

EFL Student Writing as a Social and Multimodal Practice: A Case Study

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Abstract

This paper examines the ways in which visual and verbal elements are integrated to shape EFL student's online writing as a social and multimodal practice. Via purposeful sampling, one particular Taiwanese EFL university student was recruited as the research participant. The specific genre studied is one particular promotional genre, a film proposal. Adopting the notion of genre as a staged and goal-oriented social process (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990), the research participant's multimodal writing practice is examined along three dimensions: (a) the move-step structure of written proposals, (b) the generic structure of proposal posters, and (c) the interplay between the verbal and visual elements in writing practices of a promotional genre. Data analysis reveals the EFL student participant applied the visual and verbal resources in her multimodal writing practices to fulfill the institutional expectations of meaning making and social interaction. Relevant pedagogical implications of integrating multimodality in EFL writing pedagogy are also discussed.

Keywords

multimodality, promotional genre, verbal texts, visual texts, EFL writing practices

Introduction

Nowadays, perhaps than ever before, a large number of second language learners (ESL/EFL) are present in English language classrooms. Writing in English in the EFL context however is a very challenging task for many students, as most of them write and learn to write in English solely in writing courses at schools. This immediate context of writing pedagogy affects the prevailing patterns of EFL writing instruction, which is dominated by an essentially "skills-based" perspective of writing, focusing on the training of writing skills (e.g. Atkinson, 2003; Currie & Cray, 2004). Nevertheless, for the increasing of English in the world, L2 writers have to draw upon relevant genres to communicate with others in a global community. Thus, the research orientation of ESL/EFL writing has shifted from mastering the particular set of writing skills to learning to write genres for purposeful communication, and in turn for participating in the target socio-cultural communities of practice (e.g. Hyland, 2003; Matsuda et al., 2003; Matsuda & Silva, 2005; Tardy, 2005, 2006, 2008).

While an increasing number of studies have concentrated on patterns for different written genres and contexts, the ways which writing is used to participate in a discourse community, technology-based innovative instructional intervention, and the role of writing in teacher education (e.g. Juzwik et al., 2006; Silva & Brice, 2004; one in Taiwan: Liou, 2008), one of future directions in L2 writing research is writing-context related studies: that means, drawing upon the concept of a multi-layered context, including personal, institutional, social, cultural contexts, to take account of people's values, attitudes, feelings, social relationships, purposes, and identities which shape and being shaped by writing as a social practice. The perspective of writing as a social practice does not diminish the value of teaching writing skills and helping students eliminate errors in their compositions, but it moves the frontier of L2 writing research further to understand that writing, for L2 writing is embedded in "social life and in thought, and its position in history, in language and in learning" (Barton, 2007, p.32).

Due to the easier access to ever-evolving technologies, a number of studies have explored

writing in electronic media, particularly digital literacies (e.g. Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996; Warschauer, 1999), multimodality and multiliteracies (e.g. Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; New London Group, 1996) in computer or Internet assisted communication. A social-practice perspective of writing is utilized to explore how students are given a new array of choices for making meaning and positioning themselves through multimodal communication in relevant contexts. Although multimodal resources in virtual communication allow L2 learners to cope with linguistic and contextual constraints in writing (e.g. Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Shin & Cimasko, 2008; Tardy, 2005), there remains a lack of research into how ESL or EFL students draw upon multimodal resources to negotiate meaning and express their identities in their academic writing practices, which are socially situated and (re)constructed. This paper thus explores the interplay between the visual and verbal texts as a focal EFL university student engaged in one on-line writing task in which she composed one particular promotional genre. A promotional genre is characterized by its promotional and persuasive purpose which underpins the particular context and its specific generic and contextual features. Sales promotional letter, job application letter, proposal, advertisement, and tourist brochure are typical examples of a promotional genre (Bhatia, 1993, 2004). The particular promotional genre which the focal student produced is a film proposal, including both written proposal and visual poster.

By adopting a case study approach (Yin, 2003), this paper reports an in-depth investigation of the EFL student writing as a social and multimodal practice. The research aim is two-fold: first, to explore *what* the focal EFL student participant, Diane, composed the verbal and visual texts of a promotional genre; second, to uncover *how* the verbal and visual resources were integrated for negotiating meaning and expressing the writer's identity in Diane's online writing practices which are social and multimodal in nature. In this study, a film proposal is written online as a promotional genre; both verbal and visual texts are composed. Three research questions are as follows:

- (1) What characterizes the EFL university student participant's written film proposal in terms of its move-step structure?
- (2) What characterizes the EFL university student participant's film proposal poster in terms of its generic structure?
- (3) What is the interplay between the verbal and visual texts in the EFL student participant's multimodal writing practice as s/he produces a film proposal in an online writing task?

Three types of analysis are undertaken and combined to address this research inquiry: a). move-step analysis (Bhatia, 1993, 2004) of the verbal text of a promotional genre, i.e. written proposal, b). generic-structure analysis (Cheong, 2004) of the visual text of a promotional genre, i.e. proposal poster, and c). content analysis (Tischer, Meyer, Wodak & Vetter, 2000) of ethnographic details about the EFL student's multimodal writing practices.

Literature Review

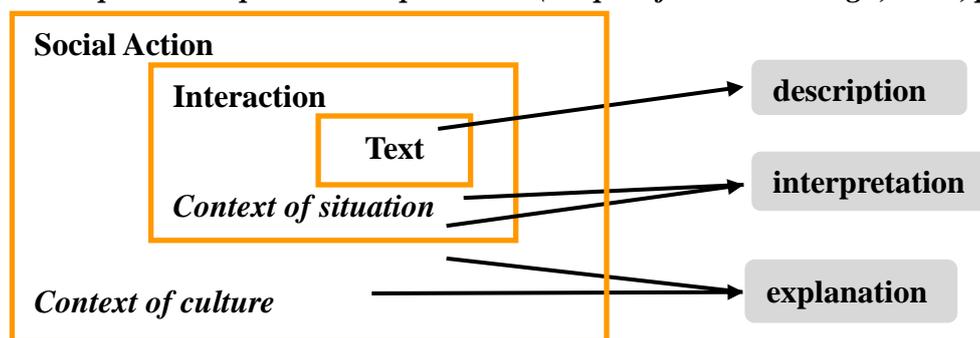
Writing as a Social Practice and Multimodal Practice

Several researchers in the field of L2 writing (e.g. Atkinson, 2003; Casanave, 1998; Currie & Cray, 2004; Hyland, 2003; Matsuda & Silva, 2005; Tardy, 2005, 2006) observe that a "skill-based view" prevails in teaching and learning of writing in ESL/EFL contexts. That is, writing in higher education is to master universal rules of usage, grammar, and text organization. These researchers; however, criticize such an assumption and propose a social-practice perspective of writing. A writer is situated in specific contexts, applying relevant linguistic and generic resources to make meaning, to interact with the intended audience, and to accomplish goals of writing. A social-practice perspective of writing puts the notion of "literacy practice" at center, emphasizing literacy (reading and writing) as "cultural

ways of utilizing literacy” (Barton, 2007); it involves values, attitudes, feelings, social relationships, people’s awareness of literacy, constructions of literacy, and discourses of literacy. Writing thus is considered as a social practice, ideologically-laden and socio-culturally (re)constructed in contexts.

The notion of “literacy practice” is supported by a multi-layered view of language, which is proposed by Fairclough (1989, 1995), a leading scholar in critical discourse analysis (CDA). Fairclough’s (1989) multi-layered view of language captures three interlocking dimensions of language, providing the theoretical backup to the discussion on the nature of writing (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Three-layered diagram of language: text-interaction-social action and levels of analysis: description-interpretation-explanation (adapted from Fairclough, 1989, p.25)



Three dimensions in Figure 1 are (1) linguistic choices within a *text*, (2) *interaction* subject to community-based conventions and discursive practices, and (3) *social action* whereby the writer goes about negotiating institutional and interactional forces for meaning making and identity (re)construction. A *text*, which is spoken, written, or multimodal, is embedded in *social interaction*. *Interaction* often shapes and is shaped by processes of text production and interpretation in the immediate *context of situation*, and these processes are further influenced by *social actions* and conditions in the broader *context of culture*. Regarding the analysis, Fairclough (1989, 1995) identifies three levels of analysis related to three interlocking dimensions of language: (a) *description* which examines the formal properties of text, (b) *interpretation* which concerns the relationship between text and interaction, emphasizing the conception of text as an outcome of the process of production and as a resource in the process of interpretation, (c) *explanation* which focuses on the relationship between interaction and the *context of culture*, depending on social conditions of the processes of production and interpretation and their social effects. It is inferred that there is a mutually reciprocal exchange between the broader social context of text production and interaction in the immediate *context of situation*, and such an exchange contributes to textual properties.

With the advancement of computer technology in the 21st century, the integration of technology into ESL/EFL writing has appealed many scholars’ attention (e.g. Warschauer, 1999; Shih, 2011). Virtual environments provide the learners with resources in various modes (verbal, visual, and auditory) to write on-line, making meaning, negotiating social relations, and positioning themselves in digital literacy practices (Hyland, 2003, p.144). Relevant to resources in online written communication is the notion of “multimodality” (Iedema, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001), which is applicable to both L1 and L2 writing. “Multimodality” is defined as various semiotic modes being applied to realize meanings in ways that can, but do not have to, share commonalities. Language-based communication relies on words, semantic structure, and

generic patterns while visual communication employs color, salience, and composition.

The perspective of writing as a social practice has been developed and endorsed by literacy theorists in the New Literacy Studies (NLS, e.g. Barton, 2007; Ivanič, 1998; Prinsloo & Baynham, 2008) and those consider writing as multimodal artifact (e.g. Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Tardy, 2005). The product of the writer's design involves the interplay of more than one kind of semiotic mode in the composition. Later a social-practice perspective is associated with relevant theories of learning, notably the study of "communities of practice" (CoP, Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), which affect the researchers in second or foreign language education to align with social and political aspect of writing, for example, critical literacy scholars (e.g. Ivanič, 1998; Wallace, 2003). L2 writing researchers (e.g. Chala, P.A. & Chapetón, 2012; Ortega & Carson, 2010; Shin & Cimasko, 2008; Tardy, 2005, 2008) attest the value of a social-practice perspective to explicate how ESL/EFL writers learn implicitly by participating in socially situated literacy events to fulfill social goals significant in relevant contexts. In their participation, ESL/EFL writers learn to make good use of affordances in multimodal resources for meaning making and identity construction.

In the EFL context, while writing research is most geared towards helping learners cope with challenges of writing accurate and appropriate texts, scant attention has been paid to L2 students' learning to write as a social practice. Such an imbalance needs to be addressed since there is a growing need for L2 writers using English as a lingua franca to achieve effective communication in the global community. To date, however, there is a paucity of research on taking a social practice perspective to literacy as an interpretive lens to examine EFL student writing, particularly those in the countries located in the expanding circle¹ (e.g. Chala & Chapetón, 2012; Ferenz, 2005; Ortega & Carson, 2010).

Only till this decade, multimodal analysis has started appealing L2 writing researchers' attention, for it expands the scope of investigation of writing from the lexical or syntactic features of written text to multimodal resources in the pedagogic and social domains of life drawn upon by L2 writers in their writing practices (e.g. Leander & Prior, 2004; Nelson, 2006; Shin & Cimasko, 2008; Tardy, 2005, 2008). The present research intends to respond to Ortega & Carson's (2010) call for more research on multilingual student writers employing relevant social and multimodal resources to write for meaning-making and self-expression. It is guided by the concerns of multimodality in student writing, particularly online writing tasks which ESL/EFL students engage in (e.g. Shin & Cimasko, 2008; Tardy, 2005, 2008). This study takes a step further by drawing upon a multi-layered view of language and context (Fairclough, 1989, 1995) to examine how the use of verbal and visual texts are pertinent to relevant contextual features, which in turn affect the EFL student's multimodal writing practices, particularly negotiation of meaning and identity (re)construction. It also attempts to demonstrate the analysis of the EFL student writing as a social and multimodal practice can generate new insights for EFL writing pedagogy.

Genre

The notion of "genre" is developed by researchers such as Bhatia (1993, 2004), Paltridge (1997, 2001), and Swales (1990) throughout 1990s; different researchers define genres by having different foci. The work of genre contributing to the design of this research include those by Bhatia (1993, 2004), Bazerman (2004), Fairclough (2003), and Swales (1990). Swales (1990) is famous for his seminal book on genre analysis. The focus of genre analysis is on the move-step structure or the generic structure in the context of one communicative event. The generic structure constitutes and is constituted by the writer's intentions and conventions of the target community. Bhatia's (1993, 2004) work is on genre analysis of professional genres. It

treats the purpose inherent for a form is most essential for the constitution of a genre and such a form is often evident by the specific generic conventions and features. Different from Bhatia's (1993, 2004) emphasis on the purpose of a genre, Bazerman (2004) and Fairclough (2003) argue that social action should be located at the heart of language use in a genre; accordingly, genre is defined as the specific type deployed and (re)produced in shifting power structures to establish relations with others, to convey messages, and to get things done.

Insights of genre proposed by these key theorists guide this research design. Genre is regarded as a social action characterized by generic conventions and features, and to some extent, associated with the purpose for (re)constructing a genre; however, generic conventions are not fixed but subject to social interactions in which genre is (re)produced. As indicated in the Introduction, this study investigates one particular promotional genre, a film proposal, which the focal EFL student, Diane, composed. Relevant details will be elaborated in later sections.

The Study: Research Design

The study is part of a larger research project which examines multimodality and genres in EFL students' academic writing practices². It follows the tradition of a qualitative case study in which the researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, p.106). An individual unit chosen to study is the EFL university student. The core issue of a case study is how to generalize such a small number of the single case. As Schofield (1993) explicates, "for qualitative researchers generalizability is best thought of as a matter of the 'fit' between the situated and others to which one might be interested in applying the concepts and conclusions of that study. This conceptualization makes thick descriptions crucial, since without them one does not have the information necessary for an informed judgement about the issue of fit" (p.221). Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000, p.89) also stress that because of the nature of qualitative research, no clear-cut answer can be found for the correct sample size. Rather, the purpose of the qualitative research and the nature of the population under scrutiny determine the sample size in the qualitative investigation.

As Prinsloo and Baynham (2008) noted, the recent work in the New Literacy Studies retain the emphasis on the complexity of literacy practices in relevant settings and also are concerned with insightful analyses of how particular literacy practices connect up with wider social contexts, cultural understanding, and forms of learning. Despite the limitation of its generalization, the case study approach has the potential to answer "how" and "why" type questions of the issue under investigation, and to explicate how a phenomenon is influenced by the context within which it is situated (Yin, 2003). Therefore, this present study reports a case of an EFL student's writing of a promotional genre in greater detail, gathering data from a variety of sources, converging and interpreting the data to illuminate the case: the EFL student's multimodal writing practice.

Purposeful sampling was employed in this study to select "information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the question under study" (Patton, 2002, p.230). Research participant recruitment started from the beginning of the second semester of academic year 2011-2012 (Spring semester, 2012), from students attending one English Writing course: English Writing (II) at one research-oriented university in Northern Taiwan. After consultation of the instructor of English Writing (II), Dr. Hsu, and detailed explanations of the present research purpose, the focal participant, Diane, agreed to join the study when given the guarantee of the confidentiality of her identity. Diane and Dr. Hu signed the informed consent forms given by the researcher and agreed to use the pseudonyms for presenting them in the present research. Relevant details of research site and the focal research participant are briefly depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Research site and the focal research participant

Research site: About English Writing (II) course (see also Appendix 1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● English Writing (I) and (II) were two elective courses among a number of Sophomore English courses—English Writing (I) was offered in the first semester of academic year 2011-2012 (Fall semester, 2011) while English Writing (II) was offered in the second semester of academic year 2011-2012 (Spring 2012, 2012/02~2012/06). Students attended English Writing (II) had to attend English Writing (I) first.● In the particular university where this study was conducted, English courses were EAP or ESP courses for non-English major students to select. English Writing (I) and (II) were considered as particular ESP courses specially designed for students majored in fine arts, including commercial design, landscape design, arts, and music.● Genre approach was adopted in writing instruction. In English Writing (II), students were taught to write short essays in four different rhetorical modes: cause-effect analysis, definition, persuasion, and business letters.
Focal research participant (Diane) selection (see also Appendix 2)
<p>The focal participant, Diane, was chosen for conforming to the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● a Taiwanese EFL university student whose major is commercial design.● received primary and secondary education in Taiwan and have learnt English as foreign language for at least nine years.● has passed the upper-intermediate level English proficiency test (General English Proficiency Test) recognized by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan.● took English Writing (I) course for one semester (Fall semester, 2011) and the participant's performance in that course is within top 10% of the whole class.● acknowledged that English writing is of great significance to her career development or further education.● highly recommended by her advisor in the Department of Commercial Design, Dr. Huang and her instructor, English Writing (I) and (II), Dr. Hsu.

In this study, a focal EFL participant, Diane, engaged in one particular on-line writing task: film proposal writing. An on-line writing task, different from a paper-based task, is characterized by its provision with opportunities for the learners to make good use of affordances in multimodal resources in virtual communication (e.g. Shih, 2011; Warschauer, 1999). The task instruction of film proposal writing is presented in **Table 1**. Diane and her classmates enrolling English Writing (II) course were required to spend two hours to write their film proposals in a computing lab.

Table 1 Film proposal: Task instruction

<p>You have a great opportunity to get a contract with a major movie-producing firm. To get the contract, you need to write a short proposal that is argumentative/persuasive in nature. In your proposal, you should describe the film you want to make, which can be something you do very well, or about particular aspects of your culture or any other creative idea you want to present. The purpose is to capture prospective customers' attention, to sustain their interests, and further to convince them of the benefits of selecting and sponsoring you. Write a well-organized proposal to convince the firm why they should choose you instead of others.</p> <p>Please apply skills of writing a persuasion/argumentation. You will need to provide relevant and convincing pieces of evidence to support your claims.</p> <p>**You have to complete this task within 2 hours; suggested length: 400-600 words, double-spaced</p>

The on-line writing task—film proposal writing—is designed to train students how to write a promotional genre by applying relevant knowledge and skills of persuasive writing. Prior to the task, students were taught skills of reading argumentative/persuasive texts and of writing persuasive essays and participated in class tasks, such as reading advertisements, business letters, political speeches as well as writing a compliant letter. The framework of the move structure of a promotional genre, as shown in Figure 3, was taught by the instructor of English Writing (II), Dr. Hsu, for guiding students to better understand why specific moves and steps are included in a promotional genre and their purposes. From the class observation and interviews with Dr. Hsu, Dr. Hsu asked students to use this framework as a reference in in-class discussions with peers on analyzing business letters and political speeches in in-class discussions with peers. The students were also encouraged to apply this framework in their assignments such as reading their chosen advertisements and writing compliant letters.

Figure 3 *Move structure of a promotional genre (adapted from Bhatia, 1993, p.47)*

Move 1	Targeting the market
Move 2	Establishing credentials
Move 3	Introducing the offer: Step 1: offering the product or service, Step 2: essential detailing of the offer, Step 3: indicating the value of the offer
Move 4	Offering the incentive (or even including enclosing the documents)
Move 5	Using pressure tactics
Move 6	Soliciting responses (or even including ending politely)

As documented in Table 1, the communicative purposes of a proposal are to “capture prospective customers’ attention, to sustain their interests, and further to convince them of the benefits of selecting and sponsoring you [writers of the proposal].” The visual poster related to the written proposal was added after several students’ suggestions³. The poster was drawn by applying relevant computer software, and students consider it would supplement with their written proposals well to convey meaning more effectively and demonstrate their creativity. In this case study, Diane’s written film proposal (Data 1-a) and visual poster (Data 1-b) constituted the major data source. Other data sources were also collected by employing different methods, including the researcher’s observation notes of some class sessions in English Writing (II) (Data 2), interview transcripts with Diane and her English writing teacher (Data 3), and Diane’s reflective journals (Data 4).

More specifically, three in-depth semi-structured interviews with Diane were conducted between February 2012 and June 2012. Diane spoke mostly in Mandarin Chinese, with occasional code switches to English and Taiwanese. The interview questions were informed by Belcher and Connor’s (2001) and Ivanič (1998)’s work on student learning of academic writing, including three major parts: *the focal student’s profile*, *English writing experiences*, and *learning to write in English through multimodal resources*. The researcher also got the permission from the instructor of English Writing (II), Dr. Hsu, to observe some class sessions and conduct the interviews with her. In October 2012, Diane and her instructor, Dr. Hsu received hard copies of their retrospective accounts written in English. After both of them agreed that their accounts were accurately reproduced, their accounts were revisited for further thematic coding by the researcher first and then two other researchers to ensure inter-rater reliability of the whole coding process. In addition, Dr. Hsu required her students in English Writing (II) to keep reflective journals about their processes of learning to write in English. Reflective journals by Diane became another valuable data for the researcher uncovering the complexity of her multimodal

writing practices.

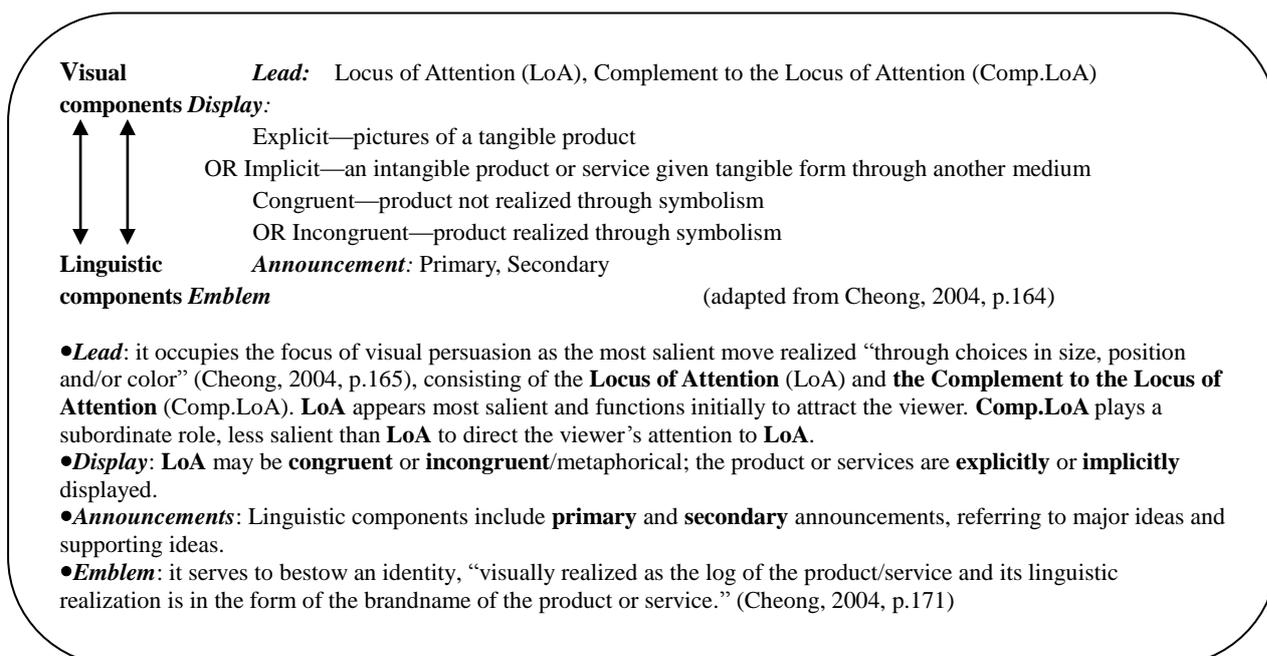
As Silverman (2000) claims, infusion of various activities for the research is done to ensure the multiplicity of data generated; the “multiplicity” includes people, process, even time, and the socio-cultural context. The aim of this qualitative case study is to particularize, rather than to generalize, a focal EFL student’s multimodal writing practices. As suggested by Yin (2003), relevant strategies such as cross-examination of different data sources and constant comparison are used to ensure the whole research procedure reliable and valid. The following sections on data analysis demonstrate that the researcher undertook the rigorous analyses of multiple data sources to achieve trustworthiness in a case-study approach and to allow future researchers implementing similar research investigations into the L2 learners’ writing in the EFL context.

Data Analytical Framework

Data analysis is informed by Fairclough’s three levels of analysis (1989, 1995): *description*, *interpretation*, and *explanation*. *Description* is about textual analysis of a promotional genre written by the focal student, Diane. *Interpretation* constitutes the examination of the interaction which foregrounds Diane’s production of a promotional genre in terms of generic features and structures. *Explanation* underscores social or cultural values and practices that frame social interaction and selection of multimodal resources in Diane’s writing practices.

Three specific data analytical means are adopted to analyze research data. Firstly, Bhatia’s (1993, p.46-51) *move-step structure* framework of a promotional genre (as presented in Figure 3), which was utilized by the instructor of English Writing (II), Dr. Hsu, is employed to analyze Diane’s written film proposal (Data 1-a). Secondly, Cheong’s (2004) framework on the *generic structure* of print advertisements (as presented in Figure 4) is adapted for examining Diane’s visual poster (Data 1-b). Thirdly, with regard to *ethnographic details* of Diane’s writing practice elicited through interviews, researcher’s classroom observation, and Diane’s reflective journals (Data 2, 3, 4) are analyzed through the means of content analysis (Tischer et al., 2000).

Figure 4 The generic-structure framework of print advertisements (Cheong, 2004, p.164)



There exists the intimate relation among three types of analysis; each analysis encompasses three levels: *description*, *interpretation*, and *explanation*. Although the analyses of the verbal text (Analysis I) and the visual text (Analysis II) of a promotional genre are presented as two stand-alone subsections in the section of **Data Analysis and Discussion**, they are interconnected; the visual and visual resources contribute to EFL student writing practices in differing ways as discussed in Analysis III. Due to the space constraint, crucial segments of data are quoted in the next section⁴.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Analysis (I) The Move-step Structure of the Verbal Text, Diane's Written Film Proposal

Data analysis of Diane's writing of a promotional genre: film proposal (Text FP) reveals that her proposal is characterized by the particular *move-step* structure, similar to the one for sales promotional letters (Bhatia, 1993, p.46-51), as presented in Figure 3 above. For brevity, four important moves (moves 1~4) are discussed here.

Diane started her proposal by precisely locating the market and introducing the theme of her film proposal. Move 1: Targeting the market, as one vital move in a promotional genre, is constituted by the first sentence in Diane's written proposal: "It focuses on the theme of love, loving the disabled and respecting their potentials; with this theme, the film surely will move the heart of audience of all age levels." In one retrospective interview, Diane talked about her motive of arousing the audience's interests by pointing out the theme straightforwardly: "the audience could grasp the focus of [her] film proposal...and they can pay attention to the contemporary social issue I discussed in the proposal...I learnt the importance of considering the audience in my written proposal from my writing teacher's instruction on sales business letters and also discussions with my groupmates on reading assigned advertisements..." (interview extract 1). Diane's account illustrates her awareness of the purpose of move 1 was much pertinent to what she was taught in English Writing (II) course.

Right after move 1, Diane underlined her team's credentials in terms of well-established reputation or professional experience in order to impress the potential audience. Diane said that "it will help to strengthen her team's expertise and to promote our film" (interview extract 2). Evident in this move is the use of two pronouns: "we" and "you". From Fairclough's (1989, 1995) multi-layered view of language and three-level-analysis approach, at the *description* level, the pronoun use is identified as a salient linguistic feature to indicate the relationship between the writer and the audience. At the *interpretation* level, Diane's understanding of the interaction with her audience in the immediate context determined her language use. Retrospectively, Diane acknowledged one of her important reader is her instructor, the assessor of her writing. She wrote in her reflective journal (extract 1): "...using you is considered acceptable since I remember the instructor said using 'you' can create the friendly image; a strategy to build the relation, more oriented to peer-like relation rather than authority-client relation." Besides, Diane was influenced by her belief of being a writer, which is somehow related to the traditional Chinese view as being modest, as noted in the interview (interview extract 3) and the researcher's observation note (note 1). This cultural belief of and the institutional expectation of a writer resulted in Diane's struggle of presenting herself as an author in relation to the audience. At the *explanation* level, the traditional Chinese cultural conception of the writer's position or status is brought into social interactions in both *context of situation* and *context of culture*. Diane's practices of writing this move might be influenced to some extent by her exposure to the writing instructor's explicit instruction of a promotional genre in the class and the traditional belief of the writer's authority in the broader socio-cultural context. Instead of using "I" to underline the authorship, Diane chose to use "we" to invite her audience to participate in the decision making process of selecting film proposals and

sponsoring her film production teams.

This finding is similar to Bhatia's studies (1993, 2004) on the promotional letters and Vergaro's research (2004) on advertisements. Vergaro (2004) pointed out that the most striking characteristic in the move of "establishing credentials" is that the writer refers themselves as "we", aiming to present good qualities of the target product or service and then to lead to the intended audience's behavior of buying. Also the writer uses "you" to guide the audience to engage in the evaluating process of the target product or service (*ibid*). In this study, Diane made attempts to attract the audience's attention by first identifying her team's credentials through using "we" and "you" consciously or subconsciously to address herself and her audience.

Having established her team's credentials, Diane turned to elaborate the major content of her film, which constituted move 3: "introducing the offer." Diane presented different elements of a film and arranged them in sequence: firstly the theme, followed by plots, climax, and resolution. In terms of textual properties, a number of positively evaluative adjectives; for example optimistic, pessimistic, compassionate, cynical, caring, sincere, selfish, isolated, sexy, famous, humorous, are found in Diane's written proposal. This finding echoes with the feature of positive evaluation of the product or service in a promotional genre, such as sales promotion letters or advertisement (Bhatia, 1993, 2004; Cook, 2001; Vergaro, 2004). Lexical boosters accompanying the positive evaluation are used to achieve persuasion. ESL/EFL writers tended to use certain lexis and text structures unique to the promotional genre (Prior, 2005). Diane, like most of ESL/EFL writers, rely more on various functional-semantic and stylistic devices to indicate the beginning, end, or different parts of a text (e.g. Vedder, 1999).

Also, it is noted that in Diane's written proposal, most sentences are accurate, yet the use of evaluative adjectives is not very complex. There are more simple sentences (76%) than complex (8%) or compound (13%) sentences whereas several transitional words and phrases are found. Retrospectively, Diane reported her addition of cohesive devices on purpose to demonstrate her "improved command over ways of signaling the relations between sentences and paragraphs in the written proposal" (interview extract 4). She did so to please a particular audience, the writing instructor as the assessor of her writing in the immediate *context of situation*. Furthermore, move 3 in Diane's proposal was subject to the social condition, the impact of the conception of argument and tactics of arguing shared by those with Chinese cultural heritage: "Chinese people usually do not like to cause conflicts. In the process of arguing, we try our best to avoid confrontations...thus we often do not address or engage with opposing viewpoints" (interview extract 5). As Andrews (2005) pointed out, ESL/EFL students with Chinese heritage, compared to English native speakers, make relatively few refutations as they value the group harmony and consider that attacking opposing viewpoints may be a threat. This cultural value and ways of arguing, to a certain degree, influenced Diane's choice of organizational structure, evident in lack of rebuttals in her film proposal. Diane mentioned about her perception of argument with regard to the claim-evidence pattern which she learnt from the previous writing class and her dilemma of revealing her identity as an arguer. She said: "I do not like arguing, defending against the counter-arguments, but I know I should do so to strengthen my stance. I keep thinking of my role. What do my readers think of me as an arguer..." (interview extract 6).

After presenting the essential details about the product or service, the writer may provide the incentive in the form of the special offer or discount, which results in the move of "offering the incentive" (Bhatia, 1993, p.53) as a way to give an ease closure. This move is better understood in its formation by taking account of a multi-layered view of language (Fairclough,

1989, 1995) and the notion of context (Barton, 2007; Gee, 2004; Ivanič, 1998). In her reflective journal (reflective journal extract 2), Diane indicated her decision of including the component of bargaining in her film proposal to attract more audience: “I notice bargaining is a very common technique to persuade the potential buyers in my reading of several advertisements and commercials. I also bargain quite a lot in my daily life, especially going to night markets for buying food or clothes.” Diane’s remarks points to the process of recontextualisation (Bernstein, 1996): selecting and relocating resources from two major layers of context: *context of situation* and *context of culture* in her film proposal writing practice. Diane applied her understanding of promotional techniques from her study of advertisements in the previous schooling context (resource from *context of situation*) and skills of bargaining in her social life (resource from *context of culture*).

The move-step structure analysis of Diane’s written film proposal reveals that film proposal as a promotional genre is socially situated and constructed. Three-level-analysis (*description, interpretation, explanation*) suggests there is a mutually reciprocal exchange between two layers of context (*context of situation, context of culture*) of text production and textual properties. Specific features of second language writing are evident in Diane’s proposal, particularly, the low degree of specificity in terms of lexis and syntax. Social interactions in relevant contextual layers which underpin the composing process influence Diane’s writing practices at three levels. At the interpretation and explanation levels, Diane selected of resources from the *context of situation* and *context of culture* (the writing teacher’s explicit instruction, the discussion with classmates, Diane’s out-of-class reading of relevant promotional genres such as advertisements and business letters, Diane’s exposure to the traditional social or cultural beliefs) to shape the moves and steps in a particular promotional genre, the written film proposal and the claim-argument pattern of presenting central arguments. At the *description*, Diane carefully decided her language use in the proposal, reflected in the use of positive adjectives as boosters and relevant pronoun use: “we”, “I”, and “you”.

Analysis (II) The Generic Structure of the Visual Text: Diane’s Film Proposal Poster

In addition to the written proposal, Diane produced the film poster (FP-P), utilizing visual resources to make meaning in her writing of a promotional genre. Considering that the poster serves the main function of advertisement, Cheong’s (2004) framework of the generic structure of print advertisements (see Figure 4) is employed for the analysis of Diane’s poster. Some salient examples of these components are identified in Diane’s film proposal poster, and they are schematically listed in Figure 5.

Figure 5 Analysis of Diane’s film proposal poster

Film Proposal Poster	Components of the generic structure identified in Diane’s poster (FP1-P) and Tina’s poster (FP2-P)
FP1-P (by Diane): Cecile—The Sound from Heaven Lead: LoA, Comp. LoA1, Comp. LoA2 Display: implicit, incongruent Emblem: Cecile: The Sound from Heaven by Heavenly Melody Announcement: Primary Announcement—“she cannot speak but she can sing and her voice is all that she has got. That true value of a person’s existence is to see oneself as a treasure, and cherish one’s potential.”	

FP-P: film proposal poster by Diane

Illustration 1: FP1-P, film proposal poster by Diane



Comp.LoA

Comp. LoA 1: Eiffel tower

Comp. LoA 2: The iron-gate

Emblem

Cecile: The Sound from Heaven by Heavenly Melody

Primary

Announcement

She cannot speak but she can sing and her voice is all that she has got. That true value of a person's existence is to see oneself as a treasure, and cherish one's potential.

LoA: Lead : a girl named Cecile (portrait painted in blue color) holding the microphone (microphone painted in yellow color)

LoA Display: implicit, incongruent

According to Cheong (2004, p.165), the Lead exhibits the quality which has an outstanding size, position or color to capture the attention of the viewers. The core of visual persuasion is the LoA, embedded in Lead. In FP-P, shown in Illustration 1, the LoA refers to the girl named Cecile who held a microphone and stood outside the black iron-gate, yet deliberately ignored what happened in the world within the gate. Two Comp. LoA are identified: the delicately-craved iron-gate adjacent to the LoA, which is less inviting than the LoA in terms of color, and the image of the Eiffel Tower, surrounded by people on the street. Two Comp. LoAs are painted with dim color (color of black) to highlight the contrast with the LoA, which is illuminated by the bright color for painting the portrait of Cecile (color of blue) and her microphone (color of yellow) held by Cecile. In other words, two Comp.LoAs successfully thrust the LoA into the audience's attention.

As Diane said in one interview, she painted the black iron-gate and put the Eiffel Tower as a background to "direct the audience's attention to the center of the poster: the girl in the middle of the poster as a leading character" (interview extract 7). The visual impacts of the LoA and two Comp.LoAs upon the audience are evident, as noted in Diane's reflective journal extract (extract 3):

I painted the portrait of the girl, Cecile...being quite aloof from the modern society outside the gate...not looking outside of the gate, the beautiful [Eiffel] tower...but gazing at the microphone in her hands. I selected the Eiffel tower to represent the prosperity of the city, Paris. I painted gate to symbolize a barrier, which divided Cecile's world into two: the society outside the gate and her own territory inside the gate. (reflective journal extract 3).

Diane's journal extract points to her application of spatial arrangement constructed by the gate in relation to the girl and of symbolism embedded in the posture of Cecile to attract the audience's attention to the focus of the poster, the LoA. That is, the protagonist, Cecile, had been marginalized in the society because of her disability in speech; however, with courage and

determination, Cecile made use of her talents in singing to remedy her imperfection, to overcome obstacles, and to gain recognition from social public.

In Cheong (2004)'s terms, the LoA is incongruent in display for the symbolism and is implicit for promoting an intangible service: the innovative film promoted in the poster. The film title is depicted in the Emblem, right above the LoA, written as "Cecile—The Sound from Heaven" with the larger and bold font. Instead of revealing her name, Diane chose to use the name of the film company, "Heavenly Melody" for the particular reason, as elaborated in one interview:

"I named our team as Heavenly Melody because its name somehow matches with the theme of the proposed film. Heavenly Melody is a Christian broadcasting organization in Taiwan, very famous for producing gospel music and English language teaching programs on TV and radio to educate the young people and to purify people's heart. Since this university is a Christian university and I also went to a couple of concerts held by Heavenly Melody on campus....Using this name may catch my classmates' attention and win approval of my teacher. I can convince my audience easily." (interview extract 8).

As Cheong (2004, p.171) put insightfully: Emblem at times can serve as the indicator of authority ideologically, validating the value of the service. Diane's interview extract above indicates her motive to win approval of her instructor and fellow students but meanwhile to reveal her creativity in composing Emblem, naming of her team as Heavenly Melody. To some extent, Diane exercised her authority as a creative writer under the circumstance which pedagogic device was in dominance. Therefore, she acted with caution to ensure her creative ideas would be accepted by the authority.

Analysis (III) The Interplay between the Verbal Text (Diane's Written Proposal) and Visual Text (Diane's Film Proposal Poster) in a Promotional Genre

As shown in Figure 4, visual components, particularly the LoA, are related to linguistic components such as Announcement and Emblem (Cheong, 2004, p.165). Central to this examination is three levels of meaning exhibited in the LoA in relation to the Announcement in Diane's poster (FP-P) and her written proposal (Text FP). As Cheong points out (*ibid*), the LoA is essential to add the force of persuasion in the move of Lead. It has three-fold functions, "interpersonally attracting attention, ideationally construing reality in a way intended by the advertisement, and textually serving a springboard for further development of the central idea." Guided by the three-fold functions of meaning making realized through the LoA, the following discussion on the interplay between the verbal and visual texts in Diane's composition of a promotional genre covers three interrelated dimensions of meaning-making: ideational meaning for the content in Diane's written proposal, interpersonal meaning for the relation between the writer and the reader/viewer, and textual meaning for the generic structure of the written proposal and the poster.

Interpersonally, the LoA appeals to the viewer since visually the LoA encapsulates the focus of the film proposal poster. In FP-P, the LoA, the portrait of the girl, is put in the center of the poster to realize its interpersonal meaning. It attracts the audience's attention to explore more about the story of Cecile, depicted verbally in Text FP. Its theme appears in the second sentence of the proposal: "Despite facing the diversity, at last, Cecile gained social recognition by attending the World Cup Singing Competition; she got the first prize, and became the well-known singer."

Besides, the LoA of Diane's poster along with the Announcement ideationally directs the audience to explore the reality constructed through the LoA, that is, Cecile's world: Cecile worked very hard to overcome obstacles resulted from her innate disability and social discrimination in order to be a singer. According to Cheong (2004, p.173), the Announcement as the most linguistic item in the print advertisement aims to convey the essence of an intended core message which "the advertisers wish to foregrounded to the consumers" (Cheong, 2004, p.173). Juxtaposing the LoA with the Announcement in FP-P and with Diane's Text FP, the interplay between the verbal and visual texts for meaning making is made clear. In Diane's film proposal poster (FP-P), the only announcement, Primary Announcement is inscribed on the head of Cecile as "she cannot speak but she can sing and her voice is all that she has got. That true value of a person's existence is to see oneself as a treasure, and cherish one's potential." The Announcement in FP-P is closely connected with move 1 of Text FP: "introducing the offer", which summarizes the theme of the proposal: to cherish and to make maximum use of one's potentials. The theme of Text FP is reinforced in the LoA in terms of its meaning and distribution of colors. As spelt out by Diane, "I choose blue for the girl, yellow for the microphone, and green for the inscription, since the mixture of blue and yellow will result in the color of green...through the mixture of these colors, I hope to make the theme of the proposal explicit and clear to the audience, that is, Cecile with language abilities managed to develop her talents in singing and then to win social recognition." (interview extract 9). Diane's remark exemplifies the choice of colors and announcement in FP-P are not random, but constructed in the particular context. From the perspective of semiotics, the connotation for the colors of blue, yellow and green can be interpreted as calmness, sunshine, and hope/new hope respectively (Beasley & Dansei, 2002, p.18). Metaphorically, despite encountering the diversity, Cecile did not give up herself but coped with tough situations with clam (symbolized by color of blue) and cheerful (symbolized by the color of yellow) attitude. Cecile's skillful singing skills won the support from the public, inspired people, and assisted Cecile to start the new chapter of her life (symbolized by color of green).

Textually, visual persuasion constituted through the LoA and other components in FP-P, in some way, parallels to verbal persuasion realized by the claim and supporting details in Text FP1. In one retrospective interview, Diane mentioned that her intention of interweaving the verbal and visual texts of her film proposal

"I use traditional words or phrases in the proposal and different colors to mark the striking contrast in the poster. The main purpose is to signal the transition of ideas...I am not good at using adjectives and other expressions in English to describe Cecile's characteristics and to write major plots vividly. But as my teacher keeps reminding us, the written text is more important. The visual poster is a supplementary material. I do hope the poster can help me compensate my weakness and to convey meaning and make my proposal more impressive...I still need to enrich my English language repertoire ..." (interview extract 10).

Diane mentioned two strategies here: firstly, signaling strategy by using cohesive markers and the particular color, bright or dark one; secondly, underlining strategy by highlighting the LoA and contextual clues such as gate and Effie Towel to emphasize what's written in the film proposal, specifically her description of Cecile's personality traits and efforts to confront challenges. While employing both visual and verbal resources for composing the film proposal as a promotional genre, Diane was aware of the institutional expectation, that is, the verbal text was much valued.

Overall, Analysis (III) shows at the *description* level, Diane made meaning in the written proposal and film poster through the verbal and visual modes of communication. At the

interpretation level, Diane as an EFL writer drew upon multimodal resources to interact with the audience in both verbal and visual persuasions. At the *explanatory* level, Diane's interaction with the audience was shaped by contextual features. Although Diane was encouraged to use visual and verbal texts in her composition of a promotional genre, verbal text was marked as a more powerful means of communication as a result of the influence of pedagogic authority.

Summary of Three Kinds of Analysis: Analyses (I), (II), (III)

The synthesis of three types of analysis (Analysis I, II, III), informed by the three-level-analysis: *description*, *interpretation*, and *explanation* (Fairclough, 1989, 1995), reveals that Diane engaged in multimodal writing practices as she composed her film proposal as a promotional genre. Although the combination of the verbal and visual texts added the elements of creativity in Diane's writing of film proposal as a promotional genre, her writing practice, to the larger extent, was subject to pedagogic device. Diane's writing practices were influenced by the writing course instructor's expectations; consequently, Diane wrote "creatively" by following the "creative" criteria which the institutional authority considered appropriate. Diane appeared active, recontextualising verbal and visual resources to negotiate meaning and her identity as a writer. Nevertheless, her agency was "constrained" to a considerable degree, evident in her efforts for acculturating into the target community.

Conclusion and Implications

Multimodality in academic texts has appealed increasing attention in the era of technologization, but mostly focuses on textbooks, teaching materials, prospectuses, and others (Leader & Prior, 2004; Royce, 2002). This study responds to the call for further studies on visual elements operated in argumentation/persuasion (Andrews, 2005; Mizra & Perret-Clermont, 2010) to investigate verbal-visual synergy in the EFL student's multimodal argumentative/persuasive writing practices.

Adopting a social-practice approach to writing (Barton, 2007; Casanave, 1998; Leki & Carson, 1997; Ivanič, 1998; Tardy, 2005, 2008), this research concerns the individual second language writer's development in particular social contexts. It explores the focal EFL student's writing of a promotional genre, a film proposal. Verbal texts and visual texts are integrated to achieve the communicative purpose of a promotional genre, which is persuasive in nature. Data analysis is guided by a multi-layered view of language and three-level-analysis (*description*, *interpretation*, *explanation*; Fairclough 1989, 1995). Genre analysis and content analysis are employed to analyze the focal EFL student's verbal and visual texts in terms of move steps and generic structures as well as ethnographic details of her writing practices. Overall, given the limited linguistic repertoire of English which most ESL/EFL students exhibit, there is no question that the knowledge of spelling and rhetorical patterns, of what is accepted as grammatically accurate and generically appropriate in written English, and of conventional punctuations is an important aspect of learning to write. However, the present research findings reinforce the argument which foregrounds the new trend of L2 writing research: moving beyond the linguistic substance of a written product to taking up a social-practice perspective for understanding student writing as a social and multimodal practice. It implies that allowing EFL students to utilize multimodal resources in composing processes can facilitate student's writing and other dimensions of learning such as creativity and confidence, (e.g. Barton, 2007; Casanave, 1998; Leki & Carson, 1997; Tardy, 2005, 2008) as shown in Diane's case. It contributes to the recent debate on the innovative way of arguing in academic genres through different combinations of words and images (e.g. Prior, 2005; Prior & Hengst, 2010). Two specific major research findings and relevant EFL pedagogical implications are summarized in Figure 6.

Figure 6 Major research findings and relevant implications for EFL/ESL writing pedagogy

Research finding (1)	Pedagogical Implications (1)
<p>(a) At <i>description</i> level reveals that the focal student participant, Diane, devoted much attention to decisions about the form, appropriate word usage, and acceptable organizational patterns.</p> <p>(b) At the <i>interpretation</i> and <i>explanation</i> levels, Diane composed a film proposal not as a linguistic exercise to get familiar with vocabulary, syntax, and generic patterns of argumentative/persuasive texts done in English.</p> <p>(c) The analysis of Diane’s writing of a film proposal as a promotional genre at three levels (<i>description, interpretation, explanation</i>) illustrates that her writing is a social and multimodal practice. Diane learnt to adapt to contextual features, to explore resources, to interact with others, and to position herself as an EFL writer.</p>	<p>(a) The social-situated and multimodal nature of L2 writing should be acknowledged and promoted in EFL writing instruction.</p> <p>(b) ESL/EFL writing instructors can use Fairclough’s (1989, 1995) multi-layered framework of writing at three levels (<i>description, interpretation, explanation</i>) as the guideline to explicitly address that L2 writing is not simply decoding or encoding verbal or visual code to complete texts, but participating in real-life contexts to interact with others in the target community.</p>
Research finding (2)	Pedagogical Implications (2)
<p>(a) Diane did not select visual and verbal resources randomly to compose her written proposal and visual poster. She learnt dominant literacy practices by negotiating meaning and social relations. She participated in diverse social interactions in which she as an EFL student writer practiced and acquired relevant generic knowledge and conventions in related contexts.</p> <p>(b) From the perspective of Lave and Wenger (1991), Diane seemed to be a legitimate peripheral participant, seeking membership in the imagined community of practice. The imagined community practice may be the EFL writing community located in English Writing (II) course or the film industry which Diane desired to interact with via her written film proposal and visual poster. On the one hand, institutional power regulated social actions which constituted and were constituted by Diane’s practices of writing a promotional genre. On the other hand, Diane’s attempt to demonstrate creativity through the use of visual and verbal texts reflected her interaction with those in power and negotiation of her writer identity.</p>	<p>(a) EFL writing instructors can serve as facilitators, not grammarians, collaborating with their students in learning-centered tasks. In these tasks, EFL students are guided to examine <i>where, how, and why</i> they draw upon and recontextualize resources in various contexts (<i>context of situation</i> and <i>context of culture</i>) to engage in a wide range of social interactions to fulfill the purposes of written genres which they produce. By doing so, EFL students are able to articulate their thoughts and to (re)construct their identities with confidence.</p> <p>(b) The issue of agency emerges as a significant issue for further investigation. It is also worthy incorporating the insights of multiliteracies (Jewitt, 2004; Royce, 2002; Shin & Cimasko, 2008; Stein, 2000) into EFL writing instruction.</p>

This study, like those which adopt an ethnographic orientation and relevant research methods (e.g. Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999), involved a longer-term engagement and inquiry using observations, interviews, and discourse analysis. The evidence presented in these ethnographic research projects is contextually-oriented, yet inherently local, for the complexity of factors related to issues about second language learning under the investigation. Although rigorous analysis has been undertaken in this case study, this research finding is limited in some way for not being able to make a broad generalization. However, the present study yields some useful insights of how EFL students may utilize and interweave visual and verbal texts to compose multimodal genres. More specifically, EFL students draw upon multimodal resources to participate in diverse types of situated interactions; these interactions in turn scaffold students' acquisition of text forms, composing processes, and negotiation of meaning and identities in purposeful social interactions through writing in English.

In conclusion, despite relevant evidence and explanations presented in this study highly interpretative and selective, they capture the nature of second language writing, much dependent on individual learners' abilities and circumstances in which they are situated. The research findings reveal that there is a need to address the social and multimodal nature of writing in second language writing, particularly EFL writing instruction. Future investigations can be conducted as longitudinal research projects, scrutinizing EFL students' writing practices in greater details and for a longer duration. It is hoped that under the teacher's guidance, EFL students are given opportunities to discuss their interests, values, beliefs, and power relations which shape and are shaped by their writing practices. Eventually, EFL students can effectively develop their learning approaches or strategies, applying a variety of multimodal resources to make meaning and to negotiate social identities in their writing practices.

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Endnotes

¹ Kachru (1985) proposed the idea of three concentric circles of language to better explain the widespread use of English as a global language in different countries—the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle. In this paper, the target research participant is one L2 writer in the EFL context, located in the expanding circle. The expanding circle encompasses those countries where English is neither used as the native tongue (inner circle) nor plays the historical or official role for communication (outer circle); however, is widely used as a foreign language or lingua franca. English speakers in the expanding circle are commonly known as EFL learners, the largest group of English users in the world's population; these learners are from countries, such as China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Egypt, most of Europe, South America, and others. Even though this research as an in-depth qualitative study focused on one particular Taiwanese EFL university learner in this case study, its research findings, to some extent, contributed to the understanding of EFL student writing in the broader expanding circle.

² A larger research project which this present study is part of is a one-year longitudinal research project on the multimodality and genre construction in a group of Taiwanese EFL students' academic literacy practices. This project followed the tradition of multiple qualitative case-study approach. Relevant details of the project documented in Appendix 1, and a profile of the focal learner, Diane, is presented in Appendix 2.

³ As the teacher announced the film proposal writing and explained the task instruction, several students requested the possibility of adding the visual poster related to the written proposal. After discussing with the whole class, the majority of students agreed the addition of the poster. Thus, they produced both the written film proposal and the visual poster.

⁴ Besides the data relevant to the section on Data Analysis and Discussion, Appendix 3 consists of more details of data sources about the focal learner, Diane.

Appendix 1 Relevant details of the research project

A larger research project which this present study is part of is a one-year longitudinal research project on the multimodality and genre construction in a group of Taiwanese EFL students' academic literacy practices.

Research focus
Multimodality and genre construction in a group of Taiwanese EFL students' academic literacy practices
Research participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ten EFL students enrolling English Writing (I) and (II) courses. (written consent form was signed)● Had Upper-intermediate-level English proficiency, strongly motivated in learning English and majored in the subject area of art design.● Studied English writing in two modes: (a) intensive, about 32 week class time for one academic year (16 weeks per semester) in which teaching chiefly concentrated on knowledge of writing academic genres, i.e. different rhetorical types of writing, such as description, narration, process, cause-effect analysis, argumentation, definition, business letters, and others (b) extensive, on weekly basis, during out-of-class time, students were required to keep weekly writing journals on the topics related to their learning of how to write in English, of other subjects in the university, and life experiences.
Research data
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Data (a): student participants' multimodal texts (written and visual) constituted in their academic writing practices.● Data (b): students' reflective journals on their learning of reading and writing in Sophomore English Writing course, other courses in their university studies, and social domains of their life.● Data (c): the researcher's non-participant observation on particular sessions in Sophomore English Writing course: Writing (I) and (II), (d) interview data with the course instructor and ten student participants (3 interviews: at the beginning of fall semester, at the beginning of spring semester, two weeks after the end of the academic year).
Data analytical framework
A social-practice approach to literacy was employed as a theoretical and analytical lens of analyzing and interpreting the data centered on ten EFL student participants' academic reading and writing practices.
Research output
Besides this manuscript, two papers were written to report some of the research findings for this larger longitudinal research project, as shown in the references: Lai and Tseng (2011), Lai and Tseng (2012).

Appendix 2 The learner profile: Diane

Diane was born in 1992 in Taipei. Her father is a CEO in one well-known international trade company in Taiwan and her mother is a high school geography teacher. Diane has one brother who is three years younger than her; they were sent to bilingual kindergarten, starting to learn English since the age of five. However, during the interview, she mentioned her English learning before secondary school was simply for fun, playing games and singing songs. She is outgoing and loves to travel, to read newspapers and magazines in English, particularly about fashion and entertainment, and to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. She took part in two on-line study pal programs in her high school and regarded these two experiences very rewarding for providing her previous opportunities of communicating with students in U.S., Mexico, Spain, and France. She also has had several opportunities to talk to foreigners who are his father's colleagues, particularly when his father organizes social events at least three times per year at her house. Her main reason to major in art design is her ambition of being a CEO like her father in the future, yet working with models and fashion designers. She expressed her strong motivation of learning English; with a humble attitude, considering her oral English is better than writing skills. In the interviews, Diane mentioned that she has been keeping diary in English since her high school days and considered diary writing is an effective means for developing her thinking and writing in English.

Diane's ambition to master English skills well to be competitive in her further studies and career was the reason for her selecting English Writing course. Her instructor, Dr. Hsu commented Diane as a creative, intelligent, and diligent learner. Diane was good at expressing her ideas, but she needed more guidance in organizing her thoughts and getting rid of some grammatical errors.

Appendix 3 Extracts of some research data

In this Appendix, some data extracts of Diane’s written proposal are presented in the chart. Conventions for presenting data: FP refers to the Film Proposal written by the focal participant, Diane. The code before each sentence refers to its location in the proposal; for example: (FP1_1) refers to the first sentence in the first paragraph; the first 1 refers to the number of the paragraph: the first paragraph; the second 1 refers to the number of the sentence: the first sentence. Underline and relevant annotations are used by the researcher to emphasize main points or themes in data analysis.

<i>The verbal text (FP): extracts</i>	<i>Ethnographic details</i>	<i>Analysis</i>
Move 1: Targeting the market		
(FP1_1) It focuses on <u>the theme of love</u> , loving the disabled and respecting their potentials; with this theme, the film surely will move the heart of audience of all age levels.	<i>interview extract</i> I would like to impress my audience first with my expertise and to inform them directly <u>the theme of love.</u>	<i>content analysis:</i> ●theme 1: movie’s theme/key message
Move 2: Establishing the credentials		
(FP1_3) Our team: Heavenly Melody is well-known for the <u>professional players and back-up stage crew</u> . (FP1_4) We have been producing several good quality films over these 15 years... (FP1_6) We think that most of people have limited interactions with others, showing less concern towards others... (FP1_5) <u>So</u> we’d like to encourage more people to pay attention to this social issue... (FP1_6) It is our ambition to persuade you, our dear audience, to learn to cherish what you have and to help those who are in need.	<i>interview extract</i> I would like to impress my audience first with <u>the qualification</u> of my professional team. It will help to strengthen our team’s expertise and to promote our film... I decide to highlight my role as the author by using “ <u>I</u> ”, yet sometimes I am influenced by the Chinese value of a writer, <u>being modest</u> ... different from being the author in English writing, using “I” to reveal him or her as a powerful and confident person to interact with the audience... using “you” is to create a more friendly image, to shorten the distance between the writer and the audience.	<i>content analysis:</i> ●theme 2: the author’s expertise/ qualifications ●theme 3: the pronoun use
Move 3: Introducing the offer		
(FP2_1) Here is the summary of our movie, <i>Cecile—The Sound from Heaven</i> ... (FP2_3) The plot reminds us to remove our stereotypes on people, such as the disabled or those at disadvantage for their physical, mental health or financial status... (FP2_4) Your attitude towards others usually will influence how people treat you. (FP2_5) Which attitude do you choose to take? <u>optimistic</u> or <u>pessimistic</u> ? <u>compassionate</u> or <u>cynical</u> ? <u>caring</u> , <u>sincere</u> or <u>selfish</u> , <u>isolated</u> ?	<i>interview extract</i> ...I applied what I’ve learnt from <u>last semester’s writing class</u> ... to follow <u>the pattern: introduction, main body, and conclusion paragraph</u> . I also added more transition words or phrases because my writing teacher mentioned one of my weak points in writing is lack of <u>coherence</u> ... <i>interview extract</i> ... I do not like arguing but I have to argue, to make claims... what I’ve learnt from the writing class is... to provide evidences to support my claims is crucial to effective arguments... One issue usually has two sides, pros and cons, yet I shall insist <u>my own stance</u> ... <i>reflective journal extract</i> ... my understanding is about presenting an argument means making strong claims and reasons or explanations. That’s different from <u>our cultural ways of arguing</u> . <u>We, Chinese people, usually do not like to attack others</u> . To keep harmony is important... so usually <u>avoid confrontation from opposing viewpoints</u> ... retrospectively, that’s probably what Dr. Hsu want me and our classmates to add <u>rebuttals</u> in our arguments.	<i>content analysis:</i> ●theme 4: language-in-use, such as lexis (particularly adjective, cohesive device), syntax & a macro-structure of an essay ●theme 5: resources from <i>context of situation</i> (prior schooling context) ●theme 6: resources from <i>context of culture</i> (broader social/cultural context)
Move 4: Offering the incentives		
(FP4_1) The voucher will be given to the first fifty people going to see the prime show. (FP4_2) We believe lots of people would like to get this voucher.	<i>reflective journal extract</i> ... before writing my film proposal, I went to scrutinize several <u>advertisements</u> to identify effective ways to present my ideas... of course, bargaining is a common and popular technique to convince the audience... As everyone knows, <u>bargaining is quite common in Taiwan</u> .	