, "this might also" be one of the unforeseen factors that, which, which, "this might also, this might also..." this might be, this might be also, this might be also, this also might be, this also might be, "one of the unforeseen factors which", which... which... which... result, results in... "this is also might be of... this also might be one of the unforeseen factors which..." results, result, which, result, which, cause, which was... the students, which causes, causes students to lower academic performance. Which causes... lower academic performance of students.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
60	<u>Besides that, poor sec... ooh, another paragraph. Besides that, poor security level of the hostel... has to be improved. There are several cases of... stolen... "there are several cases of stolen" computers.</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>This, this is, this is the... this is the... this is the... this is a big lost, "big lost" for a student who, "this is a big lost for students who... this is a big lost for student who... who" is mainly living on study loan.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating

65	<u>Ehem... Therefore, “therefore”, this problem led... this problem impose, imposes adverse effects on students on students, financially and emotionally.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>As for female residents, as for female residents, they are facing greater threat, greater threat.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
70	<u>It is because, “it’s because... it is because...” unidentified, “unidentified, unidentified, unidentified” personae... non... of the member of the school, unidentified individuals often seen to be linger in campus area.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
75 80	<u>As the crime rate, crime rate is rising, in... worry... “as the crime rate is rising”, the... the... concern, concern of, of female resident, “of female residents”... is highly, highly, accepted, “highly accepted”. “Concern of female residents is highly accepted, is highly” acceptable, acceptable. “As the crime rate involving females... as crime rate... involving female is rising.... As the crime rate, crime rate of... is rising... as the crime rate involving female is rising, as the crime rate is rising, the concern of female residents is highly acceptable.”</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>This is a, this appear, this appears, this is a... This appears to be a great threat and problem to all hostel residents.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
85	<u>There are some suggestions from... students to solve the problems, “solve the problems” mentioned. “To solve the problems mentioned”.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
90	<u>One, one of them... first... first, “one of them” is by, is by holding hygiene awareness campaign, campaign among, among, among the hostel residents.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>Moreover, furthermore, moreover, furthermore, in addition... Moreover, rules should be... new rules, “new rules should be” implemented to maintain good or even excellent hygiene level in the hostel.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
95 100	<u>This will surely help, this surely will, this surely will... This will surely... will improve, surely will improve, “surely will improve”... will... solve, solve the, “will solve the”... pipe clogging... “will solve the” issue of unpleasant smell from toilet and clogging, “solve issue of unpleasant smell from toilet and clogging” of pipe.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating

	<u>These are some of the measures can be taken by management... “by management” office.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
105 110	<u>Hope to hear from... “hope to hear” positive, “hope to hear... hope to hear”... from management, “hope to hear from management” soon. Hope management, “hope management” will provide a... “provide” solutions... to “provide solutions” to the students, “to provide solutions to the students”. “Provide solutions to the students”... “provide solutions” to solve the problems faced by students. Hope management will provide solutions to solve the problems faced by students.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>Thank you for reviewing. Yours sincerely, me, as a student of University Malaya. Thank you.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating

APPENDIX B4 (Transcript of Participant B's Informal Letter Writing)

Topic: You are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel where you are staying at the university campus. Please write a letter about this to your cousin staying overseas to complain your dissatisfaction. Limit your letter to 300 words.

Line	Utterance	Remark (Writing Stages)
1 5	You are not satisfied towards... you are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel where you are staying at the university campus. Please write a letter about this to your cousin staying overseas to complain your dissatisfaction. Limit your letter at 300 words.	Task-examining
	Ok, informal letter. Alright. Okay. Format is different. Address... <u>50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia</u> . Then my date. Today is 29, <u>29 of September 2013</u> . My cousin. <u>Dear Samantha, Samantha</u> .	Task-examining, Idea-generating, Text-generating
10	<u>How are you? It has been a while, "a while"... since I wrote letter to you. Currently... Hope... aunty and uncle are fine too.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	Now, <u>currently, currently... currently... currently... I [have] just entered into the first year of my degree life, "first year of my degree life" in University of Malaya.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
15	It has been an exciting. <u>It has been an exciting and challenging journey, "and challenging journey" so far.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>Besides, as a new member of the university, I am provided... I am provided... I am... I... have the privilege to stay in, "to stay in"... the hostel provided by university.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
20 25	<u>However, there oops... there are... some troubles, "there are some, there are some... there are some... there are some... there are some"... inadequacies... "There are some... there are some"... issues. There are some issues, "there are some issues" concern... "there are some issues, there are some issues" for the my concern... "There are some issues" concerning the hostel hygiene level and... and security conditions.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating

30	<u>Although... hygiene level... what is... what's the problem, what's the problem... hmm... It is appear to be... Apparently, "apparently", some of the hostel residents show low, low level of hygiene.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>Although, although rubbish bins are provided adequately, "adequately" in the campus area, rubbish still can be found everywhere.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
35	<u>Furthermore, "furthermore"... hmm... Personally, personally, I think we are lacking of awareness, "we are lacking of awareness" towards hygiene.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
40	<u>Furthermore, the sinks of the toilet in hostel... "in the hos... in the hostel" become... become... "Furthermore, the sinks of the toilet become... become..." the channel... for the food remains... becomes... found themselves.... Furthermore the sinks of the toilet in hostel becomes.... The sink of the toilet in hostel becomes... the sink of the toilet is, is... where food remains are discarded, "discarded".</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
45	<u>Eventually, the... the... pipe is clogged and unpleasant or rotting smell... arises from there and linger around the hostel.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
50	<u>This has been, "this has been"... a disturbing, a disturbing, "this has been a disturbing, disturbing, disturbing, this has been a disturbing... this has been a disturbing, disturbing" issue, "disturbing issue, this has been a disturbing... issue" for me whenever I am in the hostel.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>Nonetheless, nonetheless... clothes are hanged in the toilet for drying.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
55	<u>This could be due to... this could be... this could be the symptom, symptom, this could be the symptom, symptoms for insufficient, "insufficient" facilities provided... for residents in the hostel.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>Meanwhile, security conditions. Meanwhile... I am also worry about the low security level of the university.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
60	<u>It is often that unidentified individuals... "unidentified"... "it is often that unidentified individuals" appear in campus.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating

	<u>At the same time, “at the same time”, crime rate is shooting high, therefore this increases the sense of insecurity in me and among the students.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
65	<u>There are even, “there are even”... cases of laptop being stolen in the hostel.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>I could not imagine, “imagine” that happen, happens on me.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	These are, I don’t know... hmm... aiya... [long pause]	Idea-generating, Emotion-expressing
70	Hmm... <u>These are the challenges</u> , “these are the... these are the... hmm... these are the... hmm... these are the”... hmm... stepping stone... “these are the” 绊脚石 (<i>stumbling stones</i>)... “these are the... these are the”... concern, concerns... in my life... in... “these are the” <u>concerns for me to stay in hostel.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	That is all, that’s all, <u>that is all from me now.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
75	<u>Hope to receive your reply, “hope to receive your reply” soon. Take care, “take care” Amanda, ohh, Samantha. “Take care” Samantha.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating

APPENDIX C1 (Participant C's Formal Letter)

John Tan
No. 45, Jalan 11/44,
46200 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia.

Management Office of Third Residential College
University of Malaya
50603 Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia.

10 OCTOBER 2013

Sir/Madam,

Seeking for solution and improvement towards the Hygiene Level and Security
Conditions of Third Residential College

With reference to the above, I, John Tan a resident of Third Residential College would like to complaint about the hygiene level and security condition at place that I'm staying now.

2. The terrible matter of the hygiene level which all the male student which using the toilet and did not clean up. Taking an example, student did not flush away their poops which making other student so uncomfortable. Besides that, student simply throw their underwear in the toilet. Moreover student did not concern about other in this hygiene condition. I am hoping the the management are able to take action toward this matter.

3. The security condition is so dangerous. I found out lots of students who bring their family or couples staying inside their hoster. Other that that, stealing matters had been increase through. I am very disappoint toward the management security system.

4. I am hoping that the management will consider to take action to fight for the students right. Hope to hear from you soon. Thank you.

Your sincerely,

John Tan

(JOHN TAN)

APPENDIX C2 (Participant C's Informal Letter)

Jeff Lim
No. 11, Jalan Agung,
46200 Petaling Jaya,
Malaysia.

10 OCTOBER 2013

Dear Veronica Eunice,

Hello Eunice. How are you? I am trying to share with you the condition of hygiene level and the security system that did not manage well by the management of Third residential college of my university.

Our hostel is so poor towards the hygiene level in here. Student did not obey instruction of staying inside the hostel. Student like to cook inside their and wash all the disher which did not clean at all and left some leftover foods inside the toilet. Student is so unconsiderate towards other peoples view.

Other than that, student also bring their mates or family into their room and overnigh. Thus this had show that the security system is so damn poor.

Actually I had wrote a complaint leter to the management office and hoping them can solve the matters. Anyway, just trying to share with now terrible situation I'm facing now.

Hoping have fun in your college life too.

Best regard,
Jeff

APPENDIX C3 (Transcript of Participant C's Formal Letter Writing)

Topic: You are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel you are staying now at the university campus. Please write a complaint letter to the management office to seek for a solution or some improvement. Limit your letter to 300 words.

- a) Task-examining: Analysing the writing prompt (examine the purpose of writing, the topic, and the instructions)
- b) Idea-generating: Planning the content and evaluating it
- c) Idea-organising: Planning of content organization and evaluating it
- d) Text-generating: Producing and reviewing the text
- e) Process-controlling: Controlling the writing procedures, words, time limit, etc.
- f) Emotion-expressing: Expressing emotion or personal comment(s) that is not written down as part of end written product during the composing process.

Line	Utterance	Remark (Writing Stages)
1 5	Alright, now I'm going to start with a formal letter which is err... the topic followed by... You are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel you are staying now at the university campus. Please write a complaint letter to the management office to... to seek for solution or some improvement. Limit your letter at 300 words.	Task-examining
10	Ok. Now, the formal letter will start from writing the name at the left hand side of the letter which... my name is John Tan. <u>John Tan</u> . And followed by the address. So my address will be... <u>No. 45, Jalan 11/44, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating
15	Alright. And continue with... ahh... I need to... for the letter, and I'll be erm... make a spacing and draw a line below the let... below the address. So... after the line, I'll be err making another space and... write down to the management office. So... the <u>management office of third residential college of University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Idea-organising, Text-generating
	Afterwards, err... I'll be writing down the date. And the date will be writing at the same line with the Malaysia. Which means the... the management, the management address... Date will be <u>10th of</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-

20	<u>October</u> , and the October have to be all in capital cap... capital letter... <u>2013</u> .	generating, Text- generating
25	Alright, and followed by a spacing and continue with... <u>Sir... or madam...</u> coma... and the... will be followed by the spacing and continue with the title, which is hmm... let me think... I think will be... seeking a... <u>seeking for solution and improvement...</u> “seeking”... seek, seek “for the solution and improvement” <u>towards the hygiene level and the security...</u>	Process- controlling, Idea- generating, Emotion- expressing, Text- generating
30 35	Alright, so... [long pause] erm... Let me think. What kind of title should I include? Hmm... so all letters need to be... first letter will be in caps and followed by the small capital letter. So, the title which I will put will be: “Seeking the solution and improvement towards the hygiene level and the security” <u>conditions of the hostel. Seeking for solutions and improvement of... towards the hygiene level and the security conditions of third residential college.</u> So afterwards, I need to underline all the title.	Idea- generating, Emotion- expressing, Text- generating, Process- controlling
40	So the next point will be continue with err... we have to just continue at the next line. There’s no spacing needed, so will be just continue <u>with reference to the above, I, John Wan An Tan, a resident of Third Residential College would like to complain about the hygiene level and the security condition at the place that I am staying now.</u>	Process- controlling, Idea- generating, Text- generating
	Afterwards, I’ll be continue with the second point, which is... the first will be the introduction, and continue with the body and... I’ll be... making a spacing, and draw a line...	Process- controlling, Idea- organising, Idea- generating
45 50	Draw a line and... write number two, and first I will be... erm, making two spacing and continue with the first point, which is the <u>hygiene level that...</u> err... no, I shouldn’t, I shouldn’t write this. Or I try to change another... style which hygiene level of... the terrible matter of the... <u>the terrible... matter of the hygiene level which all the male hostel, male students which using the toilet and did not clean up.</u>	Process- controlling, Idea- generating, Idea- organising, Text- generating

55	<u>Taking an example, students did not flush away their poops which making other students so uncomfot... uncomfortable, uncomfortable... Besides that, student, student... simply... throw their underwear in the toilet. Moreover, student did not concern about others in this hygiene condition.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
60	Alright... Ok now I continue with the third point which I need to write... err... spacing after that will be continue... Ohh, I should end up all these matters. Alright erm, so I need to continue with the same paragraph which after the “hygiene condition”, <u>I am hoping that the management are able to take action towards this matter.</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Idea-organising, Text-generating
65	Alright, after that I’ll be continue to the second point, which with spacing and I need to write at third paragraph which... and will be making a spacing at the front and continue with the next point which is <u>the security condition is so... dangerous.</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Idea-organising, Text-generating
70	Am I right? As in Malaysia, erm... I don’t know how to say. Ok, as what we can concern about that, that Malaysia will... is like a very erm, how to say. The crime condition is very err danger... and it becomes a serious matter, so erm... I am hoping that this management, hoping that the security condition will upgrade like erm, you see the...	Emotion-expressing
	<u>I found out lots of students who bring their family or couple staying inside the hostel which this is... it disobey[s] the law, and [it is] against the rules.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
75 80	And I found out that the security doesn’t care about like... who entering the college, and it’s like anyone can enter the college and no one, no one is like... erm, even the thief also can... err... enter the college and simply err... steal the money... err... the laptop or some valuable things that the students who place it inside their hostel. So I hope that the conditions of the security should be upgrade and... Alright. Erm, ok, I’m just hoping that hmm... ok the first thing...	Emotion-expressing, Idea-generating, Idea-organising
85	<u>“inside their hostel”... and other than that, stealing stuff... stealing matters had been increase through the years. I am very disappoint towards the management security system.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating

	<p>Alright now, I am writing the conclusion. So I need to leave it a blank and write number four and space. So... writing... <u>I am hoping that the management will consider to take action to fight for the students right.</u></p>	<p>Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating</p>
90	<p>Alright then I'll be saying erm... followed by... <u>Hope to hear from you soon. Thank you.</u> And ok, so, followed by err... I will make three spacing and writing <u>yours sincerely, coma,</u> and draw a line and the signature and the below line will be my name, <u>John Tan.</u> And that's all for the formal letter. Thank you.</p>	<p>Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating</p>

APPENDIX C4 (Transcript of Participant C's Informal Letter Writing)

Topic: *You are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel where you are staying at the university campus. Please write a letter about this to your cousin staying overseas to complain your dissatisfaction. Limit your letter to 300 words.*

- a) Task-examining: Analysing the writing prompt (examine the purpose of writing, the topic, and the instructions)
- b) Idea-generating: Planning the content and evaluating it
- c) Idea-organising: Planning of content organization and evaluating it
- d) Text-generating: Producing and reviewing the text
- e) Process-controlling: Controlling the writing procedures, words, time limit, etc.
- f) Emotion-expressing: Expressing emotion or personal comment(s) that is not written down as part of end written product during the composing process.

Line	Utterance	Remark (Writing Stages)
1 5	So now I'll be continue with the second topic, which is the informal letter, that the title will be: You are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel where you are staying at... at the university campus. Please write a letter about this to... your cousin staying overseas to complain your dissatisfaction. Limit your letter to 300 words.	Task-examining
	Ok, so... the format will be ok... writing my name <u>Jeff Lim</u> at the right hand side of the letter and followed by the the address which is <u>No. 11, Jalan Agung, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.</u>	Task-examining, Text-generating
10	And I'll be making a space and continue with the same at the right hand side. Below of the address will be writing the... today's date. So today's date will be <u>10th of October 2013.</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating
15 20	And next, I'll be making a spacing and... start with my letter and the left hand side. First, I'll be writing... <u>Dear Veronica Eunice.</u> And I'll be giving a greet which err... <u>Hi, it's been a long time...</u> it's been a long time that we... it's been a long time that... err... I guess I should write another. Erm... which... erm... maybe... Hi Veronica, Hello Eunice, ok, <u>Hello Eunice. How are you? I am writing, I am trying to complain, I'm trying to share with you... the condition of hygiene level and the security system that did not manage well by the management of Residential, of the Third Residential College of my university.</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating

25	And I continue with the second paragraph which talking more details about the hygiene level and the security system. So, the hygiene level. <u>Our hostel is so poor towards... the hygiene level in... here. Students did not obey the rules, obey the instructions... of staying... inside the... hostel.</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Idea-organising, Text-generating
	<u>Students like to cook... inside their room and wash away all the dishes which did not clean at all... and... left some leftover foods inside the toilet. Student is so... unconsiderate [inconsiderate] towards others peoples view.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
30	<u>Other than that... students also... bring their mates, mates or family into their room and overnight. And thus, this had shown, this had shown that... the... security system is so... damn poor!</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
35	What if a thief or any other strangers that entering into the college without asking and without registering their data, their information? They just simply enter, and just simply take all others valuable stuffs? So, what you can see is very terrible.	Emotion-expressing
	So I am hoping that err... I had actually, <u>actually... I had wrote [written] a complaint letter to the management office and hoping them can solve... these matters.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
40	<u>Anyway... “anyway” erm... just trying to share with you how terrible [is] the situation I’m facing now. And... just hoping you... I should write in next paragraph.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating, Process-controlling, Idea-organising
	<u>Hoping you have fun in your college stuff, college life too.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
45	Now, making a three spacing [three-line-spacing], and followed by your <u>Best regard</u> , underline and signature, and my full name. <u>JEFF</u> , all in capital letter. And that’s all. Thank you.	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating

APPENDIX D1 (Participant D's Formal Letter)

Sujanna Joo
9, Jalan Putra,
1/13 Bandar Putra,
85000 Segamat,
Johor, Malaysia.

Management Office of Third Residential College,
University of Malaya,
50603 Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia.

10 OCTOBER 2013

Sir/Madam,

Complaint About Hygiene Level And Security Conditions

With reference to the above, I, Suhanna Joo, write this letter on behalf of my housemates, would like to raise few issues we are currently facing with stark details.

2. First of all, we got some portion of residents had made our staying here unpleasable in the sense they always cook inside their room. Although this has broken the rules of residential college, but since there are not enough of spot check carry out regularly, so indirectly make them bolder to do it always. This has actually lead to so much troble for the rest of us as they always leave the residue of the dishes at the sink of toilet. That is the place suppose to wash hands only but they had made it a place to wash their place etc. So, this has make the sink flooded with all these disgusting residue and the water cannot go down. I think the drainage system has been affected as it has been quite a long time they did it and a lot of foods stucked there. Further than that, this has caused unpleasant smell spreads over the whole corridor when they are having friend fish as their dishes.

3. Secondly, I would like to bring attention regarding the security conditions recently since I was moved in. I had observed the manner of the guards at our college especially when facing the visitors. It was quite dangerous to think of the consequences that might

happen for their ignorant attitudes. My friends and I had witnessed that there can be whole family went through the gate at the presence of the guard standing for duty but did not take any action. Some even can bring their boyfriends enter our college without impediments. There has been also a case where property being stolen and we had no way to rectify it as all of us can be that particular suspect. So I personally do not think they have carry out their job properly. This is an urgent issue and need to be remedied as soon as possible so our security are assured. Therefore, we can study well without worrying about our safety and any other unnecessary interruptions. Because sometimes when they held a family gathering over our college, that ambience is not only making us homesick but also causes us could not study well as it is very noisy, to be frankly.

4. The next issue that I am obliged to bring out is the one regarding not having the proper place to hang our clothes. As it is very obvious we got unwelcome guest, often come over to the place where we hang our clothes and take them away, do not have to doubt, it is monkeys. Out of choice, some of our buddies choose to get our clothes dry by hanging them in the toilet. This is a creative way but it is also kind of interruptions though, for fellow toilet users. Because some of them will hanged it for so long until it became smelly and I do not think it is a solution we can adopt for long term. We look forward your reply.

Thank you.

Your sincerely,

Sujanna Joo

(SUJANNA JOO)

APPENDIX D2 (Participant D's Informal Letter)

Susan Ooi,
90, Jalan Permaisuri, Bandar Permaisuri,
46200 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor, Malaysia.

10 OCTOBER 2013

Dear Lily,

Hello Lily. I hope u are now doing well at Australia since your semester have just started. Hope you enjoy reading my letter and send my best warmest regard to you.

It is pretty fun for my life I have experienced in University of Malaya as I got the course I wanted to badly and now, I managed to get a bunch of lovely friends and this has enriching my life too when hanging out with them. However, there has been something unpleasable things happened and I would like to share this with you and hopefully, can get your piece your advice on how to deal with it.

I can get along with my roommates well but I really cannot bear the hygiene level at my residential college. I cannot enjoy my time staying there when the toilet is not really usable. The janitors did not clean out the toilet frequently and residues of food often makes the basin stucked and flooded as water could not go down. Sometimes they even hang the clothes there and make the toilet occupied. Thus, we cannot freely move but need to walk properly as the floor will became slippery after water dropping down from the clothes which were just washed.

Next issues I would like to share with you is the one concerning security conditions. As it is not pretty safe anymore when the guard did not inspect every visitor that get into our college. What I saw is they often chit-chatting with each other, I mean not only one guard on the duty, so I do not think they really care. Sometimes they even play the cards together as they were in their homes. I do not think it is good as there are

a lot of visitor come back and forth easily without their identity being confirmed. That would definitely made our life uneasy as they were quite noisy and sometimes even spend their night at my college. I could not sleep properly and had no mood to attend the class next day, meaning I could not concentrate!

But do not worry, I am bold enough to stand out for my other housemates and have already written a complaint letter to the concerned officer. Hopefully I can get the reply from them and the problems can be solved as soon as possible. So far, I think that is enough for today. I need to get prepared for my mock exam tomorrow and anticipate your next letter! Hopefully I can hear more from you about your new life over there.

Your sincerely,

Susan

APPENDIX D3 (Transcript of Participant D's Formal Letter Writing)

Topic: You are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel you are staying now at the university campus. Please write a complaint letter to the management office to seek for a solution or some improvement. Limit your letter to 300 words.

- a) Task-examining: Analysing the writing prompt (examine the purpose of writing, the topic, and the instructions)
- b) Idea-generating: Planning the content and evaluating it
- c) Idea-organising: Planning of content organization and evaluating it
- d) Text-generating: Producing and reviewing the text
- e) Process-controlling: Controlling the writing procedures, words, time limit, etc.
- f) Emotion-expressing: Expressing emotion or personal comment(s) that is not written down as part of end written product during the composing process.

Line	Utterance	Remark (Writing Stages)
1 5	Hi, now I want to write one formal essay. It's a formal letter actually. Now I want to read the topic to get a concept, what should I write later. Topic one is the... You are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel you are staying now at the university campus. Ok... Please write a complaint letter to the management office to seek for a solution or some improvement. Limit your letter to 300 words.	Task-examining, Process-controlling
10	And then, ok, I think I've got some point to write. So now I want to start my essay. Want to start writing now. Hmm... ok. Now I want to jot down my name first. It is <u>Sujanna Joo</u> . Then my address, ok. It is <u>9, Jalan Putra, 1/13 Bandar Putra, 85000 Segamat, Johor</u> , and then, err... coma again, err... <u>Malaysia</u> . Ok. I am finished with the address.	Emotion-expressing, Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating
15 20	Now I leave one blank here and then I use... to draw a line there. Hmm... ok. And then I leave a blank again. Now I want to set my erm... addressee's address... which is... err... <u>management office of third residential college</u> , ok, this is where I stay. <u>University of Malaya, 50603 err... Kuala Lumpur then Malaysia</u> . This one... I need to underline the Malaysia. And then beside there, need to write down the date of today...err... which is <u>10 October of 2013</u> . Ok. Then, now... ok...	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating
25	<u>Sir or Madam, coma...</u> then I want to, I want to write lah, which title would be appropriate. And then the title is about complaining something right? So, err... it's like... err... request or complaint ah? I think is it ok if I write it's a request? Ok say it complaint lah, more straight forward. Err... complaint err... regarding the... cos	Task-examining, Text-generating, Idea-

30	[because] the title mention about hygiene level and security conditions... so I would like to say... <u>The complaint about...</u> err... “about” the... “about the”... err... <u>hygiene level and security conditions</u> . Ok.	generating, Emotion- expressing
35	Err... and then I underline it. Leave a few blank before I start with the... with reference. So now erm... <u>with reference to the above, I, my name, Suhanna Joo,</u> err... write this letter err... <u>on behalf of my housemates,</u> erm... <u>would like to...</u> err... <u>raise few erm... issues</u> err... <u>we are currently facing</u> err... <u>with stark detail</u> . Ok. But I don’t know whether I should place ‘-s’ there... stark details or stark detail? Err... “we are currently facing with” err... “stark detail. We would raise few issues we are currently facing with stark details.” Hmm... ok lah, I put one ‘-s’ there.	Process- controlling, Idea- generating, Text- generating, Emotion- expressing
40	And then... err... and then I blank one line there. Now I start my content lah ok, I want to start developing my content. The second point, then I err... ok have a blank.	Process- controlling, Idea- generating
45	Ok. hmm... <u>first of all, there’s</u> a set... now I need to say... now I want to talk about the hygiene level first lah. Ok, especially the... some... some issues err... that everybody knows but no one have come out and and... let the authority know about it. It is the, is there’re some people there erm... I mean the small portion of our residents here. They always like... ok ok I write this one first lah ok.	Process- controlling, Idea- generating, Idea- organising, Text- generating
50	So <u>first of all, we got</u> a, we got... we got... <u>some portion of residents</u> err... had make our... ok this is past tense right, had made our... <u>had made our staying</u> err... “had made our staying” <u>here</u> erm... not enjoying ah, how to say?	Idea- generating, Text- generating
55	“First of all, we got some portion of residents here made our staying... portion of residents had made our staying here” erm, unpleasable [unpleasant] <u>in the sense that they always erm cook inside their room</u> .	Idea- generating, Text- generating
60 65	Erm... <u>although this has</u> erm, this is... “although this has” erm... break ah, or broke? “Although this has” erm, <u>broken the rules of residential college, but erm, since there are not erm... “there are not” enough spot check carry [carried] out regularly, so erm... indirectly</u> err... “so indirectly... although this has broken the rules of residential college, but since there are not enough spot check carry out regularly, so indirectly” they... this type of cases increase lah. How to say? “So indirectly”... err... hmm... <u>make them</u> ... err “make them”... 变本加厉 (<i>worse than original condition</i>) “so indirectly make them”... <u>do it without... do it without caution</u> .	Idea- generating, Text- generating

70	<p>“First of all, we got some portion of residents had made our staying unpleasable in the sense they always cook inside their room. Although this has broken the rules of residential college, but since there are not enough spot check carry out regularly, so indirectly make them” <u>bolder err... to do it erm, frequent... to do it... err... frequently. So indirectly make them bolder to do it erm... always.</u></p>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
75	<p><u>And this has actually erm... lead to so much trouble for the rest of us as they always err... leave err the residue of the dishes erm at the err... at the sink of toilet erm... There [that] is... the place suppose to wash erm... hands only but erm... they had make [made] it a place to wash their plates erm... etc etc. So, erm... this erm has make [made] the sink 塞住 (clogged).</u></p>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
80 85	<p>“This has made the sink” not that... how to say har? “This has make the sink” erm... hmm... “This has made the sink” err... ohh! I forgot. “This has made the sink... There is the place suppose to wash hands only, there is the place suppose to wash hands only but they has make [made] it a place to wash the... wash... their plates” 85 ahh... “etc”, so this has make [made] the sink” erm... <u>flooded with all these disgusting residue and... and... the water can’t... cannot erm, cannot go down.</u></p>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
90	<p><u>I think... erm... “I think” the drainage system has been affected la ok. “Has been affected” as erm, as erm... It has been... quite a long time erm... “has been affected as it has been... “I think the drainage system has been affected as it has been quite a long time, as it has been quite a long time”... they erm... they did it and many erm, and a lot of foods stuck there. Ok.</u></p>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
95	<p>Then, erm... <u>further than that, “further than that”... this has erm, caused unpleasant smell err spread, spreads over the whole, whole erm... whole corridor sometimes when they, when they are having</u> 95 <u>hmm... “they are having” 丰富 (abundant), “when they are having”... 丰富(abundant)... erm... “they are having” erm fried fish as they dinner, as their dishes.</u></p>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
100	<p>Now I have finished with the hygiene level and then now I will proceed to the next issue.</p>	Process-controlling, Idea-organising
	<p>Err... <u>Secondly, erm... I would like to bring erm, bring bring attention regarding the security conditions erm... recently err... since I was moved in.</u></p>	Idea-generating, Text-generating

105 110	<u>I had observed, I had observed the... I have observed the manner of... of... of the guards at our college especially, especially...</u> “I had observed the manner of the guards at our college especially”... “Secondly I would like to bring” ok, “to bring attention regarding the security conditions recently since I was moved in.” Err... quite weird la the sentence.	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	“Secondly I would like to bring attention regarding the security conditions recently since I was moved in. I had observed the manner of the guards at our college especially”... err... <u>when facing especially facing the visitors.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
115 120	And then... <u>It was quite dangerous erm... to think of the consequences that might erm, happen for their erm... ignorant attitude erm... I and my friend, oh sorry, it's my friend and I erm, had witnessed that erm... they can be whole family erm... went to the gate erm... at the presence of the guard err... standing for duty, standing for duty but did not take any erm... action hmm... but didn't take any action. Ok.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	Err... so hmm... and then... <u>Some even can bring their boy friends ahh... enter our college without impediments.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
125	Erm... <u>There has been also a case where err... property been stolen and we had no way to rectify it as all of us can be that particular suspect.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>So... I err... personally hmm do not think they... they... they have carry out their job properly.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
130 135 140	Hmm... okay, I think this is quite, quite ok already la. And then, let me check it out first ah. “Secondly I would like to bring attention regarding security conditions recently since I was moved in. I had observed the manner of the guards at our college especially when facing the visitors. It was quite dangerous to think of the consequences that might happen for their ignorant attitudes. My friend and I had witnessed that there can be whole family went through the gate at the presence of the guard standing for duty but did not take any action. Some even can bring their boy friends enter err... our college without impediments. There has been also a case where property being stolen and we had no way to rectify it err... as all of us can be that particular suspect. So I personally do not think they have, they have carry [carried] out their job properly.”	Process-controlling

145	Erm... <u>This is an urgent issue and need to be remedied as soon as possible so our security are... are assured.</u> And err... and... erm... <u>Therefore, we can study well without worrying, “without worrying” about our safety and any other unnecessary erm... 打扰 (interruption), unnecessary interruption.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
150 155	Because sometimes err... when they when they held a family <u>gathering over our college, erm... that err... 气氛 (ambience), ambience is not only err... making us homesick but also err... but also erm, caused us could not study, study well as ... “that ambience is not only making us homesick but also causes us could not study well” erm... as erm... as err... very noisy la ok... as it is very noisy. “it is very noisy.” Err... to be frankly speaking, to be frankly.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
	So I think this is it la. Ok. And probably... oh actually I forgot to err... to say that there’s also one more issue la ok err... I may want to add in la ok. So I proceed to the fourth paragraph.	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Idea-organising
160	<u>The next issue that I that... erm... that I am obliged to bring out... “that I was” or, I am? That I am obliged, obliged, that I am obliged, that I am obliged to bring out erm... is hmm is the one regarding... regarding not having the proper place to erm hang our clothes, okay.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
165 170	Why is it so? Ok, let me explain briefly la ok about our current situation here. Err... <u>because</u> hmm... erm, <u>as it is very obvious</u> erm... <u>we got... erm, we got, we got erm... unwelcoming guest,</u> ahh ok. Err... err... to be describe in more exactly actually it’s the monkey la ok. “as it is very obvious we got unwelcoming guest” erm, <u>often come over to hmm... to the place where we err... where we hang out clothes and... and... and... and take, and take, and take them away</u> erm... ok. Then to say that erm... err... <u>don’t have to, do not have to doubt that... it is the monkeys ok.</u> “It is the monkeys”, it’s monkeys. Ok ok, don’t have ‘the’ there. So, “it is monkeys”.	Emotion-expressing, Text-generating, Idea-generating
175 180	Hmm... <u>Out of choice, some of our buddies err choose to have ahh... “to have” their clothes err... “chose to have their clothes” dry... hmm... by hanging them err in the toilet.</u> Erm... this is erm... <u>this is, this is a creative way but erm, but it is also kind of unc cosy though,</u> “but it is also kind of unc cosy, unc cosy though”... <u>for... for... fellow toilet users.</u> Hmm... okay. “This is a creative way but it is also kind of unc cosy though.” Err... “it is also kind of”... err... “it is a creative way but it is also erm... kind of” err interruptions la would be better, ok. <u>Interruptions, interruptions</u> “though... for toilet users.”	Text-generating, Idea-generating

185	So I need to elaborate why is it. Why is it, why it has been considered as an interruption lar, ok. <u>Because err... because erm... some of them will hang it err... for so long until smelly err... “smelly... until it became smelly” and I do not think it is a hmm... “it is a, it is a... it is a” solutions, “it is a” solution we can adopt for a long term, err... for long term la ok.</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Idea-organising, Text-generating
190		
	Ahh, Ok, I think that’s it lah. Then now I... I think so far, ok I have jotted down everything I want to, I want to convey. So, hmm... ok. So, lastly I say thank you and...	Process-controlling, Idea-organising, Idea-generating
195	Oh, before thank you, I should have something right... ok, I should write something la for as an ending. “I don’t think it’s a solution we can adopt for long term” err... <u>So we look forward err your reply and then thank you.</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-organising, Idea-generating, Text-generating
	And then, <u>yours sincerely</u> , err it’s my signature here, <u>Sujanna</u> and then underline. Err... <u>Sujanna Joo</u> . Hmm... Ok, done.	Process-controlling, Text-generating

APPENDIX D4 (Transcript of Participant D's Informal Letter Writing)

Topic: You are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel where you are staying at the university campus. Please write a letter about this to your cousin staying overseas to complain your dissatisfaction. Limit your letter to 300 words.

Line	Utterance	Remark (Writing Stages)
1 5	Ok, now I want to write the second ahh the second letter. So... ok now I want to read the requirements that I need to comply with. Ok, you are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel where you are staying at the university campus... so it is the same la actually. Please write a letter about this erm... to your cousin staying overseas to complain your dissatisfaction. Limit your letter at 300 words.	Task-examining
10	Ok now, I want to hmm... ok. Now I jot down my name first, it's <u>Susan Ooi, my address. 90, Jalan Permaisuri, 1/13 Bandar Permaisuri, 46200 erm Petaling Jaya, Se... erm Selangor, Malaysia. Leave a blank there and state the date for today. It's 10th October 2013.</u>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating
15	Ok now, I leave one blank and then... Dear, hmm I would put it as Lily ok, <u>dear Lily</u> , so she is my cousin la ok. Erm... now I want to start with the greetings first and... ok.	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating
20	Err... <u>Hello Lily, ok. I hope you are now doing well at, at Australia</u> err... since you had just err, you had just err... err... started... oh sorry. "Hello Lily. I hope you are now doing well at Australia since you" <u>have, you have just... err... you had just... since you just...</u> erm... since sorry... "Hello Lily. I hope you are... well at Australia since" <u>your semester have just started.</u> Ok. err... it is have la, it is not has. "Hello Lily. I hope you are now doing well at Australia since your semester have just started."	Text-generating, Idea-generating
25	Erm... erm... Hope, hope you err... ok ok. <u>Hope you enjoy reading my letter and send and send my best erm... warmest regards to you.</u> Ok. "Dear Lily, hello Lily. I hope you are now doing well at Australia since your semester have just started. Hope you enjoy reading my letter and send my best warmest regard to you." Ok, now I finish my greetings.	Text-generating, Idea-generating, Process-controlling, Idea-organising

30	Now I want to start err my paragraph. Ok, I want to tell her everything that I erm wish her to know, just share my view with her. Ok. erm, <u>it is pretty fun erm for my life I have experienced erm in University of Malaya as I got the erm course I wanted so badly and now, I manage to get a bunch of lovely friends... and hmm...</u>	Process-controlling, Emotion-expressing, Idea-organising, Idea-generating, Text-generating
35	<u>this has erm... enriching my life too. Err... when hanging out with them.</u>	
	However, [sigh] there also have something bad happen la. That's impossible to have perfect la in... ok. For everything.	Emotion-expressing
40	So... "I manage to get a bunch of lovely friends and this has enriching my life too when hanging out with them." <u>However, the... there has been something</u> hmm... something erm something... err... something... err... something how to say ah? "However, there has been something"... err... "something" <u>unpleasable</u> la. Ok, "something unpleasable" thing, <u>things happen.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
45	<u>And I would like to share this with you. Hmm... and hopefully can get your piece of advice. Erm... on how to deal with it, "on how to deal with it".</u> Ok.	Text-generating, Idea-generating
50	Hmm... <u>I can erm... I can... get along with my erm... with my roommates erm well but I really could not bear erm the hygiene level at my residential college.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
55	Erm... "I, I could not"... Erm... "I can get along with my roommates well but I really couldn't ahh... but I really... I can get along, I... I can get along with my roommates well but I really", cannot la ok, say cannot... "bear the hygiene level at my residential college".	Text-generating, Idea-generating
60	<u>I... I am not... Hmm... I cannot... enjoy my time erm staying there when the toilet err is not really usable. Err... seldom la ok, is it not always? Not always, not always la. So... the janitors come very, very... how to say ah? The janitor, the janitors hmm... the janitors did not. Ok. "I can get along...well but I really cannot bear the hygiene level at my residential college. Erm...I cannot enjoy my time staying there when the toilet is not really usable. The janitors did not err clean up the toilet erm frequently and and erm... and</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
65	<u>residues of food often makes the basin stuck and flooded, as water err... as water as water could not erm could not, could not go down. Hmm...</u>	

70	“I cannot enjoy my time staying there when the toilet is not really usable. The janitors did not clean up the toilet frequently and residues of food often makes the basin stuck and flooded as water could not go down.” And... hmm... ok, then I think it’s done.	Text-generating, Idea-generating
75	<u>And then sometimes, they even hang the clothes there.</u> And err... “Sometimes they even hang the clothes there”. Erm... <u>and make the toilet occupied. Thus, we, we cannot freely move but need to walk properly as the floor became... as the floor will become slippery after erm after... after water drops err from from... from the clothes, which were just washed.</u> Hmm...	Text-generating, Idea-generating
80 85	“did not clean up the toilet frequently and residues of food often makes the basin stuck and flooded as water could not go down. Sometimes they even hang the clothes there and make the toilet occupied. Thus we cannot freely move but need to walk properly as the floor will become, will become slippery after water drops from the”... after water err, after water err... drops ah? Ok. “Thus we cannot freely move but need to walk properly as the floor will become slippery after water” erm <u>dropping down la ok, after water dropping down</u> “from the clothes which were just washed”. Ok.	Text-generating, Idea-generating
	Now, I proceed la to next issue, which is the security conditions that ok, that’s causing some troubles, ok.	Process-controlling, Idea-organising
90	<u>The next issues I’d like to share with you err... is the one concerning erm... concerning security conditions as it is not pretty safe anymore when the guards err... err... when the guards did not did not... inspect, inspect every visitors hmm... did not inspect every visitor that get into our college.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
95	Err... <u>What I saw is erm they often chit-chatting with each other I mean, not only one guard on the duty err, on the duty. So, I do not think they really care erm... Sometimes, they even erm, they even, ok... “they even” play the cards together as they as they were in their home.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
100	Erm... <u>I do not think erm, it is good as hmm... as there are a lot of visitors erm come back and forth easily without their identity err being confirmed.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
105	Erm, <u>That would definitely erm make our life err uneasy as they are quite noisy.</u> “That would definitely make our life uneasy as they are quite noisy.” <u>And sometimes, and sometimes, even spend their night at my college. Erm... I could not sleep properly la, ok. “I could not sleep properly.”</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating

	<p>Hmm... "I could not sleep properly" <u>and have, and had no mood to attend the class next day. Err... meaning I could not concentrate.</u></p>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
	<p>Erm... ok, so much so... I think I... have written down all the points which are necessary to elaborate. So, ok. I erm... ok.</p>	Emotion-expressing, Process-controlling, Idea-organising
110 115	<p>Err <u>but don't worry, erm... I am bold enough erm... to stand out for my err other housemates err... and have already erm... wrote err "have already" written a complaint letter, letter to the officer err to the concerned officer. Erm, hopefully I, hopefully I can get the reply from them and the problems can be solved as soon as possible.</u></p>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
120	<p>Hmm... so, <u>so far, I think that is enough for today. I need to erm... get prepared, I need to get prepared, get prepared for my mock exam tomorrow. Hmm... and, and... and anticipate your next letter. Erm... hopefully I can hear more from you about your new life over there.</u></p>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
	<p>Erm, ok. erm... <u>Yours sincerely, erm, Sujanna, Sujanna Joo.</u> Ok, done.</p>	Text-generating, Idea-generating

APPENDIX E1 (Participant E's Formal Letter)

29, Jalan 17/43,
Seksyen 17,
46400 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor Darul Ehsan.

The Management Office of Forth Residential College,
University of Malaya,
50603 Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia.

20 SEPTEMBER 2013

Mr/Mrs,

The hygiene and security problem in 4th Hostel

I would like to complain about the poor hygiene level and security problem that in 4th hostel.

2. About the hygiene level, it was quite poor as I see. There was rubbish all around the corridor and outside the door. The rubbish was always get full easily. So the rubbish was fall on the floor as the bin is full.

3. Other than that, condition in the washroom is also very poor. The cloth that was hanging inside the washroom has been there for quite a time. It started getting smelly.

4. Another issue I want to complain is the security problem. My room was got break in last week. My wallet, handphone and external has been stolen. I felt quite disappointed.

5. Other than that, I also saw many strangers walking around inside the area of 4th hostel. I am sure that they didn't belong in here.

6. At last, I really hope that these problems can be solve as soon as possible. So that, everyone can live in the hostel more peacefully. Thank you.

Sincere,

Apple Yong

(APPLE YONG)

APPENDIX E2 (Participant E's Informal Letter)

50, Jalan 19/45,
46400 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor, Malaysia.

Dear Justin,

Hi, long time no see. How was your life in Singapore? I heard that you had got into university. Congratulations!!!

A few month ago, I also started my university life. It was totally different then my imagination. It doesn't look as beautiful as in television. Especially in Malaysia. As you know, I get into a local government university. The fees was cheap. But everything was a mess.

I was shock by the environment at the first day, the first step when I walk into my hostel. It look like a haunted house. You can imagine the room is full of spider web and dust. The dust was like snowing when I open the fan. And I really don't want to mention what is like in the washroom. It was a public toilet in a boy's hostel. You can imagine how it is. The smell are terrible. All the cloth are hanging around for decades.

And I don't really want to said about how bad is the security here. Last Tuesday, my roommate and I went to bathroom for 5 minutes. And when we back, our door was open and our phones and wallets have been stolen. That was 10 a.m. in the morning. There was a person sleeping inside at that time. You can see how terrible the security here. Even I report to the management office, there was no action taken.

So, that was my university life. How is yours? Let me know.

Your dear cousin,
Patrick

APPENDIX E3 (Transcript of Participant E's Formal Letter Writing)

Topic: *You are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel you are staying now at the university campus. Please write a complaint letter to the management office to seek for a solution or some improvement. Limit your letter to 300 words.*

- a) Task-examining: Analysing the writing prompt (examine the purpose of writing, the topic, and the instructions)
- b) Idea-generating: Planning the content and evaluating it
- c) Idea-organising: Planning of content organization and evaluating it
- d) Text-generating: Producing and reviewing the text
- e) Process-controlling: Controlling the writing procedures, words, time limit, etc.
- f) Emotion-expressing: Expressing emotion or personal comment(s) that is not written down as part of end written product during the composing process.

Line	Utterance	Remark (Writing Stages)
1	You are not satisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel you are staying now at the university campus. Please write a complaint letter to the management office to seek for a solution or some improvement. Limit your letter to 300 words.	Task-examining
5	Now... how to say...	Idea-generating
	Ok, 就写我以前住过的 Forth college, University... UM 咯. <i>Ok, I'll write the hostel I used to stay before, Forth College in University of Malaya (UM)</i>	Idea-generating
	UM 的话, 地址是..... hmm... 忘记了..... <i>If UM, the address is... hmm... forgot...</i>	Idea-generating
	<u>University of Malaya , err... Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.</u>	Text-generating
	<u>画一条线. 现在的地址.....</u> <i>Draw a line. Current address...</i>	Idea-generating
10	<u>29, Jalan 17/43, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. University of Malaya , err... Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.</u>	Text-generating
	<u>下来就是写.....</u> <i>Next [step] is to write...</i>	Idea-generating, Process-controlling
	<u>Ms. or Mr... Then, title, topic... Hmm... unsatisfied with hygiene level and security...</u>	Idea-generating

15	<p><u>就写... hmm... ok, 我就写 The hygiene level and security problem in the hostel.</u></p> <p><i>Just write... hmm... ok, I'll write The hygiene level and security problem in the hostel.</i></p>	Text-generating
	<p><u>Err... at the 4th hostel. Hmm... hygiene and... security problem... in 4th hostel.</u></p>	Idea-organising
	<p>I... 没有号码的, 这是。先讲清楚我要什么东西先.....</p> <p><i>I... [There is] no number, here. First is to state clearly what I want...</i></p>	Process controlling, idea-generating, idea-organising
20	<p><u>I would, I would like to... complain... about the poor... hygiene level... and security problem that in 4th hostel.</u></p>	Text-generating
	<p>接下来第二段就阐述每个问题的发生。问题有两种: hygiene level and security problem. Hygiene level 先.</p> <p><i>Next, in the second paragraph is to state the occurrence of each problem. There are two types of problems: hygiene level and security problem. [Let's start with] hygiene level first.</i></p>	Idea-generating, Idea-organising, Process-controlling
	<p>然后... hmm...</p> <p><i>Next... hmm...</i></p>	Idea-generating
25	<p><u>About the hygiene level, it was quite poor as I see. There was rubbish... all around the corridor... and outside... the door. The rubbish bin was always get full easily... So it... hmm... so the rubbish... was fall on the floor as the bin is full...</u></p> <p><u>Other than that, hygiene level... hmm...</u> 接下来就是冲凉房.</p> <p><i>Other than that, hygiene level... hmm... Next [point to talk about] is washroom.</i></p>	Text-generating, Idea-organising
30	<p><u>That... condition... hmm...</u> 就讲太过潮湿, 潮湿怎样讲? Hmm... err...</p> <p><i>That... condition... hmm... Let's say it's too 'damp', how to say 'damp'? Hmm... err...</i></p> <p><u>The cloth that was hanging inside the washroom... has been there for.....</u> "the cloth that was hanging inside the washroom... has been there for..." quite a time. It started getting smelly.</p>	Text-generating, Idea-generating, Idea-organising

	<p>接下来就 security level 了. Hmm... create examples... <i>Next [point to talk about] is security level. Hmm... create examples...</i></p>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating
35	<p><u>Another issue I want to complain.</u> 我要投诉, 在.....曾经.....被人家偷过东西, 不是属于那宿舍的人走进去 hostel 不知道是做什么.</p> <p>Literal translation: <i>Another issue [that] I want to complain, I want to complain, at... was once... things being stolen by others, people who don't belong to the hostel go into the hostel don't know doing what.</i></p> <p>Context translation: <i>Another issue [that] I want to complain, I want to complain, is... that was once... things being stolen by others, people who are not residents of the hostel go into the hostel and I don't know what they want to do.</i></p>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
	<p>首先就讲被偷的东西先... <u>is the security problem... My room was...</u> 被人家闯进来, “闯”用英文怎样讲? rob in, rob in... break in. ...<u>got break in last week.</u></p> <p>Literal Translation: <i>First talk about things being stolen... is the security problem... My room was... dashed in by others, how to say 'dash' in English? Rob in, rob in... break in... got break in last week.</i></p> <p>Context Translation: <i>First, let's talk about things being stolen... is the security problem... My room was... dashed in by others, how to say 'dash' in English? Rob in, rob in... break in... got break in last week.</i></p>	Idea-generating, Text-generating, Idea-organising
40	<p><u>My purse... aiya... my wallet, hand phone... and external hard disk has been stolen. And, there was no... 没有行动, action taken... by the administration at 4th hostel. I felt quite disappointed.</u></p> <p><i>My purse... aiya... my wallet, hand phone... and external hard disk has [have] been stolen. And, there was no... no action, action taken... by the administration at 4th hostel. I felt quite disappointed.</i></p>	Text-generating, Idea-generating, Idea-organising
	<p>接下来... and.... <u>Other than that, I also saw.... Many strangers... walking around, walking... around... inside the areas... of 4th hostel.</u></p>	Idea-generating, idea-organising,

	<i>Next... and... other than that, I also saw... many strangers... walking around, walking... around... inside the areas... of 4th hostel.</i>	Text-generating
45	<u>I am sure that they belong, didn't... belong in here.</u>	Text-generating
50	<p><u>At last, I really hope... that... hmm... the manage... No, that... these</u> <u>hmm... 不只一个问题, 所以“多数”, <u>problem can be solve as soon</u></u> <u>as possible... so that everyone can live in the hostel... peacefully.</u> <u>Thank you. Sincere... Apple Yong.</u></p> <p><i>Literal Translation:</i> <i>At last, I really hope... that... hmm... the manage... No, that... these</i> <i>hmm... Not only one problem, so 'plural', problem can be solve[d] as</i> <i>soon as possible... so that everyone can live in the hostel...</i> <i>peacefully. Thank you. Sincere... Apple Yong.</i></p> <p><i>Context Translation:</i> <i>At last, I really hope... that ... hmm... the manage... No, that... these</i> <i>hmm... There is not just one problem, so should use 'plural form',</i> <i>problem can be solve[d] as soon as possible... so that everyone can</i> <i>live in the hostel... peacefully. Thank you. Sincere... Apple Yong.</i></p>	Text-generating, Idea-generating, Idea-organising

APPENDIX E4 (Transcript of Participant E's Informal Letter Writing)

Topic: *You are unsatisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel where you stay in university campus. Please write a letter about your dissatisfactions to your cousin staying overseas. Limit your letter at 300 words.*

- a) Task-examining: Analysing the writing prompt (examine the purpose of writing, the topic, and the instructions)
- b) Idea-generating: Planning the content and evaluating it
- c) Idea-organising: Planning of content organization and evaluating it
- d) Text-generating: Producing and reviewing the text
- e) Process-controlling: Controlling the writing procedures, words, time limit, etc.
- f) Emotion-expressing: Expressing emotion or personal comment(s) that is not written down as part of end written product during the composing process.

Line	Utterance	Remark (Writing Stages)
1	You are unsatisfied towards the hygiene level and security conditions of the hostel where you stay in university campus. Please write a letter about your dissatisfactions to your cousin staying overseas. Limit your letter at 300 words.	Task-examining
5	Ohh, 地址…… err, dear Justin... erm... informal letter... <i>Ohh, address... err, dear Justin... erm... informal letter...</i>	Task-examining, idea-generating
	<p><u>Dear Justin... Hi... 先打招呼先. Long time no see. 先打招呼先, 然后才慢慢进入问题. How was your life... in Singapore? I heard that you had got into university. Congratulations about that.</u></p> <p>Literal Translation: <i>Dear Justin... Hi... First address greeting first. Long time no see. First address greeting first, then slowly enter problem. How was your life... in Singapore? I heard that you had got into university. Congratulations about that.</i></p> <p>Context Translation: <i>Dear Justin... Hi... Greeting comes first. Long time no see. Greeting first, then slowly proceed to talk about problem. How was your life... in Singapore? I heard that you had got into university. Congratulations about that.</i></p>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Idea-organising, Text-generating

10	<p>然后接下来，开始讲自己的……学校。 Hmm... 要怎样开始讲叻？ Hmm... 几个月前……<u>A few months ago, I also started my university life.</u></p> <p>Literal Translation: <i>Then next, start to talk about my own... school. Hmm... How to start talking? Hmm... A few months ago... A few months ago, I also started my university life.</i></p> <p>Context Translation: <i>Next, start to share about my own... university. Hmm... How to start sharing? Hmm... A few months ago... A few months ago, I [have] also started my university life.</i></p>	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Idea-organising, Text-generating
	<p>离开家，跟想象的完全不同。 <u>It was totally different than my imagination.</u> 它没有象电视机上看的这样漂亮，这样美好。 <u>It doesn't look as beautiful as in television, especially in Malaysia.</u></p> <p><i>Leaving home, is totally different from the imagination. It was totally different than [from] my imagination. It is not as beautiful as it is shown on the television, so wonderful. It doesn't look as beautiful as in television, especially [not] in Malaysia.</i></p>	Idea-organising, Idea-generating, Text-generating
15	<p><u>As you know, I got into a local government university. The fees was cheap, and... also err... 给我想一下... but everything was a mess.</u></p> <p><i>As you know, I [have] got into a local government university. The fees was [is] cheap, and... also err... let me think... but everything was a mess.</i></p>	Text-generating, Idea-generating, Idea-organising
20	<p><u>I was shock[ed] by the environment at [on] the first day, the first step... when I walk into my hostel. It looks [looked] like a haunted house. You can imagine, imagine... the room is full of spider web and dust. It was like snowing when you open ['open' is direct translation from Mandarin, it refers to 'switched on'] the fan. The dust was like snowing, snowing, when I open the fan.</u></p>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
	<p><u>And I really don't want to mention... 厕所的, what it's like in the washroom. 整间宿舍的人都共用, it was a public toilet, toilet, in a boys' hostel.</u></p> <p><i>And I really don't want to mention... toilet's, what it's like in the washroom, it is shared by everyone in the whole hostel, it was a public toilet, toilet, in a boys' hostel.</i></p>	Text-generating, Idea-generating

25	<u>You can imagine how it is, how it was, how it is. Hmm... The clothes... The smell are terrible. All the cloths are hanging around for decades.</u>	Text-generating, idea-generating, Idea-organising
	And I... 接下来就讲 security... don't... security... want to say about how bad is the security here.	Idea-generating, Idea-organising, Process-controlling
30	<u>Last Tuesday, my roommate and I went to bathroom for five minutes. And when we back, our door was open, and our phones and wallets... have been stolen. That was... that was 10am in the morning. And... there was a people, a person, sleeping inside at that time. You can see how terrible, the security here. Even I report to the management office... there was no action taken.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating, Idea-organising
35	<u>So, that was my university life... life.... How is yours? Let me know. Your dear cousin, Patrick.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating

APPENDIX F1 (Participant A's Interview Transcript)

R: Researcher; A: Participant A

Speaker	Conversation	Line
R	Good afternoon. Thank you for your time to be here today.	1
A	You're welcome.	
R	Can we start?	
A	Yes, we can start.	
R	Do you enjoy writing (in any language)?	5
A	Hmm, yes. But I prefer to write in Chinese.	
R	Oh, why?	
A	Because... I can express better in Chinese.	
R	What do you feel when you are requested to write in English? And why?	10
A	Hmm, I feel quite tension because I am lack of vocabulary and not very good to make good sentences.	
R	I see. What are the challenges you face when you are requested to write in English?	
A	Hmm... I think I'm lack of vocabulary... English words, I mean... Hmm... sometimes I cannot find the correct word to express my meaning. Besides, I think I need better writing pattern in English too because I usually think in Chinese first and want to write out my ideas in English... So, the pattern, the writing pattern is very different. I feel confused also when I want to change the Chinese sentence into English. The sentence structure is very different, my teacher tell me don't think in Chinese but I still cannot change the habit.	15 20
R	What are the differences you find between writing in English and writing in Mandarin?	
A	I know how to express well in Chinese because I have more variety of words in Chinese. I can construct more beautiful sentence in Chinese but not English.	25
R	What do you mean by 'more beautiful sentence'?	

A	Erm... I mean, I can write Chinese better because I know more Chinese words, can construct better sentences, more creative.	30
R	I see. Do you prefer writing formal or informal letter? And why?	
A	Hmm... I prefer formal letter, because there is the format and sentence we can follow. I use to write formal letter for I prepare to sit for my exam.	
R	What do you mean by “format and sentence that you can follow”? Do you mean a standard sentence pattern to write formal letter?	35
A	Yeah, that’s what I mean. Sometime[s] the teachers ask us to remember [memorize] some beautiful and standard sentences to write formal letter.	
R	What are the challenges do you face while writing the formal and informal letters?	40
A	I am lack of vocabulary and ability to construct good sentence with proper grammar for formal letter. For informal letter, it is hard to construct variety of beautiful sentence.	
R	What are the factors that contribute to these challenges or difficulties?	45
A	I think it’s because I can’t manage grammar and... 介词 [adverbs]?	
R	Adverbs?	
A	Ya, adverbs.	
R	What solutions do you think could be taken to solve the problems you face to improve your English writing?	50
A	Maybe reading newspapers? And study more new vocabulary.	
R	Do you read newspapers everyday?	
A	Hmm, no. I read sometimes.	
R	Maybe you should start reading everyday. Haha.	
A	Haha, yeah.	55
R	Alright. I think that’s all for now. Thank you for your time.	
A	You’re welcome. Thanks.	

APPENDIX F2 (Participant B's Interview Transcript)

R: Researcher; B: Participant B

Speaker	Conversation	Line
R	Good afternoon. Thank you for your time to be here today. Shall we start the interview?	1
B	Ya, sure.	
R	Do you enjoy writing (in any language)? And why?	
B	Hmm, occasionally, because it helps to improve my writing skills and vocabulary.	5
R	What do you feel when you are requested to write in English?	
B	No stress and it is enjoying if time is provided, because I can write freely without worrying about the time limit. Writing in English helps to improve my writing skills and have better command in English.	10
R	I see. Do you find any difference between writing in English and writing in Mandarin? If yes, what are they?	
B	Yes, my Mandarin is weaker than English, so have limited vocabulary to write [in Mandarin]. Less enjoying.	
R	Oh, but I thought your mother tongue is Mandarin, isn't it?	15
B	Yeah, I can speak Mandarin well, but not very good at writing.	
R	I see. Between formal and informal letter writing, which do you prefer more? And why?	
B	Hmm, formal letter, because it is more structural and easier to construct the sentences.	20
R	What do you mean 'more structural'?	
B	I mean there's a standard structure to follow, so I don't have to think other ways to write my sentences. Just follow the standard pattern.	
R	I see. What are the challenges or difficulties that you face while writing the formal and informal letter?	25
B	The format of the formal letter, I seldom write formal letter nowadays, so not very sure of the format. For informal letter, hmm... I think I	

	have lower expressiveness, as it can involves [involve] many aspects and needs to be more expressive.	
R	You mean need to be more creative in writing informal letter?	30
B	Yeah.	
R	What are the factors that contribute to these challenges or difficulties?	
B	Err... personality I guess... I don't like this kind of writing [informal letter], thus have less vocabulary for it.	
R	Do you mean your personal preference? Because you don't like it, so you don't have the motivation to learn more vocabulary to write better?	35
B	Yeah, you can say so. I would prefer formal letter because I can use the standard form of words choice, format and so... don't have to crack my head to think of other sentence patterns.	
R	What solutions do you think could be taken to solve the problems you face to improve your English writing?	40
B	I think need to read books more of this kind of writing.	
R	Anything that you would like to add on?	
B	Hmm... I think most of the Chinese students like me is not very motivated to write in English unless we need to. So, maybe another solution or way to improve our standard of English writing is to make us interested to learn more.	45
R	Yeah, I agree. We need to be self-motivated to learn and improve. Forcing doesn't help.	
B	Ya.	50
R	Alright. I think that's all for now. Thank you for your time.	
B	You're welcome. Thanks.	

APPENDIX F3 (Participant C's Interview Transcript)

R: Researcher; C: Participant C

Speaker	Conversation	Line
R	Good afternoon. Thank you for your time to be here today. Shall we start the interview?	1
C	Ya, sure.	
R	Do you enjoy writing (in any language)? And why?	
C	Hmm... Not really. I don't like to write, in any languages. No particular reason for it, maybe I'm not a writing person, I like to talk more. Hahaha.	5
R	So what do you feel when you are requested to write in English?	
C	I feel quite stress because I have a lot of grammatical problems. I feel so confused when to use what, I find grammar is hard to understand.	10
R	I see. Do you find any difference between writing in English and writing in Mandarin? If yes, what are they?	
C	Definitely yes. The language structure is different. I used to think in Mandarin first before I write in English. So sometimes very hard to find the right word to express my meaning. And the sentence pattern also different.	
R	I see. Between formal and informal letter writing, which do you prefer more? And why?	15
C	Neither. Hahaha. I don't like writing, you see, for me, both formal and informal letter writing are the same. Sama-sama [<i>equally</i>] difficult, hahaha.	
R	I see. What are the challenges or difficulties that you face while writing the formal and informal letter?	
C	I think... formatting problems for formal letter. I cannot remember clearly the letter format already... since I took MUET last time, I don't really practice writing anymore. And for informal letter... I think grammar problems gua [<i>a Chinese expression word to express uncertainty</i>]... Actually grammar problems for any kind of writing lar. Hahaha.	20
R	What are the factors that contribute to these challenges or difficulties?	

C	Factors ahh... Errr.... I don't know. Maybe I'm lazy to practice reading and writing gua [<i>a Chinese expression word to express uncertainty</i>]... hahahah.	
R	Ok. What solutions do you think could be taken to solve the problems you face to improve your English writing?	25
C	Read more articles, watch more English movies, and listen more English songs! I think the ways of teaching English in classroom is too boring, students not interested to learn also.	
R	I see.	30
C	I think if the teacher can make the English lessons more fun, maybe lazy students like me will be more interested to learn English. Hahaha.	
R	Hmm. Maybe if teachers are more creative in teaching, students will be more motivated to learn better.	
C	Ya. I agree.	
R	Alright. Do you have anything to add on?	35
C	Nope.	
R	Okay, I think that's all for now. Thank you for your time and participation in this study.	40
C	You're welcome.	

APPENDIX F4 (Participant D's Interview Transcript)

R: Researcher; D: Participant D

Speaker	Conversation	Line
R	Do you enjoy writing (in any language)?	1
D	Oh yes I do! But sometimes depend on my mood also. If I feel like writing, I enjoy it very much!	2
R	What language do you usually write in?	3
D	Hmm, Mandarin most of the times, but sometimes, I write in English also lah, you know, when we need to talk in the class, the teacher prohibit us from talking in Mandarin. So no choice lor. I love taking notes in English, it's more relevant to the subjects I learn in the class.	4
R	I see. That's good to hear. Do you face any challenges when you are requested to write in English?	5
D	Hmm, of course I do. A lot of challenges in fact. Especially the tenses thingy, I am always very confused on how to use it correctly, you know? Like Present Tense, Past Tense, Past Participle Tense...	6
R	What are the differences you find between writing in English and writing in Mandarin?	10
D	I think I can express myself better in Mandarin la of course, Mandarin is my mother tongue mah. I am used to it already. But in English ahh, hmm... more difficult lor. Like when I want to say something, I don't know what's the exact word to use! Then I will crack my head and find another word to explain my meaning. Sometimes cannot find also, so frustrated!	15
R	Do you have any example?	
D	Example ahh... Ahh... Wait ahh... Hmm... Hmm... I cannot think of it now ler... Just a Mandarin word la, sometimes no English word can express the meaning, like in Mandarin, we have a lot of idioms, which cannot be found in English.	20
R	So I suppose you will think in Mandarin first before you write in English, is that so?	
D	Ya ya, I always do that. But I know it's not right la, but still cannot help it.	25
R	I see. Do you prefer writing formal or informal letter? And Why?	
D	Hmm... I prefer informal letter because it's like talking to a friend, it's more... relaxing and comfortable. Unlike formal letter, I always hard to	

	find the correct word to express my meaning.	
R	What are the factors that contribute to these challenges or difficulties?	30
D	Hmm... for formal letter, it's the word choice I think. Actually for both letters are quite similar lah, I have grammar problems also, and not enough vocabulary especially for formal letter. Very hard to find suitable words to bring my meaning.	35
R	What are the factors that contribute to these challenges or difficulties?	
D	Maybe not enough reading and writing I think. Seldom read or practice writing, except when we need to do assignments. Sometimes very lazy, prefer to sleep and watch TV. Hahahah.	
R	I see. Do you see a need to improve your English then?	40
D	Yea of course, but just feel lazy to read.	
R	What solutions do you think could be taken to solve the problems you face to improve your English writing?	
D	Read more novels and newspapers, watching English movies helps too! And of course, need to practice writing more. Hmm... I think maybe need more self-motivation and self-discipline too. I'm lacking of that, too lazy! Hahahah.	45
R	Alright. I think that's all for now. Thank you for your time.	
D	You're welcome. Thanks.	

APPENDIX F5 (Participant E's Interview Transcript)

R: Researcher; E: Participant E

Speaker	Conversation	Line
R	Do you enjoy writing (in any language)?	1
E	Hmm... Yes sometimes. But mostly in Mandarin.	2
R	Why Mandarin?	3
E	Mandarin is my mother tongue, so I feel more... relax and comfortable to write in Mandarin. More familiar with the use of Mandarin.	4
R	I see. What are the challenges you face when you are requested to write in English?	5
E	Hmm... I don't like to write in English because I cannot express what I want like how I do in Mandarin. My English teacher says my grammar is bad, I think I agree with her also. Hahaha.	6
R	What are the differences you find between writing in English and writing in Mandarin?	10
E	I think... Hmm... Differences ahh... Maybe the words choice bah. i often cannot think of a suitable word to describe my thinking in English. But in Mandarin, I don't have this kind of problem.	
R	Hmm. So I suppose if you have learned more English words, it will be easier for you to write and describe your thinking in English?	15
E	Yeah, you can say that. But maybe not also. I think most of the Chinese students like me are not confident to use English.	
R	Oh, why?	
E	Hmm... We are not very comfortable to use English, we talk in Chinese more among our friends. We seldom use English.	20
R	I see. Don't you use English in university?	
E	Yes we use English but only for assignments and exams. But during discussion, we use back Mandarin also. Hahahah. Even when we write in English, we have the same problem also... we cannot find words to describe our points.	25
R	I see. In this study, do you prefer writing formal or informal letter? And Why?	
E	Hmm... Actually both are quite the same to me. Either formal or informal... they're same, with the same topic, nothing different. Just the format is a bit different only lah.	30
R	Do you face any challenges while writing the formal and informal	

	letters?	
E	Yes, of course. Like I say just now, i cannot express my meaning using English, whether in formal or in informal letter, still the same problem. Hmm... Besides that, let me think... the other challenges... Oh ya, my grammar sucks! Hahahah. I don't know when to use this and that, the present tense, past tense blah blah blah... very confusing.	35
R	I see. What are the factors that contribute to these challenges or difficulties?	
E	Maybe I don't like to study English when I am in primary school gua. Cannot focus and don't understand what the teacher says. Very boring.	40
R	What solutions do you think could be taken to solve the problems you face to improve your English writing?	
E	I think I need to read more English books or watch more English movies. See how people write and talk in English. Maybe that will help.	45
R	Just now you mentioned you feel boring to study English, is it because of the English teacher or just your own issue?	
E	I think both la. Some good teachers can teach very well but I still cannot learn and understand one. Maybe no interest at all la.	50
R	I see. Alright. I think that's all for now. Thank you for your time.	
E	You're welcome. Thanks.	

APPENDIX G1 (Formal Letter of Pilot Study)

11, Jalan 11/14,
54400 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Management Office of Raya Condominium
Jalan 45, Seksyen 100,
46400 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor Darul Ehsan.

28 February 2013

Sir Andrew,

Complaint Regarding the Vandalism in Raya Condominium

I , Ms. Superior, would like write on behalf of citizens living in Raya Condominium as a representative to voice up our dissatisfaction about the current state of affair which is control by your working team.

2. First of all, the swimming pool of the condominium was not keep under good condition. The floor was always very slippery not because of the water splashing out, but because of the vandalist, not sure whether is our very own citizens or visitors from outside purposely put the flour on the floor, without thinking of the consequences that might cause injury to my children and also the other citizens safety.

3. For the second issue, it is quite worrying and there are also vandalist who likes a lot the culture of grativy. They always did their painting at the midnight, which I accidentally found out last week. The painting is not an elegant art which I do not really appreciate. And it is quite bad for visitor to come over and see this situation, like our security guard here did not carry out their job well. Although I had approached the vandalists and deter them from doing so, I hope that authority would take steps to rectify it and refurbish the wall that has been vandalized.

4. So, we looking forward for your concern as soon as possible. Thank you.

Your sincerely,

T.S.F.

APPENDIX G2 (Informal Letter of Pilot Study)

11, Jalan 11/14,
54400 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor Darul Ehsan.

28 February 2013

Dear Kendrick,

Hello, Kendrick. Please send my warm regards to your family including you also, who are far from Malaysia. I wish you well.

I had been very tired and exhausted a bit in previous days because I've just got an assignment asked from our lecturer to complete it before end of the week of March. It's kinda tough for me since it was a first time to undertake the online research.

By the way, this is not the main reason I come up with this letter because I am so fed up with the condition of my condo as there was vandalism taking place.

I want to complain and indeed, I had already made a complaint to relative authority about how dissatisfied I was about the swimming pool. It has been used for ten years already. You know that I have habit to swim once in a week, thus, I concern a lot about the maintenance of the pool. It's always slippery and the purifier was so noisy. It makes me feel like want to destroy it (sigh). But I got no choice but just leave it to them. Hopefully they'll make a change.

Then not only this, there are also vandalism happen which they left their masterpiece on the wall. Actually I would like to join them as well because grativi seems like a cool art. Hahah. So next time, if I'm able to learn this art, I'll show you how well I done.

I want to study now. I have mock exam tomorrow but I still hope to meet you as soon as possible. Ok, that's it.

Your Love,
T.S.F

APPENDIX G3 (Transcript of Formal Letter in Pilot Study)

Topic: *You are unsatisfied towards the conditions of your residential area. Please write a complaint letter to the management office to seek for solution and improvement. Limit your letter at 300 words.*

Writing Categories:

- a) Task-examining: Analysing the writing prompt (examine the purpose of writing, the topic, and the instructions)
- b) Idea-generating: Planning the content and evaluating it
- c) Idea-organising: Planning of content organization and evaluating it
- d) Text-generating: Producing and reviewing the text
- e) Process-controlling: Controlling the writing procedures, words, time limit, etc.
- f) Emotion-expressing: Expressing emotion or personal comment(s) during the composing process that is/are irrelevant to the writing prompt and not to be included in the written product.

Remark:

- a) Written Text: Underlined
- b) Reading / Revision / Repetition on written text: “Punctuation Mark”
- c) Other languages besides English: *in Italic*
- d) Paralinguistic features (laughter, coughing, etc.): (Parentheses)
- e) Researcher’s correction on mistakes or clarification on writers’ intended meaning: [Bracket]
- f) Pauses: ...

Line	Utterance	Writing Categories
1	“You are unsatisfied towards the conditions of your residential area. Please write a complaint letter to the management office to seek for solution and improvement...” residential area... hmm, ok, condominium. Can talk about the facilities in condominium.	Task-examining, Idea-generating
5	Ok, firstly I want to write receiver’s address. Erm... I will use my current housing address, I couldn’t remember, wait ahh... Hmm... <u>11</u> , then... Jalan, <u>Jalan 11/14, 54400 PJ, Selangor</u> . Then, this one... my own address. Today is <u>28 February, 2013</u> .	Idea-generating, Text-generating
10	Then, <u>Sir</u> , should I mention the name here or what? Hmm... Ok, <u>Sir Andrew</u> .	Idea-generating, Text-generating
15	Title is <u>Complaint regarding the vandalism in, in... Raya Condominium</u> . I, Ms. Superior, would like to write on behalf of... hmm... <u>citizens living in Raya Condominium as a representative to voice up our dissatisfaction about the current state of affair</u> , hmm... which, <u>which is under the</u> , aiya, “which is under the...” wait ahh... “to voice up our dissatisfaction about the current state	Text-generating, Idea-generating

	of affair... which is under” <u>control by your</u> , “by your” <u>working team</u> .	
	Ok, then I’ll proceed straight to second point.	Idea-organising
20	<u>First of all</u> , hmm... <u>the swimming pool</u> , “swimming pool” <u>of the condominium was so</u> , “was so”, “so bad” like is a bit, no[t] so polite right... I have to change to another word, wait ahh... err... “was so...” (cough) Ohh, erm, “the swimming pool of the condominium was” <u>not keep under good condition</u> .	Text-generating, Idea-generating Emotion-expressing
25 30 35	The... <u>the floor was always very slippery</u> , ehh, it’s about vandalism, wait ahh... err... “always very slippery”, <u>not because of the water splashing out, but because of the vandal</u> , err, <u>was not sure whether is our very own</u> , err, “very own” <u>citizens or visitors from outside, purposely</u> , “purposely”...hmm... “purposely...” I don’t know, how to say. Hmm, “purposely”, hmm... “visitors from outside purposely”, ahh, “purposely” <u>put the flour on the floor, without thinking of the consequences that might bring</u> , err, “that might” <u>cause injury to my children, and also</u> , ahh... <u>the other citizens safe, safety</u> . Erm, and then, I need to proceed to third one.	Text-generating, Idea-generating Text-generating, Idea-generating, Idea-organising
	And also, the third one, wait ahh.. wait, I want to think about another area. About the... ahh, about the wall. And then, the third point I am going to bring out is about the wall.	Idea-generating, Idea-organising
40	Ok. <u>For the second issue, it is</u> err... err... it cannot be informal one, so I’ll change it, instead of put the apostrophe -’s there, “It is” err... “it is, it is” <u>quite worrying and there are also vandal</u> , err, “who” <u>likes a lot the culture of ‘grativity’ [graffiti]</u> .	Idea-generating, Text-generating
45	Is it grativity or gra... Is that grativity? Erm, I think it’s grativity, never mind. Erm, <u>they always</u> “they always” erm, <u>did their painting</u> , erm, <u>at the midnight, which I accidentally found out</u> err, <u>last week</u> . Errm, <u>the painting is not an elegant art, which</u> , “which”, erm, “which” I, “which I” <u>am not</u> , “found out last week, the painting is not an elegant art, which I... which I” <u>do not really appreciate</u> .	Idea-generating, Text-generating
50	<u>And it is quite</u> (mumbling), “it is quite, it is quite, it is quite” <u>bad</u> err, <u>for visitor to come over and</u> , “and” <u>see this situation</u> . <u>Like the</u> , “like” <u>our security guard here</u> , hmm... <u>did not bring their job well</u> , ehh, “did not, did not, did not” <u>carry out</u> “their job well”.	Idea-generating, Text-generating
55	<u>Although I had approached them</u> , “approach”, err, I mean, “approached” <u>those vandals</u> , “I” erm, “approached the vandals” <u>and, deter them, from doing</u> , “deter them from doing” <u>so</u> . <u>But I hope err that, the...</u> “that” <u>authority would take</u> , “would	Text-generating, Idea-generating

	take” steps to... “to” rectify it. And refurbish the wall that has been vandalized.	
60	And then, and then, I’m too tired already. So I want to stop. <u>Yours sincerely</u> , ehh, no no no, not yet. I want to write a word before.	Emotion-expressing Idea-generating, Text-generating
	<u>So, we looking forward</u> ahh... <u>for your</u> “for your” <u>concern as soon as possible. Thank you.</u>	Text-generating, Idea-generating
65	“Yours sincerely”, err, I want to use my English name instead of my real name. Ok.	Text-generating, Idea-generating

APPENDIX G4 (Transcript of Informal Letter in Pilot Study)

Topic: *You are unsatisfied towards the conditions of your residential area. Please write a letter about this to your cousin staying overseas. Limit your letter at 300 words.*

Writing Categories:

- g) Task-examining: Analysing the writing prompt (examine the purpose of writing, the topic, and the instructions)
- h) Idea-generating: Planning the content and evaluating it
- i) Idea-organising: Planning of content organization and evaluating it
- j) Text-generating: Producing and reviewing the text
- k) Process-controlling: Controlling the writing procedures, words, time limit, etc.
- l) Emotion-expressing: Expressing emotion or personal comment(s) during the composing process that is/are irrelevant to the writing prompt and not to be included in the written product.

Remark:

- g) Written Text: Underlined
- h) Reading / Revision / Repetition on written text: “Punctuation Mark”
- i) Other languages besides English: *in Italic*
- j) Paralinguistic features (laughter, coughing, etc.): (Parentheses)
- k) Researcher’s correction on mistakes or clarification on writers’ intended meaning: [Bracket]
- l) Pauses: ...

Line	Utterance	Remark (Writing Stages)
1	Ok, I want to write informal letter. This one is like, much more easier lah, I feel like, much more erm, not so boring lah, compared to the formal letter, I need to think of those polite words. Make me feel like very ‘sien’ [a slang, meaning: bored, not interested].	Task-examining, Emotion-expressing
5	Ok, now, I want to write my own address, same as before. Then the date, then I go to the... <u>dear</u> , my beloved cousin, <u>Kendrick</u> . It’s a male lah, ok.	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating
10	And then I will to proceed to greetings. <u>Hello, Kendrick, please send my warm regards to your family, ahh, including you also, who are far from Malaysia, hmm, I wish you well.</u> And then, I start with the first paragraph.	Process-controlling, Idea-generating, Text-generating

15	I don't know how to start of with, wait ah, I'd say... aiyo, I don't know what to say, wait ah... oh, about the vandalism, err... err ok, err, <u>I had been very tired and exhausted a bit</u> ahh, pre... <u>in previous days because I've just got an assignment asked from our lecturer to, "to" complete it before end of the week of March, it's kinda boring</u> , ehh, "kinda, kinda" <u>tough for me since</u> ahh, ok, "since, since", err, "since" <u>it was a first time err to undertake the online research.</u>	Emotion-expressing, Idea-generating, Text-generating
20	<u>By the way, this is not the main reason I come up with this letter. Because I was so, ehh, I am so fed up err, with the condition of my, "of my" condo, err "of my condo". As... as... as, as having, having or got ahh? I don't know.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
25	"I come up with this letter because I was so fed up with the conditions of my condo", <u>as there was vandalism taking place.</u> I don't know lah, I'm not sure with the, erm, past tense and present tense and all that. The... What else can I write ahh, besides the swimming pool and wall?	Idea-generating, Text-generating Emotion-expressing, Idea-generating
30	Can I just, can I just choose the other topic instead of vandalism? I'm not so sure with that. I don't want to say this severe thing in this letter. Why vandalism, write not to the right person? Useless right? It's like quite useless. Never mind. Err... I'll keep going on.	Emotion-expressing
35	Err... <u>I want to complain and indeed, "and indeed", I had already err, err, made a complaint to err, relative authority about how dis... err... satisfied I was about the swimming pool... has been using, has been used, "has been used" for ten years already.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
	Err, <u>you know that I have habit to swim once in a week, thus, I concern a lot about, about the maintenance, "about the maintenance", hmm... "to swim once a week, thus I concern a lot about the maintenance"... of swimming... of the pool.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating
35	Hmm, <u>it's always slippery and the purifier was so noisy. It makes me feel like want to smash it, ehh, "want to" ahh... "want to" destroy it. (sigh) But, but I got no choice but just leave it to them. Hopefully they'll make a change.</u>	Idea-generating, Text-generating, Emotion-expressing

40	<p><u>Then not only this, there are also vandalism erm, happen ahh, which “which”, err, “which”, ahh... they left their masterpiece on the wall.</u></p> <p><u>Actually, I would like to join them as well because err, grativi [graffiti] is, “is” erm... “because grativi [graffiti]”... “join them as well, because grativi [graffiti]” seems like a cool art.</u></p>	<p>Idea-generating, Text-generating</p> <p>Idea-generating, Text-generating</p>
	<p><u>Hahah. So next time, if I, if I’m able to, “to” learn this art, I’ll show you how well “how well”, “I’ll show you how well” I done, “I done” is it?</u></p>	<p>Idea-generating, Text-generating</p>
45	<p><u>Ahh... I want to study now. I have mock exam tomorrow, err, but I still hope to meet you as soon as possible. Ok, that’s it. Hmm... Then, ok, Your love, T.S.F.</u></p>	<p>Idea-generating, Text-generating</p>