

Task Representation and Text Construction in Reading-to-Write

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Students' interpretations of their academic writing tasks has been a central concern in the cognitive-based writing research due to the prominent role such decision-making plays in determining students' subsequent thinking and composing strategies and ultimately in shaping their textual quality. Without a comprehensive understanding of how L2 students interpret the writing task, ESL/EFL writing instructors may not know the sources of various writing problems in students' written texts and hence, may not be able to develop appropriate writing pedagogy. The present study attempts to address this research gap by studying the interpretive process of three high ability college seniors as composing a source-based academic assignment. The findings show that all the participants have different representations of the assigned task. Two of them were less able to make sense of the requirements of such a writing task as expected in the academic community and consequently failed to use the assigned readings as required although they did understand the basic format associated with this task type and had received prior instruction on reading-based writing. First language culture may have affected how they constructed the writing task for themselves as inferring and eliciting the information specified in the writing prompt.

Key Words: task representation, reading-to-write, task construction, second language writing

1 Introduction

An area of deficiency in the previous second language (L2) writing studies is the investigation of EFL writers' task representation of their academic writing tasks (Allen, 2004; Plakans, 2009). Task representation in this study is defined as the interpretation or conceptualization of the various requirements for the assigned writing tasks, such as reader response and expectations, genre format, rhetorical purpose, etc. Several studies in first language (L1) context have contended that students' task representation determines their subsequent thinking and composing strategies and ultimately shapes the quality of their written texts (Flower, 1990; Spivey, 1990 & 1997). As such, some of the textual problems manifested in L2 students' writing or their

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ineffective use of writing strategies or their lack of effective composing strategies may derive from their failure to represent the requirements of the assigned writing task as the teachers expect (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2008; Ruiz-Funes, 2001). To further disclose the sources of L2 students' writing problems particularly when they undertake reading-to-write tasks, more research is required on this aspect of student writing.

To date, the most seminal work on students' task representation was conducted by Flower, Stein, Ackerman, Kantz, McCormick, and Peck (1990). In this project, Flower et al intended to find out how task representation is created, how it influences students' use of writing strategies and their text quality, and what factors shape their task representation. Based on their research findings, Flower advanced a tentative theory of task representation with three features:

1. "Writers do not choose a representation, they construct one, integrating elements from a large set of options and schemas" (p.54).
2. "Because the process of constructing a task representation depends on noticing cues from the context and evoking relevant memories, it can extend over the course of composing" (p.56).
3. "Developments and changes in a writer's representation can lead to problems in constructing an integrated task and text" (p.58).

In their project, participants were given a typical reading-based assignment, which required them to synthesize and interpret the readings and formulate one's own argument. Flower (1990) and Kantz (1990) found that students interpreted the same assignment in strikingly varied ways, which consequently affected their text structures. They primarily differed in three aspects: major source of information, text format and features, and organizing plans, strategies and goals. These different task representations resulted in five types of text structures: summary, response, review, synthesis, and synthesis with a rhetorical purpose. Within the same project, Ackerman (1990) argued that students' responses to a class assignment depends on not only the immediate rhetorical context (the class or the assigned writing task), but also the larger, cultural context, such as the legacy of schooling, academic discourse communities, and their own intellectual history.

Ackerman's observation was further supported by studies on the reading-to-write tasks by ESL learners. Greene (1995) observed that a Hmong ESL college student placed the emphasis of a reading-to-write task upon the authority of both the class teacher and the authors he has read. This task representation led him to employ a writing strategy of comparing different authors while his classmate, another participant from Puerto Rico,

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was able to utilize a problem-based approach by identifying a conflict and clarify a problem as the teacher expected. Greene contended that despite the teacher's effort to provide multiple instructional scaffolding in cultivating students' sense of authorship, the two participants formulated varied conceptualizations of the class assignment and their conceptualizations were closely linked to their individual social and cultural backgrounds. Likewise, Riazi (1997) reported a group of Iranian doctoral students in a US university conceptualized a review of reading texts as a summary task in contrast to the professors' expectation requiring them to include critical comments. In another example, Allen (2004) tracked a Japanese student's process when undertaking reading-to-write tasks in a disciplinary course in an Australian university and also found that her representation is limited in lack of her own evaluation of the source text. Zhu (2005) examined task representation of reading-based writing tasks by one mainland Chinese graduate student of advanced English literacy in the US and concluded that the participant's task conceptualization was influenced by an array of factors, such as the writer's previous experience and the conceptual models provided in the source texts.

Although a substantial research has suggested the potential culture effect on L2 students reading-to-write performance, little empirical research, except Greene (1995), attempts to investigate the cognitive processes novice EFL writers has engaged as composing a reading-to-write task and how culture also affects this writing process. Particularly, along with the globalization, English has become an international language and an increasing number of students in EFL contexts are imposed with graduation requirements to compose and publish in English. Yet, many EFL students may not have been exposed to writing from multiple sources in their first language and may have experience different L2 literacy socialization paths from those of ESL students and. A critical examination of how EFL learners assume the role of author as they compose source-based writing can advance our knowledge about what they brings to such writing task in order to design writing courses helping them bridge the cultural differences.

To tackle this issue, the present study intends to address the following questions: 1) What were students' representations of the assigned source-based writing? 2) How did their task representations affect their reading-to-write processes? 3) How did their representations affect their text construction?

2 Method

2.1 Participants

Participants were three senior English-major students, one male and two female students at a national university in southern Taiwan. They have high English and writing proficiency as indicated in their prize-winning records in

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local university-based English composition contests and in their excellent academic performance. All have received three-semester long English writing instruction and one-semester reading-based report writing. Despite their previous training in writing from sources, participants claimed that they actually had rare opportunities to practice this type of writing beyond the required writing course.

2.2 Writing task

Participants wrote an essay based on the reading of four source texts on the issue of globalization. Each source varied in terms of voice, claim, and genre. All readings were selected from an English textbook, *Raise the Issues* (p. 193-209). The given writing prompt was as follow: “Do you think globalization is more positive or negative? Write an essay in which you discuss both the positive and negative consequences of this process. You need to present the various sides of the argument and clearly state your position. Use personal examples as well as examples from the articles. Try to show why your position is the one with which we should agree.”

2.3 Data sources

The primary data consisted of students’ pre-task and post-task retrospective interview protocols, think-aloud protocols and written texts. Participants have received think-aloud training as participating in another study by the researcher. To capture their interpretations of the assignment and their reading and composing strategies, they were required to think aloud at the beginning of the composing process and throughout their reading of the writing prompt and the given articles, and during their multiple-drafting processes. All participants completed the whole task cycle individually on three separate occasions; each lasted for two to three hours. On the first occasion, they read the writing prompt and assigned articles, and made a rough outline. They completed their first draft on the second meeting and the third draft on the third occasion. The researcher conducted two retrospective interviews through several cued questions adapting from Greene’ research (1995 & 2001); one was right after their initial reading of the writing prompts and another was after the completion of their final draft (See Appendix A).

2.4 Data analysis

First of all, retrospective interview protocols and think-aloud protocols were transcribed and then read in light of the specific research question framing the present study: How did participants interpret the source-based writing task? In addition, to capture the cognitive operations employed at different stages of the composing process to realize the task representation, transcripts

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of think-aloud protocols were analyzed using a taxonomy of cognitive operations derived from Stein's (1990) protocols coding schemes: monitoring, elaborating, structuring and planning (See Table 1 for details). Furthermore, the analyses of students' texts focused on the lines of reasoning they employed to develop an argument in response to the question posed in the writing prompt. Three separate analyses were conducted in terms of the types of claims and use of citations as shown in Table 1. Table 1 illustrates the coding schemes for the type of data to each research question:

Table 1. Coding Schemes for Interview Transcript, Think-Aloud Protocols, and Texts

Research Question	Data type	Analysis scheme
What were students' Interpretations of the assigned source-based writing?	Retrospective interview script	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The extent participants include their own experiences and prior knowledge 2) Their understanding of what constitutes an argument 3) Their writing difficulty (Greene, 2001)
How did their task representations affect their reading-to-write processes?	Think-aloud protocols	<p>Monitoring: task monitoring and comprehension monitoring</p> <p>Elaborating: using prior knowledge</p> <p>Structuring: any activity in which participants apply ideas in a source text to their own writing</p> <p>Planning: Gist and list strategy, TIA strategy (True, Important, I agree), Dialogue, Knowledge-driven planning, constructive planning (Stein, 1990)</p>
How did their interpretations affect their text construction?	Written texts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Types of claims (Ramage, Bean & Johnson, 2004): factual, definitional, evaluation, causal, proposal. An argument may take the form of a factual or definitional proposition, a statement about causes or consequences, about what people consider is good, important or worth doing. 2) Use of citations (Greene, 2001): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) use as a source of content: using the reading materials as a source of information, b) locate a faulty path: identifying flaws in previous arguments,

- c) statement of a claim: citing the source as the writer's own claim,
 - d) support a claim: citing the source as the writer's support for his/her claim
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3 Results

3.1 Participants' Interpretations of the writing task

In the following analysis, excerpts from participants' interpretations are organized around three concerns: (1) the extent to which the participants considered necessary to include their own opinions from prior knowledge and experience into their own texts, (2) their understanding of what constitutes an argument, given that argumentation genre is the backbone of most academic writing, and (3) their writing difficulty in constructing this type of text.

3.1.1 Participant A

With the writing prompt in front of him, Participant A explained that the task required him to formulate his own viewpoint and elaborate his own argument with personal experiences and examples given in the articles.

I need to first of all think about the effect of globalization on my life as a student in Taiwan...I am more positive on globalization and so I have to support my position...I have to figure out why I think so...Since I have never thought about this topic before, I can advance very few ideas right now to support myself. These reading sources can help me to evoke some relevant ideas from my long-term memories. I would like to learn from these articles on how each author interpreted the effects of globalization. I don't intend to reproduce or to summarize their ideas to be used in my own essay. These readings can act more like a prompt for me to search more ideas from my own life experiences or my prior knowledge on globalization.

For participant A, the nature of this task required his inclusion of original thoughts about this issue. The source of his ideas should reside in him not the assigned reading texts while these texts may facilitate his exploration of his own opinions. It appeared that he was quite familiar with the common expectation of this type of academic writing as he placed great emphasis upon the authority on him but not upon the authors he was going to read.

When asked in the post-task interview about what made the

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assignment difficult, participant A simply pointed out that his lack of knowledge of the topic imposed great difficulty on formulating genuine arguments and developing his own criteria to evaluate the source articles. This also led him to be uncertain about the strength of his lines of reasoning and about his readers' potential objections to his viewpoint. As he stated in post-task interview, "My arguments are not strong and persuasive. A sound argument should take into account the alternative perspectives and modify my own arguments accordingly." Here, participant A mentioned his concern of alternative perspectives but he was not able to translate his understanding of argument into things he should do due to his limited knowledge with the assigned topic.

3.1.2 Participant B

Reading the assignment aloud, participant B related her understandings of what the prompt expected her to write to the format of writing an argument with which she was already familiar. She remarked that,

My previous English writing instructor has emphasized that it is important to formulate my own individual argument in English writing and to avoid talking about other peoples' ideas throughout my essay...I think I will simply cite some examples from the articles but not their ideas to support my own position...

Initially, participant B interpreted the task requirement by noticing exclusively certain wordings from the writing prompt in correspondence with her schema of certain essay type and with her previous experience taking a graduate entrance exam and ignoring the other cues specified in the prompt. She commented that, "I think this is an informative essay because the prompt requires us to discuss both the positive and negative sides of globalization. I have encountered a very similar topic in one of the entrance exams for graduate program." Such limited interpretation was further compounded with her lack of awareness of how to compose an argumentative writing, which ultimately led to very conflicting views on what she was expected to do, despite her understandings of the importance in advancing one's own ideas to be the source of her essay but not argumentation, in which she needed to identify a controversial issue and stated her position on it.

When questioned in the post-task interview about the reason why she initially interpreted the writing assignment as an informative essay, she argued that,

Basically, I agreed with the pro and con sides of this issue. That's my position, neutral. Is it necessary to take a polarized stance in this type of writing? Why should we do that?...Since

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globalization is a trend, I am not going to change this phenomenon even if I take a polarized position. You see, all the authors in these assigned readings presented different points of view. Even so, what did they change? Nothing. Right? As such, the most important issue, from my own perspective, is how we prepare ourselves to come to terms with it.

These accounts indicated that participant B offered an incomplete picture of what constitutes an argument. What's interesting is her reasons about why she did not align her paper to the question raised in the writing prompt but instead, she advanced another related issue in her essay. Among the several converging factors shaping her task representation, the one determining which information to go into her essay is more associated with her perception of the rhetorical purpose this piece of writing serves. That explained why she sided away from the assigned issue and focused on the issue she considered more urgent, *how we prepare ourselves to terms with globalization*. As she elaborated, "Although all the writers in these readings argued their position whether globalization is more positive or negative, they failed to change the fact that globalization is inevitable." Consequently, the task she assigned to herself is problem/solution type of essay.

Participant B also explained the major difficulty she faced in composing this type of writing is to mediate and integrate the different and conflicting ideas into a coherent text. Once she was able to come up with superordinate categories to structure her essay, she was under less pressure to complete the task.

3.1.3 Participant C

Likewise, participant C appears to show her familiarity with this reading-based task after reading the writing prompt. Initially, she interpreted the task as one in which the primary source of her essay should be her own ideas and the given readings should be used to support her own argument.

This is a persuasive essay in which I will have to state my position on whether globalization is more positive or negative and attempt to persuade other people why I believe so...I think I will use the articles to support my own argument. First of all, I will discuss both the advantages and disadvantages of globalization before stating my own perspective... I can't decide my position right now due to my lack of familiarity with this topic and I think the articles may help me to formulate my own position.

Nevertheless, the prompt wordings "discuss both the positive and

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negative consequences of this process” and “present the various sides of the argument and clearly state your position” were in conflict with her mental map of what constitutes an argumentative writing. As a consequence, when she started to compose her first draft, she failed to fulfill her initial promises by incorporating her own perspective or ideas on this issue although she did emphasize perspective-taking as a significant concern in her interviews and think-aloud protocols. Yet, in her written texts, she simply summarized the positive and negative aspects of globalization by using the reading as sources of her information. In the first post-task interview, she explained,

I thought I should not take any polarized position on this issue; otherwise, I may focus on only one aspect of this issue and failed to realize what is expected for this task: to objectively discuss both advantages and disadvantages of globalization, as it has been specified in the writing prompt...In the past when we composed argumentative writing, we usually discuss an issue from one perspective. That is, either positive or negative.

Obviously, she lacked meta-awareness of what it meant to write an argumentative writing. That is, one needs not only to support one’s position but also to defend one’s position by incorporating opposing views and refuting these views. As a consequence, the prompt wordings “discuss both the positive and negative consequences of this process” and “present the various sides of the argument and clearly state your position” were confusing to her.

She further pointed out the challenge of what most of these participants face when they are required to read different and conflicting points of view and struggle to deal with these readings to fashion their own argument. This problem was further compounded when they lack familiarity with the assigned topic. She contended,

Since I am not familiar with globalization, the assigned readings exerted great influence on how I develop and support my argument. The ideas presented in these articles are all very persuasive to me so that I was not able to decide whether globalization is more positive or negative. I knew that academic writing requires our own unique perspective to the issue and in most of my course assignments, I usually generate my own opinion and support my argument with the reading sources. But this time I borrowed a lot of ideas from the reading sources.

Although she conceded her difficulty in shaping her own ideas on the topic due to her lack of familiarity and the impact the reading has on her, she

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did consider the issue from her own identity as a pre-service English teacher in the retrospective interview. She argued that,

In my field, globalization indicates there is an urgent need to learn English and a huge market for English teachers. But I believe the major impact of globalization should be on the business world. If I were majoring in business, I would be more sensitive to this issue and can come up with more ideas.

Still, she did not follow up on her ideas about how to respond to the issue based on her current identity as a pre-service EFL teacher in Taiwan, which may guide her to construct a genuine argument.

Together, these three students' accounts revealed the influence of students' history as learners and the writing prompt that the researcher provided. Their understanding of what it meant to argue and to compose this reading-based writing was very general or even incorrect, relating more to the format of a paper, such as supporting their claim. All participants underscored the importance of formulating their own perspective based on their previous English writing instruction. However, participants A & C appeared to have encountered enormous difficulty in translating this knowledge into their plans for writing. Implicit in participant B's conceptualization is a fundamental tension between developing one's perspective and avoiding taking a specific position on the assigned issue. Perspective-taking is traditionally a western concept and is strongly associated with developing of one's voice. By contrast, under Confucian influence, Chinese may not take a polarized stance in their writing due to their preference for a middle ground in constructing a rhetorical style (Nelson et al., 1995; Young, 1994). They may simply lay out all the ideas associated with the topic without explicating their stance. Obviously, this rhetorical tradition appeared to override other factors on the way participant B conceptualized the writing task.

3.2 Cognitive operations in reading and writing processes

As shown above, students may have different representations of this task that in turn may affect the processes they bring to bear on performing it. This section will illustrate what cognitive processes (with a focus on monitoring, elaborating, structuring, and planning) students used to realize their representations of the task, and explore the relationship of cognition to context, as manifested in the expectations and knowledge they brought with them and in the current task.

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3.2.1 Participant A

Participant A's protocol was the longest among the three students. As he began the task, he worked out several comprehension problems in his first reading (comprehension monitoring). In his second reading, he was more able to assess the feasibility of various assertions on globalization, stating agreement or disagreement, drawing on his own personal experience to see how his perceptions of globalization compared with those written about in the text (elaborating). This is apparent as he began his second reading of the text, claiming "Let me reflect on to what extent McDonald's food has exerted any influence on me? Do I understand American culture through McDonald's? Surely not." Throughout this second reading, he attempted to challenge claims advanced in the source materials with counter-examples or imagined an instance in which the ideas in source text might be tested (elaborating). Such evaluative comments helped him make decisions about what kind of paper to write. Realizing that he disagreed with some of the claims given in the source text, he decided to use points of agreement, embellished by personal experiences, as the structure for his own texts (structuring).

However, participant A appeared to encounter difficulty in structuring his elaborated materials. Although he was able to pull out the ideas he agreed and disagreed, he was having trouble seeing how the source texts "hang together" (planning). The source text had a number of contradictions embedded within it at the global and local levels. Without working out with these contradictions, he was not able to begin to see how things are and are not connected in the texts.

As such, although his task representation of this assignment may trigger a great amount of elaborative behavior in his reading process, he was less capable of structuring and synthesizing these ideas for a clear rhetorical purpose. This ability is what Flower called (1990) "knowledge transformation". Participant A's difficulty in planning this synthesis was not unique. According to Flower, the first problem for many students was to understand that the information offered by the "authorities" did not easily fit into convenient, obvious categories. Finally, participant A created a synthesis employing a rhetorical framework borrowed from one of the texts, using few of his elaborative ideas.

3.2.2 Participant B

Similar to participant A, participant B spent a great deal of time on comprehension monitoring and pulling out the gists of each article in her first reading (planning). When she was done, she has a bare-bones list of gists. Throughout her second reading, she went through the source texts to decide which points to be used in her own texts (structuring) and made minimal comments on the claims advanced in the source materials, based on her own

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prior knowledge or experience (elaborating). Her task conceptualization appeared to trigger such reading strategies with a focus on capturing main ideas to develop her essays.

This plan to summarize the sources sidestepped the process of integrating one's own knowledge with that of the source text. It typically simplified the process of reading-to-write. As such, she constructed a global planning based on her gists and began writing immediately. Throughout her reading and writing process, she never really monitored the task (task monitoring), asking herself "Is this enough?" "Is this the best way to do this?". As such, she was unable to write a text of her own because she was unable to make the source text work for them in a way for a specific rhetorical purpose.

3.2.3 Participant C

Participant C appeared to have no trouble with this reading-to-write task. She moved from reading to writing with perfect ease, and appeared to have well-rehearsed procedures she has already internalized. She appeared to have less trouble with comprehension (comprehension monitoring) and was capable of capturing the gists of each article in her first reading (planning). Throughout her reading process, her comments primarily focused on categorization of advantages and disadvantages of globalization and each author's positions on globalization (planning). She said, "...I can't see that the author has apparent personal stand...I can't see what kind of stand that he has... in terms of globalization whether positive or negative...". As reading another article, she commented that, "...so the author probably doesn't agree with the ideas of the so-called against homogenization...so this could be against homogenization..."

She then made an overall text plan based on her comments (planning) by listing the positive and negative aspects of globalization in terms of economy, culture and politics. After working out a rough global plan, she proceeded with second reading, making synthesizing moves and deciding to write about what the authors (not she) agreed and disagreed about (structuring). During her composing process, she often resorted to the source articles and discovered that she can hardly find examples to support the effect of globalization on economy. She then included her knowledge on economical monopoly of developed countries caused by global capitalism and international commerce with regard to its impact on economy (elaborating).

Similar to participant B, she never really monitored the task in the composing process (task monitoring). By exploring deeper of the source materials and uncovering the rhetorical purpose of the task, such as, "Why is this issue important?" "Who cares?" "Why is it an issue?", she may be able to come up an even closer, fine-grained analysis and transform what she read

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and her prior knowledge and experience for a clear rhetorical purpose or to adapt it to the needs of her target readers.

Note that a critical feature of English academic writing is to contribute a unique perspective by adapting and restructuring information from different sources to meet the writer's goals (Flower, 1990; Greene, 1995). The think-aloud protocols of these participants revealed that except participant A, other participants relied on reading and writing strategies consistent with their representations of the task. In their representations, the source for writing seems to derive from what these authors have said and yet their own experiences were not a legitimate and essential source for writing. They failed to understand that they must do something more than simply agree or disagree with the reading texts they have read. Although participant A appears to know the need to interweave his personal experiences throughout the essay, he has encountered immense difficulty for translating this understanding into a plan for writing. Despite of minimally two-year English composition instruction at university level, these participants were still not able to acquire the ability to develop their own voice in their essays, an essential trait of English academic writing.

3.3 From interpretation to text construction

In investigating English L1 college students' difficulties in composing disciplinary writing, Greene (2001) pointed out that there is a gap between what students could articulate and what they actually wrote. As such, more detailed analyses of the three participants texts helped to provide a comprehensive picture of their task representation. What follows is analysis of the three students' texts in terms of their claim types and citation practices.

3.3.1 Types of claim

As noted previously, analysis of claim types was exclusively limited on the thesis statement explicitly expressed either in the introduction or in the conclusion. The types of claims used (fact, definition, causal, evaluation & proposal) foregrounded the difference between a stronger or weaker essay. Evaluation and proposal types of claims are considered as more effective in the argumentative essays than other claim types since both involve higher-order thinking skills to assess what people consider important, good or worth doing (Ramage et al., 2004).

The thesis statement in the introduction of participant A's first and final drafts, as shown in Table 2, was factual but in the conclusion of his final draft was evaluative. His observing that "Thanks to its primary attribute ...faced with some challenges derived from it" was not in response to a controversial issue and presented his own interpretation with what happens along with globalization (i.e. "provide us with numerous merits ...

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faced with some challenges derived from it”). This factual/interpretive thesis statement foregrounded a very imbalanced development of his essay with exclusive focus on discussion of the advantages of globalization in lack of weighing the cost and benefit of globalization to justify his final evaluative statement (i.e. “it is far more positive ... all humans’ advantage”).

Strictly speaking, the claim in participant B’s text was not a “thesis” at all for an argumentative essay. She simply described the cause of globalization and its potential consequences. After completing her first draft, participant B was requested to pay more attention to the prompt cues by the researcher since this student at first represented this task as a discussion genre. Yet, she just added one more sentence in her final draft (i.e. “Globalization ... trend of the world.”) without any significant revisions of her first draft. In her think-aloud protocols, she commented that “By doing so, I hint my position about this issue. The teacher should be able to see my stance from this statement.” Although participant B appeared to be aware that she needed to take a position, her comments did not indicate she was aware of what a stance or a thesis means in English writing.

Although participant C also wrote a factual/descriptive claim initially in her first draft, she took a step further than participant B in providing a frame in signaling the reader her essay’s focus (i.e. Both consequences will be discussed as follows in terms of the cultural, economical, and political aspects.). Similar to participant B in composing a factual statement in her first draft, she was requested to re-examine the writing prompt by the researcher prior to her revision of her draft. Ultimately, she generated an evaluative claim in her revised text by contending that “Globalization...does bring about more positive rather than negative consequences” Despite the fact that she was urged to take a polarized stance toward the issue, her lack of meta-awareness of what consists of an argumentative writing led to the lack of support of this thesis in her essay development.

Table 2. Participants’ Claim in Their First and Final Draft

	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C
First Draft	Thanks to its primary attribute that aims to connect people around the world together, globalization, in my view, does really provide us with numerous merits even though we are also inevitably faced with some challenges derived from it (factual claim)	Owing to the convenient transportation and internet, we enter the era of globalization. Some participants (perceived) it will establish a new vision for the world. But some worry it will worsen the hostility between us. (factual claim)	Globalization has brought about both positive and negative influences and impacts while it constantly keeps striking the world that surrounds us. Both consequences will be discussed as follows in terms of the cultural, economical, and political aspects. (factual claim)

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Final Draft	<p>Thanks to its primary attribute that aims to connect people around the world together, globalization, in my view, does really provide us with numerous merits even though we are also inevitably faced with some challenges derived from it (factual claim)</p> <p>While globalization, in one hand, tends to engender some headaches, it is far more positive to human beings in numerous respects mentioned above. Therefore, what really matters is whether we can make efforts to realize it in a way to all humans' advantage...(Conclusion) (evaluative claim)</p>	<p>Owing to the convenient transportation and internet, we enter the era of globalization. Globalization has become the most popular trend of the world. Some participants (perceived) it will establish a new vision for the world. But some worry it will worsen the hostility between us. (factual claim)</p>	<p>As far as I am concerned, globalization, though provoking lots of diverse opinions, does bring about more positive rather than negative consequences during its process. (evaluative claim)</p>
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3.3.2 Use of citations

Analyses of students' uses of citations pointed to differences in the ways students adapted, even transformed what they read to advance an argument. The following analysis was based on students' final (second) draft since they failed to complete their essay in their first draft. Although two of the three participants finally generated evaluative thesis statement, all participants appeared to use the readings for the same purpose, appealing to authorities primarily as a source of content most of the time (6 out of 13 citations) & as a source of claim support (5 out of 13 citations), no matter what types of claims the participants had advanced in their essay. These appeals revealed that students failed to employ citations for a fuller range of rhetorical moves. Among the 16 citations, only two were employed to locate a faulty path by participant A, "though Numrich, Watson, and Iyer have all signaled in their articles that globalization may run the risk of losing people's self-identities and giving rise to some repercussions on their own cultures and nations..." & "Due to the globalization power, those advanced countries like U.S. seem more able to dominate the world's precious resources than ever (Numrich & Watson)".

Appealing to authorities as a faulty path (40%) & as a source of claim support (60%) was in keeping with participant A's purpose --- to advance an evaluative claim. Participant B appealed to the authorities more as a source of

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content (four out of six citations) than as a source of support (two out of six citations) in advancing her factual claim. While participant C's explicit appeals to authors were limited and primarily used as a source of information, a closer examination of her essay revealed that she simply re-worded several ideas from the sources without explicit citations and presented these ideas as the support for their major claim. These appeals revealed that students' use of sources were consistent with the claim types employed in participants' essays.

Table 3. Participants' Appeals to Authority

	Number of sources cited	Claim	Claim support	A faulty path	Source of information
Participant A	5	0	3	2	0
Participant B	6	0	2	0	4
Participant C	2	0	0	0	2

4 Discussions

The present findings indicated that the focal students did not respond uniformly to the assignment in their task representations and text construction. Given that the three participants built varying task representations, they have utilized different reading and composing strategies in response to various contextual constraints, which affected their text construction in terms of claim and citation use.

By setting his goals to develop his own voice in this task, participant A, in comparison with participants B & C, employed a myriad of cognitive operations in his reading process, testing the assertions of the source text more carefully, comparing them with his own experience in similar situations, conditionalizing them, stating reasons for agreement or disagreement at greater length. However, these active reading strategies did not enable participant A to engage in constructive planning. This finding partially supports previous studies examining the relationship between reading ability and reading-to-write performance (Asencion, 2008; Watanabe, 2001). These studies concluded that the reading ability on its own was not a significant predictor of reading-to-write performance. As such, after struggling with difficulties in synthesizing his own ideas and the source texts, participant A relied on standard repertoire of composing strategies to generate a superficial essay, which suggested a synthesis but delivered a summary. His performance indicated that student writers need an enlarged repertoire of strategies, including rhetorical, textual, interpersonal, and writing process strategies to manage these tasks. Otherwise, even they may be familiar with the expectations for this academic text, they lack strategies to adapt and even transform their knowledge for a specific purpose.

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In contrast to participant A, participants B & C approached the task with a low-investment strategy guided by a content-driven search for information due to their limited and even incorrect task conceptualization. They adopted a well-learned *gist & list* strategy in their reading and writing process. They went through the text looking for the main points, found an idea or term that linked them, and used that to organize the text. This familiar strategy is fast and efficient but not effective to enable writers to produce successful academic discourse. According to Flower (1990), academic discourse as a rhetorical act assumes that writers need to transform their knowledge in response to a problem, issue or purpose. Such knowledge-transformation process often depends on the plans and goals writers give themselves. However, the limited task conceptualization of participants B & C appeared to lead them to work on the wrong task, different from what is expected in the academic community. Although participant C was able to formulate a thesis conforming to argumentative text, she failed to structure her essay accordingly.

The present finding accords well with previous L2 studies contending that L1 literacy education and culture affect students' ways of defining and approaching a writing task (Allen, 2004; Greene, 1995; Riazi, 1997; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2008). After all, the writing students did reflected the values and functions of the culture in which their writing was embedded --- a culture that valued recitation of given information (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991). In Chinese culture, students are accustomed to displaying or reproducing knowledge within the evaluative climate of school and this old habit of mind cannot be discarded after three or four years of advanced English literacy training. However, within the western rhetorical framework, authorship includes conveying something new to move the discourse along and transforming given information into a source of evidence to advance one's own rhetorical purpose (Flower 1990; Greene, 1995). Under the influence of their L1 culture, these high-ability participants seemed to have difficulty translating the guidance and advice they received in their composition courses into actions they could take as authors. They either have defined and approached the task in a way distinct from English rhetorical tradition or they were able to define the task as expected but lack rhetorical reading and composing strategy to fulfill this reading-to-write task.

5 Conclusion and Implication

Based on think-aloud protocols, interview data and text analysis, this study is intended to add to our knowledge of cognitive processes novice Chinese EFL writers engaged as composing from sources and whether their first language culture has affected their conceptualizations of this writing task and their subsequent writing behaviors. The findings provide relatively strong evidence for the effect of first language culture on the way these participants

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conceptualized and approached the reading-to-write task.

Given that reading-to-write tasks are common in some undergraduate and graduate courses, more attention needs to be paid to task representation in second language writing instruction. Although task representation may not be directly taught since it can be influenced by a variety of factors, teachers can promote students' awareness of their own task representation and of the context for writing, as suggested in Flower (1990), Greene (1995) & Zhu (2005). For instance, teachers can ask students to share and to reflect on their representation of each assignment in class discussion. Teachers can also help their students to analyze the features of each writing context in order to enhance their awareness. In addition, students need to be taught how to read source articles purposefully and strategically for different types of information. It may have helped to tell students that they should try to "find where a writer works or doesn't work in interesting ways with your own view" or "to play ideas off one another". L2 writing instructors can consult Hirvela's book (2004), *Connecting reading and writing in second language writing instruction*, for more teaching tips on reading-to-write pedagogy.

The present study is limited in its generalizability as a result of the small number of participants examined. Because the sample size was small, the study was in a specific context, and it dealt with a particular group of students, the findings cannot be generalized beyond such a group. To capture the dynamic of task representation activities in greater details, it is impossible to conduct the study with the number of students large enough to make generalization. Thus, replication of the present study should be conducted to examine task representation of EFL students at different levels and in different educational settings. This line of research will contribute to our understanding of L2 writers' task representation and its subsequent influences on task construction. With a better understanding of this issue, teachers can better help students develop academic literacy skills crucial for performing reading-to-write tasks and for academic success.

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Appendix

Sample interview questions

About the writing prompt:

1. What do you think the writing prompt ask you to do?
2. Is this essay easy to compose?
3. What is your goal? How will you achieve that goal?
4. Did you change your conceptualization of the task after reading the source articles?

About the assigned readings:

1. How did you organize the different ideas presented in the source articles?
2. How did you decide which ideas in the source articles to use in your own essay?
3. Which ideas in the source articles are more persuasive to you? Did you change your position after reading the source articles?

About text production:

1. What difficulty did you encounter while composing the source-based task?
2. How did you incorporate your own ideas into the essay?
3. What are the major ideas of your essay?