

*Self-directed Target Language Learning in an Authentic Target
Language Environment: The Taiwanese Experience*

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For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of York

Department of Educational Studies

December 1999

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr. M. Ferguson and Mr. I. Gregory, for their support, encouragement, and comments during the time we have worked together. My gratitude also goes to Prof. I. Lister, Dr. C. Kyriacou, and Dr. A. Horbury for their generous support during my studies in the Department of Educational Studies.

In addition, without the support from the Taiwanese students at York, 1995-1997, the present research study would never have been completed. I am thankful to the Taiwanese students who participated in my research work. Their enthusiastic participation is key to the current state of this thesis.

Finally, I want to thank my parents, Ho-ping Chang and Yu-chih Shu; my brother, Ji-shang Chang; and my sister, Fu-hui Chang, for their endless support and affection which had made my stay and study in this country possible. My gratitude also goes to N. M. Y. Li, and other friends whose encouragement supported me throughout my life in York, and helped me to complete this thesis.

Abstract

This longitudinal empirical research study is the first investigation of the self-directed target language learning (SDTLL) experience of a group of Taiwanese postgraduate students of English as a Second Language (ESL), studying for academic purposes at the University of York, England. The main aim of the study is to investigate issues relating to SDTLL in a cross-cultural context. The present research study, conducted by using qualitative methods, particularly in-depth interviews, is sensitive to cultural contexts and gives a detailed account and explanation of insiders' perspectives on the phenomenon of SDTLL.

Cultural factors, including the L1 and L2 cultural elements of the participants, are discovered by the present research study to be an eminent dimension in influencing their self-directed target language (TL) learning experience in an authentic L2 environment. The main findings of the present research study not only lead to a number of models which explain the SDTLL of the participants, but also extend Schumann's (1978) Acculturation Model in relation to the concept of language shock. Two other forms of psychological anxiety, socio-cultural and academic culture shock, have also been identified as an obstacle for the participants to cope with in addition to their TL learning difficulties. Other relevant issues, including environmental contextual factors, individual learner factors, and the time factor are also closely examined and discussed in this thesis.

Some specific TL learning obstacles are regarded as closely related to the distinct language differences between participants' L1 and L2, their L1 culture in general, their previous L2 experience, and the individual learner variables. The participants' TL contacts with native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs) in the research environment are considered to be significant in relation to their TL development. The academic orientation is suggested as being crucial to the participants' TL learning strategies in the research

environment. The time factor, closely linked to the participants' academic studies, has been identified as influential in relation to the TL learning foci of the participants over time. The main findings of the present research study enhance understanding of Taiwanese ESL learners' SDTLL in an authentic TL environment.

List of contents

Acknowledgements	i
Abstract	ii
List of Contents	iv
List of Tables	x
List of Figures	xii
List of Abbreviations	xiv
Introduction	1
Chapter One: The context of the study	
Introduction	6
1.1. The research participants	7
1.1.1. The L1 and TL of the participants	7
1.1.2. Background information on the participants	9
1.1.3. The participants' previous TL experience	10
1.2. The research environment	12
1.2.1. The language policy of the University	13
1.2.2. The characteristics of the research environment in relation to SDTLL	14
Summary	15
Chapter Two: The background to self-directed language learning	
Introduction	18
2.1. Second language learning	18
2.1.1. Theoretical models in second language learning	18

2.1.2.	Factors influencing second language learning	28
2.2.	Self-directed learning (SDL)	44
2.2.1.	Self-directed language learning (SDLL)	46
2.2.2.	English for specific purposes (ESP)	50
	Summary	52
Chapter Three: Research methods and design of the study		
	Introduction	55
3.1.	The nature of the research	55
3.1.1.	The main aims of the study	56
3.1.2.	The schedule of the present research study	59
3.1.3.	The key research questions	60
3.2.	The research approaches adopted	62
3.2.1.	The use of a qualitative tradition	62
3.2.2.	The use of a case study	65
3.2.3.	The use of in-depth interviews	67
3.2.4.	The use of a diary study	76
3.3.	Other related issues	79
3.3.1.	Ethical issues	80
3.3.2.	The sampling of the participants	82
3.3.3.	Triangulation	84
3.4.	Analysis and presentation of data	86
3.4.1.	Transcription of interviews and information from diaries	86
3.4.2.	Data analysis and presentation of data	86
	Summary	91

Chapter Four:	Culture conflicts in self-directed language learning (SDLL) in an authentic TL environment	
	Introduction	94
	4.1. Cultural Distance and culture shock	98
	4.1.1. Social cultural distance	98
	4.1.2. Academic cultural distance	103
	4.1.3. Acculturation	107
	4.2. Linguistic distance and language shock	116
	4.2.1. Linguistic distance between L1 and L2	117
	4.2.2. Linguistic distance between L2 (AE) and L2 (BE)	118
	4.2.3. Language shock	120
	4.2.4. TL learning difficulties	123
	Summary	144
Chapter Five:	Environmental contextual factors in self-directed target language learning (SDTLL) in an authentic TL environment	
	Introduction	147
	5.1. Environmental contextual factors	149
	5.1.1. Authentic TL environment	149
	5.1.2. Authentic TL input	157
	5.1.3. TL social contact	165
	5.2. TL learning resources for self-access in the research environment	176
	5.2.1. Human and non-human resources	177
	5.2.2. TL learning activities	186
	5.2.3. TL supporting programmes on the campus	189
	5.2.4. Review from the participants in relation to their SDLL in the research environment	190
	Summary	193

Chapter Six:	Learner's perspective in SDTLL in an authentic target language environment	
	Introduction	197
	6.1. Individual learner variables	198
	6.1.1. Motivation	199
	6.1.2. Personality factors	207
	6.1.3. Other affective factors	212
	6.2. The transfer between L1 and L2	213
	6.2.1. The influence of L1 on the L2 performance	214
	6.2.2. The influence of previous L2 learning experience on the L2 performance	216
	6.3. Language learning strategies in SDLL	217
	6.3.1. The participants' behavioural activities, use of self-access in SDTLL	218
	6.3.2. The participants' psychological activities and attitudes to SDTLL	222
	6.3.3. The modes of self-assessment of the participants	226
	Summary	234
Chapter Seven:	Transformation	
	Introduction	237
	7.1. The concept of SDTLL in the research environment	237
	7.1.1. Cultural elements	238
	7.1.2. TL environmental contextual factors	239
	7.1.3. Individual learner factors	241
	7.2. The role of learner in the context of SDTLL	244
	7.2.1. The notion of the learner in SDTLL	244
	7.2.2. The notion of learning in SDTLL	245
	7.2.3. The notion of learner's L1 culture in SDTLL	248

7.3.	The concept of transformation in SDTLL	251
7.3.1.	The transformation in TL learning purposes	252
7.3.2.	The transformation in TL learning environments	254
7.3.3.	The transformation in TL learning modes	257
7.4.	The time factor in the concept of SDTLL	261
	Summary	268
Chapter Eight:	Conclusions	
8.1.	Introduction	272
8.2.	Summary of the main results: the concept of conflicts	273
8.2.1.	Issues related to cultural differences in the present research study	273
8.2.2.	Issues related to learning priorities and TL learning environment	278
8.2.3.	The time factors in SDTLL in the present research study	281
8.3.	Implications and contribution to knowledge and understanding of SDLL	283
8.3.1.	Issues related the Socio-Educational Model	283
8.3.2.	Issues related to the Acculturation Model	284
8.3.3.	Issues related to the Universal Grammar Model and the Interlanguage Theory	287
8.4.	Recommendations and suggestions for future research	288
Appendices		
Appendix A.	The TL learning experience of the participants	294
Appendix B.	A list of individual learner variables (ILVs)	296
Appendix C.	Learning strategies and definitions	297
Appendix D.	Four sessions of interview questions	299
Appendix E.	A copy of diary used in the present research study	304

Appendix F.	Results of the diaries kept by the participants- Part 1	306
Appendix G.	Results of the diaries kept by the participants- Part 2	317
Appendix H.	The average hour per day which the participants spent on the TL related activities during two term times and the vacation in the research environment	328
References		330

List of Tables

- Table 1.1. Background information on the participants
- Table 1.2. The number of EFL students in the research environment
- Table 2.1. A list of individual learner variables (ILVs)
- Table 2.2. Definitions of acculturation
- Table 3.1. The TLL of the participants in Taiwan and in the present research study
- Table 3.2. The timetable of the present research study
- Table 3.3. Four categories of interviews
- Table 3.4. The procedures of sampling of the participants
- Table 3.5. An example of Stage two of the analytical procedure
- Table 4.1. Dimensions of cross-cultural contact of the participants
- Table 4.2. Three elements of communicative competence
- Table 4.3. General differences between the participants' L1 and L2
- Table 4.4. TL learning difficulties of the participants
- Table 4.5. Concepts of vocabulary learning
- Table 4.6. TL learning difficulties of the participants in relation to listening
- Table 4.7. TL learning difficulties of the participants in relation to speaking
- Table 4.8. TL learning difficulties of the participants in relation to reading
- Table 4.9. TL learning difficulties of the participants in relation to writing
- Table 5.1. Categories of TL activities undertaken the participants
- Table 5.2. The most improved language skill(s) of the participants
- Table 5.3. The definitions of standard and non-standard English
- Table 5.4. Psychological circumstances of the participants while talking to NSs and NNSs
- Table 5.5. The average number of hours per day which the participants spent talking to NSs and NNSs
- Table 5.6. The time spent on talking to NSs and NNSs

- Table 5.7. The major human and non-human resources utilized by the participants to facilitate their SDLL in the research environment
- Table 5.8. The number of average hours per day which the participants spend using TV as a TL resource
- Table 5.9. The average number of hours per day which the participants devoted to the four language skills in the research environment
- Table 5.10. A summary of the participants evaluation of the authentic TL environment in relation to their SDTLL
- Table 5.11. The reasons for the participants taking the TL supporting programmes and how they benefited from taking the courses in the research environment
- Table 6.1. The reasons for the participants' decision to study in the UK
- Table 6.2. Academic English vs. daily conversational English
- Table 6.3. Definitions of three types of anxiety
- Table 6.4. The time which the participants spent on reading academic and non-academic materials
- Table 6.5. The time which the participants spent on academic and non-academic activities in relation to the writing
- Table 6.6. TL learning attitudes of the participants in the research environment
- Table 6.7. The modes of self-assessment of the participants in the research environment
- Table 6.8. The frequencies and modes of self-assessment of the participants
- Table 7.1. The transformations of the participants in relation to their TLL in the research environment
- Table 7.2. Issues related to the concept of transformation in the participants' TLL
- Table 7.3. The lengths of time which the participants had stayed in the research environment when the data collection of the present research study was first conducted
- Table 7.4. The different levels of TL learning difficulties and TL needs among the participants
- Table 8.1. The change in TL needs and TL learning objectives among the participants

List of Figures

- Figure 1.1. The interaction between the participants and the research environment - Model 1
- Figure 2.1. A simplified Gardner's Socio-Educational Model
- Figure 2.2. The relationship between autonomy, self-direction, self access and self-directed learning
- Figure 2.3. The process of SDL
- Figure 4.1. Circular relationship model of UTLC, TLP and AA
- Figure 4.2. Linear relationship of UTLC, TLP and AA - Model 1
- Figure 4.3. Linear relationship of UTLC, TLP and AA - Model 2
- Figure 4.4. Partial relationship of UTLC, TLP and AA - Model 1
- Figure 4.5. Partial relationship of UTLC, TLP and AA - Model 2
- Figure 4.6. The concept of TL learning difficulties in the aspect of listening
- Figure 4.7. The concept of TL learning difficulties in the aspect of reading
- Figure 5.1. The relationship of the four categories of language learning environments in the present research
- Figure 5.2. Sociocultural or environmental factors of the participants' SLL in the research environment
- Figure 5.3. SLL of the participants in Taiwan
- Figure 5.4. SLL of the participants in the research environment
- Figure 5.5. The social relationship between the participants' L1 and L2 in the research environment - Model 1
- Figure 5.6. The social relationship between the participants' L1 and L2 in the research environment - Model 2
- Figure 5.7. The daily average length of the TL related activities of Participant 1 during the two term times and the vacation in the research environment

- Figure 6.1. The relationship between the three components and the present research study - Model 1
- Figure 6.2. The interaction of instrumental and integrative motivation in SLL
- Figure 6.3. The interaction of TL learning factors and academic factors in instrumental SLL motivation
- Figure 6.4. The three TL learning attitudes of the participants in the research environment
- Figure 6.5. The participants' use of qualitative and quantitative self assessments in the research environment
- Figure 7.1. The influences of the cultural elements on the participants' SDTLL in the research environment
- Figure 7.2. The influences of TL environmental contextual factors on the participants' SDTLL in the research environment
- Figure 7.3. The influences of the individual learner factors on the participants' SDTLL in the research environment
- Figure 7.4. The relationship between the three components and the concept of SDTLL in the present research study - Model 2
- Figure 7.5. A general time scale showing the participants' residence period in the research environment and the four sessions of interviews
- Figure 7.6. The interaction between the time factor and the internal and external factors in the participants' TLL in the research environment
- Figure 8.1. The consequences of the encounter of the L1 and L2 culture of the participants in the research environment
- Figure 8.2. The causes of the participants' language anxiety
- Figure 8.3. The influence of the L1 culture elements on the participants' TL development
- Figure 8.4. The relationship between academic success and TL learning of the participants
- Figure 8.5. The interaction between the participants and the research environment - Model 2

List of Abbreviations

AA	Academic achievement
AE	American English
BE	British English
CRAPEL	Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pedagogiques en langues
DDFs	Different discourse forms
DDGs	Different discourse genres
DLCs	Different linguistic contexts
EAP	English for academic purposes
ECP	English for communicative purposes
EEP	English for educational purposes
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a second language
ESP	English for specific purposes
GLL	Good language learner
GRE	Graduate record examination
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IL	Interlanguage
ILVs	Individual learner variables
IVS	Individual variables
JCEE	Joint College Entrance Examination
JSL	Japanese as a second language
KMT	Kuo Min Tang
KTV	Karaoke television
L1	First language
L2	Second language
LTC	Language teaching centre

MTI	Movement of Taiwan independence
NNSs	Non-native speakers
NSE	Non-standard English
NSs	Native speakers
PD	Pro-drop
SA	Self-access
SAL	Self-access learning
SAS	Self-access system
SD	Self-direction
SDL	Self-directed learning
SDLL	Self-directed language learning
SDTLL	Self-directed target language learning
SE	Standard English
SLL	Second language learning
TEYL	Teaching English to young learners
TL	Target language
TLL	Target language learning
TLP	Target language performance
TOEFL	Test of English as a foreign language
TSAY	Taiwanese student association York
UG	Universal grammar
UTLC	Understanding of target language culture

Introduction

The present research study, which sets out to explore the self-directed target language learning (SDTLL) of a group of Taiwanese postgraduate students of English as second language (ESL) studying for academic purposes in an authentic target language (TL) environment, was prompted by an interest in understanding self-directed language learners' learning progress in an authentic TL environment where learners have the total control over their TL activities, and where learners experience a close contact with genuine TL elements.

Three concerns of the present research study are: (1) to see how self-directed language learners self manage their TL learning in an out-of-classroom environment, (2) to investigate the factors influencing their TL development and performance in an authentic TL environment, and (3) to discover the inter-relationship between the TL learners, the authentic TL learning environment and the TL learning and performance of the learners.

Most of the existing research in SLL was conducted in the classroom setting, such as Ellis (1984, 1990) and Schumann (1978); on American and European TL learners' learning experiences, Ehrman (1996), and Skehan (1989, 1991); and on short term TL learning in an authentic TL environment, Freed (1990, 1995), and Ginsberg (1992). There is correspondingly a lack of research based on the long term SDTLL experience of Taiwanese learners of ESL in a cross-cultural context, in which issues relating to the interaction between the learners, the environment, and TL learning may arise and directly influence the process of SDTLL. In addition to the lack of knowledge about the SDTLL experience of Taiwanese students in the UK, which has gradually become a popular place for Taiwanese students to study for degrees in recent years, there are under-researched problems of culture clash which are also relevant to other international students in this country.

Being able to take the initiative, which is identified as self-direction by Dickinson (1987), indicates that TL learners may have different kinds of orientations in relation to their learning motivation, which are identified by Gardner's (1988) Socio-Educational Model as integrative and instrumental. Revealing the interaction and relationship between SDTLL and learning motivation can inform both educators and learners of what to expect in terms of language needs, and what to do to help learners in relation to their SDTLL.

Apart from the research carried out in SDTLL and issues concerning learning motivation, previous work that is relevant to the present research study includes studies of out-of-class learning strategies, such as those of Rubin (1975), Naiman et al. (1978), O'Malley and Chamot 1990, and Oxford (1990), which have been very much emphasized in recent years. Most of the emphasis in out-of-class learning strategies has been focussed on listening, speaking and reading skills, such as the study carried out by Naiman et al. (1978). Discussions related to writing skills are rather limited, because the TLL purpose of research subjects tends to be English for communicative purposes (ECP), as in Pickard (1996). In addition, the subjects of previous research conducted in this specific field have tended to be students of ESL from European countries, which may have more congruent cultural backgrounds to their TL compared with students of ESL from Far East countries. Consequently, uncovering the TL learning needs and strategies of English for academic purposes (EAP) Taiwanese postgraduate students in relation to their academic writing skills has a practical and theoretical value in the field of SLL.

The longitudinal quality of the present research study allows issues related to the concept of SDTLL to emerge over time. Three phases were included in the present research study: the phase of initial piloting and exploratory work, the phase of the main study consisting of stages of data collection and data analysis, and the phase of writing up. Phase one was carried out in 1995 to 1996, Phase two took place in 1996 to 1997, and the final phase of the present research study, the phase of writing up, aimed to present the significant findings drawn from the present research study in relation to the field of second language learning (SLL), and specifically to the area of self-directed language learning (SDLL) in a cross-cultural context, an authentic target language (TL) environment.

A brief overview of the chapters included in this thesis is provided in the following paragraphs.

Chapter One sets the context of the study: (1) by providing profile data on the participants in relation to their academic status at the University, the social status of their L1 and L2 in Taiwan, and their previous experience in L2; and (2) by describing some of the relevant features of the research environment, the TL policies of the University, and one specific characteristic of the research environment concerning the TLL of the participants. The main aim of this chapter is to identify possible TL learning obstacles, caused by the interaction between the learners and the environment, which learners of TL may face when in the cross-cultural context of the authentic TL environment. The characteristics of the participants and the research environments, such as the participants' TL learning experience and the TL input from the research environments, which closely relate to the participants' SDTLL are discussed in this chapter to serve as a fundamental consideration for the data analysis of the present research study.

Chapter Two reviews some of the models and developments in second language learning (SLL), and self-directed learning (SDL), which are regarded as closely related to the present research study. The objectives of this chapter are twofold: (1) to highlight some of the relevant L2 learning processes from a theoretical perspective and to feature some of the internal and external elements which account for SLL; and (2) to emphasize the significance of SDL at an advanced level of SLL and to justify the use of SDL in the context of the present research study. The implication is that SDTLL in an authentic TL environment involves not only the mechanisms of the learners' learning a different code and system of communication, but also the interaction and acquisition of the L2 cultural norms, which may not be substantiated in the participants' L1 environment.

Chapter Three states the main aims and structure of the present research study in detail. Descriptions and discussions of the research methods and instruments utilized in the present research study are provided in this chapter. Discussions on the strengths and weaknesses of the present research study in relation to the research methods and instruments are also given in this chapter.

Chapter Four provides the reader with the results, relating to cultural elements, of the present research study. Discussions in this chapter are presented under two primary categories: (1) cultural distance and culture shock; and (2) linguistic distance and language shock. The specific psychological anxiety caused by the cultural distance between the participants' L1 and L2 cultures, in terms of culture shock and language shock, is examined in this chapter. Both culture shock and language shock are regarded by the participants as irritating, and language shock is argued to be extremely closely related to the development of their TL writing competence. However, socializing with particular peer groups is recognized by the participants as relieving the uneasiness caused by culture shock.

Chapter Five provides the reader with the results relating to the environmental contextual factors of the present research study. Issues related to the language authenticity of the TL environment, which has been generally regarded as a strength in facilitating ESL learning, are discussed in detail in this chapter. The strengths and weaknesses of the TL authenticity of the research environment are discussed. In addition, whereas the effectiveness of non-human resources, such as TV, in relation to TL development has been widely recognized by the participants, the availability of human resources in relation to TL learning in the research environment is shown to be considered by the participants as limited.

Chapter Six reports on the results relating to the learner's perspectives, as revealed by the present research study. Discussions in this chapter focus on three specific aspects; individual learner variables; language transfer; and language learning strategies, which are considered to be closely related to the role of the learner in the context of SDTLL. It is considered by the present research that the participants' L1 has a significant influence on the role of the learner's perspective in SDTLL.

Chapter Seven gives a conclusive discussion drawn from Chapters Four, Five and Six, and aims to pull together the fundamental issues related to the three main aspects of the present research study, the cultural, environmental and learner elements. Significant results and models are presented in this chapter to conclude the present research study and to inform the reader of its significance. Chapter Eight gives a brief summary of the conclusions derived from the present research study, and suggests a number of implications relating to

the field of SLL and SDTLL.

The results which emerged from the present research study serve to inform educators and researchers in this area of some potentially problematical issues which may arise in the context of SDTLL in an authentic environment. It is hoped that the present research study can provide a starting point for more research into this area.

Chapter One

The Context of the Study

Introduction

The present chapter provides background information on the research participants, a group of eleven Taiwanese postgraduate ESL learners studying for academic purposes at an English university, and the context of the research environment, relating to TLL, where the present research study was conducted, the University of York, England. The purpose of providing this information is twofold: (1) to define some of the features of the research participants which are regarded as closely related to their TL learning; and (2) to show the characteristics of the context of the research environment in relation to its TL learning supporting facilities, which may influence the participants' self-directed target language learning (SDTLL).

Different groups of English as a target language (TL) learners may have different learning strategies, and therefore may encounter different TL learning difficulties. For example, the participants of the present research study may have TL obstacles in relation to their acquisition and use of TL vocabulary, which is totally different from their L1. Consequently, it is necessary to have an understanding of the aspects of the participants' backgrounds which may influence their TL learning and development, such as their L1 language and their previous TL learning experiences, because these specific characteristics may explain some of the findings drawn from the present research study. In addition, some of the features of the research environment, such as its TL supporting facilities and policies which distinguish it from those of other universities, need to be addressed because these features may later be utilized to explain some of the findings drawn from the present research study.

1.1. The research participants

The participants in the present research study are a group of eleven Taiwanese postgraduate ESL learners studying for academic purposes at the University of York, England. Information on the participants presented in this section will provide an account of some aspects which may directly or indirectly influence the participants' self-directed English language learning in the research environment. Discussions in this section are divided into three categories: (1) the L1 and TL of the participants; (2) background information on the participants; and (3) the participants' previous TL learning experience.

1.1.1. The L1 and TL of the participants

Discussions in this section will focus on the general linguistic differences and social background of the participants' L1 and TL in their L1 environment, and the specific comparisons of linguistic differences between the participants' L1 and TL. The influence of such differences on the participants' SDTLL can be seen in Chapter Four of this thesis. The L1s of the participants, Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese, are regarded as very different from the participants' TL, English, in relation to pronunciation, syntax and writing systems. Basically, they are two different languages from two different language families.

The L1s of the participants are Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese. Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese belong to the same language group - Chinese. Chinese belongs to what are called Sino-Tibetan languages which consist of four main groups: Chinese, Miao-Yao (languages spoken by tribes in the mountainous parts of Indochina, northern Burma and southwestern China), Kam-Thai (Thai, Lao, Shan, and other languages of southeast Asia), and Tibeto-Burman (languages spoken in Tibet, Burma, other parts of south and southeast Asia, and some areas of northern India) (Kratochvil, 1968). Chinese is not simply one single language but a group of different languages.

Mandarin Chinese, originally spoken in the northern part of China, was the official language spoken in the Ching dynasty. When the Ching dynasty was overruled in 1911, the Republic of China was founded by a political party (Kuo-Min Tang, KMT, also known as the nationalist party). In 1913, Mandarin Chinese was nominated, by the Conference

on Unification of Pronunciation, as the standard language which was not merely to be used as a means of official communication but also to be taught in all schools from the primary grades upwards (DeFrancis, 1984). Mandarin Chinese was not the official language spoken in Taiwan until 1949 when the KMT retreated from China to Taiwan, where it is still the ruling party in Taiwan today. Taiwanese, which belongs to one group of the Chinese dialects, Min, spoken in southern China, is the most commonly spoken language in Taiwan.

The participants' TL, English, was not officially introduced into the educational system in Taiwan until the retreat of the KMT government to Taiwan in 1949. English was designated as the only foreign language to be studied by Taiwanese junior high school students in 1968, the year in which the practice of nine years mandatory education, six years of primary school and three years of junior high school, was introduced.

Since 1968, English has been the only foreign language to be taught and studied by junior high school students, senior high school students and university students. Students are obliged to study English during their first year at university, but they may decide not to study English in the subsequent three years at university. Courses in other foreign languages are made available for the students to learn at university. The educational status of English in Taiwan has been emphasized by the educational authority and the government due to not only the domestic educational interests but also the need to participate in international affairs, including international trading and political matters.

One issue which needs to be addressed at this point is that the close political and economic relationship between the Taiwanese government and the US government may have been significant in influencing the type of English to be taught in Taiwan. As Taiwan has had a close relationship with the US government, the English that is taught in Taiwan is therefore more influenced by the US than by the UK. American English (AE), including the use of words, spelling system and articles, is regarded as the target English to be presented and taught to students in their TL education at school in Taiwan. Some Taiwanese university students may have opportunities to come into contact with British English (BE), but this happens only when they have their major in courses related to

English literature or English language at university. It can, therefore, be understood that most of the participants of the present research study are more familiar with AE than with BE.

1.1.2. Background information on the participants

Of the eleven participants, six are female and five are male. The sampling of these eleven participants will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three of this thesis. The present section will look in detail at the length of time the participants had stayed in the research environment at the point when the present research was conducted. The purpose of the examination of this particular aspect is to see if there is a relationship between the length of time the participants stayed in the research environment and their use of SDLL strategies, which may closely relate to their language development in TL learning in the research environment.

The table below, Table 1.1., indicates: (1) the academic subjects of the participants, and their mode of study; (2) the date when the participants arrived in the research environment and the date when their academic courses began; and (3) the degree for which the participants were registered.

Table 1.1. Background information on the participants

Participant (sex)	Degree for which the participant was registered	Academic subject	Mode of study	Date of arrival in the research environment	Start date of the academic study
1 (F)	MPhil/ DPhil	Music	By research	Oct. 1995	Oct. 1995
2 (F)	MA	Education - science	By taught course	Aug. 1996	Oct. 1996
3 (F)	MA	Education - science	By taught course	Oct. 1995	Oct. 1995
4 (F)	DPhil	Education - social science	By research	Oct. 1994	Oct. 1994
5 (M)	DPhil	Biology	By research	Sept. 1994	Sept. 1995
6 (M)	DPhil	Computer science	By research	Sept. 1994	Oct. 1995

7 (M)	MPhil/ DPhil	English literature	By research	Oct. 1995	Oct. 1995
8 (M)	MPhil/ DPhil	Biology	By research	Feb. 1996	Feb. 1996
9 (F)	MA	Women's studies	By taught course	Aug. 1996	Oct. 1996
10 (F)	MA	Education - social science	By research	Oct. 1996	Oct. 1996
11 (M)	Diploma	Economics	By taught course	Aug. 1996	Sept. 1996

Among these eleven participants, eight had never taken any pre-sessional language course before the start of their academic studies, and only three had taken a pre-sessional course before they started their academic studies in the research environment. Most of the participants arrived in the research environment just days before their academic courses started. The participants, in this case, had limited time to familiarize themselves with the TL in the research environment before they started their academic studies. As long as the scores of the participants' TL tests, Internal English Language Testing System (IELTS) or Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), have satisfied the TL requirements of the university and their academic departments, they are not requested to attend the pre-sessional language course. The participants who have a recognized strong TL competence may nevertheless still encounter obstacles in adapting themselves to a different cultural and academic environment.

1.1.3. The participants' previous TL experience

According to the participants, nine of them first started their formal TL learning at the age of thirteen, the first year of junior high school education in Taiwan, and continued until the first year of college/ university. This amounts to a total of at least seven years of formal TL learning in Taiwan. Two of the participants have ten years of formal TL education due to their English language/ literature major at university in Taiwan. Apart from their formal TL education in Taiwan, some of the participants have had other opportunities to learn TL in a formal setting, and some of the participants have had no other opportunities to learn or practise their TL after their formal seven years of TL learning in Taiwan. Appendix A

indicates the TL experience of the participants, including the formal education they received and the additional TL experience they had after the basic seven years of TL learning in Taiwan.

According to Appendix A., four of the participants have had no experience in the use of TL after their formal TL education in Taiwan, whereas three of the participants have had a year or more of experience in the TL after their formal TL education in Taiwan. Among these three participants, one had completed a master's degree in a university in Wales, one had completed a master's degree in a university in England, and one had taken two years of undergraduate courses in a university in Canada. According to the participants, their additional TL experience appears to benefit their TL development and some of their understanding of TL cultural norms, which is important in facilitating their life in general in the authentic TL environment. An understanding of and familiarity with some aspects of TL cultural norms are considered to be influential for both the participants' academic studies and their attitude towards TL learning in the research environment. Being willing to accept the differences between their L1 and L2 culture is regarded as a significant factor affecting the degree of culture shock which the participants experienced (see Chapter Two for discussions in detail) and influencing their attitudes towards their SDTLL and L2 environment (see Chapters Four, Five, and Six for discussions in detail).

The participants' experience of contact with the TL culture and the TL itself before they came to study in the research environment may facilitate their adjustment to a new life in general and to the use of TL in the research environment. However, language shock, a state of psychological anxiety caused by the unfamiliarity with the use of a language (see Chapters Two and Four for discussions in detail), is regarded as an obstacle for the participants to overcome, especially when it comes to language shock which is related to the academic use of the TL, which requires not only the accurate use of TL but also a standard method of presenting ideas. The participants, who had no experience in academic TL before they came to the research environment, will have to utilize TL resources in the research environment to facilitate their academic TL development. Consequently, the research environment, which will be further discussed in the following section, is regarded as a factor which influences the participants' SDTLL.

1.2. The research environment

Some features of the research environment, such as issues relating to the TL environment and TL learning, may influence the participants' SDTLL. These features include the profile of students at the University, and the University's policies and resources to facilitate TL learning. The size of the University may influence the participants' opportunities to practise and acquire TL in their life on the campus, and the University's TL policies and TL supporting programmes can directly influence the participants' TL development.

The environment of the research study is an academic institution, the University of York, located in the south of the city of York in the north of England. The University was founded in 1963, and has been described as a rather small university compared with other universities in the UK (Curtis, 1995). In relation to the number of full-time and part-time postgraduate students, the Review of Postgraduate Education (1996) indicates that in the 1994-95 academic year 5,577 postgraduate students were registered at the University of Cambridge, 4,364 postgraduate students were registered at the University of Leeds, and only 1,426 postgraduate students were registered at the University where the present research was conducted. The University is, therefore, considered as a small-sized university.

In relation to the number of overseas students at the university during the time when the present research study was conducted, the Annual Review of the university (1996) indicates that there were 399 overseas students, 179 undergraduate and 220 postgraduate students, among the 6,053 students at the University of York. Students from the European Union (EU) are not counted as overseas students in these figures. Table 1.2. below indicates the number of students studying at the University between 1995/96 and 1998/99.

Table 1.2. The number of students in the research environment

Type of students / Student numbers in total	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Overseas students (excluding students from EU)	399	520	651	603
Students from EU	271	361	525	506
Students from English as L1 countries	85	143	222	139
Students of ESL	585	738	954	970

The number of ESL students in the research environment when the present research study was conducted in 1995/96 suggests that approximately 10% of the students in the research environment are EFL speakers, and 90% of the students are NSs of the TL when the present research was conducted. This figure indicates that the participants have great opportunities to have contact with the TL and NSs of the TL in the research environment.

1.2.1. The language policy of the university

The discussions in relation to the language policy of the University in this section will focus on two aspects: (1) the language requirements of English in the recruitment of overseas students whose English is not their L1, and (2) the TL policies and TL supporting programmes of the University for overseas students of ESL. In relation to the English language requirements of the University, in general, the University looks for students with 6.0 or above on the IELTS test and 550+ on the TOEFL (Information on the website of the University of York, 1997). Apart from this general requirement, the University tends to leave the decision to individual departments to recruit their overseas students in relation to their English abilities. Individual departments may set their TL requirements according to the language demands in their own academic field. Consequently, individual departments at the University play a significant role in the recruitment of the overseas students whose English is not their L1.

It is notable that the researcher was told by one of the senior staff at the graduate office in May 1997 that no specific TL policies had been published by the University when the time the present research was conducted, a state which is unchanged since a research study of language support was conducted by Curtis (1995). According to Curtis (1995), no publication on TL policies had been distributed by the university when his research study was conducted relating to matters which concern the TL competence of ESL overseas students during their studies at the University. The only description which concerns overseas students is available in the handbook published by the University, entitled "The degree of MPhil and DPhil: notes of guidance for students, supervisors and examiners", under the section of the role of the supervisor (September, 1997, p. 5):

- (iii) to be particularly sensitive to the needs of overseas students, who may need more of the supervisor's time than other students.

Such a statement can be regarded as rather broad in relation to the needs of overseas students. According to the above statement, supervisors are regarded as a general facilitative resource which overseas students can turn to when they encounter obstacles in their life at the University.

The TL supporting programmes at the university are operated by the EFL unit in The Language Teaching Centre at the university. Several different TL supporting programmes (see discussions in Chapter Five for detail) are run by the EFL unit to cater for students with various TL needs. However, students who decide to utilize these programmes to facilitate their TL development will have to finance their attendance at these TL supporting programmes themselves.

1.2.2. The characteristics of the research environment in relation to SDTLL

Language learning involves an interaction between the learners and the environment, and consequently, some characteristics of the environment, such as authentic TL input, may therefore benefit the learners' learning processes. In relation to the characteristics of the research environment, some of the features of the research environment, NSs and NNSs, may either facilitate or obstruct the participants' SDTLL. The discussions in this section will focus on the allocation of the students' accommodation at the University, in which the participants may stay for a considerable time during their studies. Fellow students with whom the participants live in their accommodation may, therefore, directly influence their SDTLL.

Data obtained from the Student Records Office indicates that in the 1996/97 academic year, 221 home postgraduate students and 313 EU and overseas postgraduate students lived in university accommodation on the campus. No official record is available on the ratio distribution between home postgraduate students, and EU and overseas postgraduate students in individual university accommodation. In this case, the general ratio distribution between home postgraduate students, and EU and overseas postgraduate students is 1:

1.42. The researcher was told by one of the senior staff at the accommodation office in October 1998 that university has no specific policy in allocating home, EU and overseas postgraduate students. Consequently, although the number of home postgraduate students, and EU and overseas postgraduate students living on the campus is quite even, it must be borne in mind that not every university accommodation unit is allocated with equal numbers of home, EU and overseas postgraduate student. This figure suggests that the participants in general have fifty per cent of chance of coming into contact with NNSs in their accommodation, which is higher than the previous figure indicated in Section 1.2., the ten per cent of NNSs studying at the University.

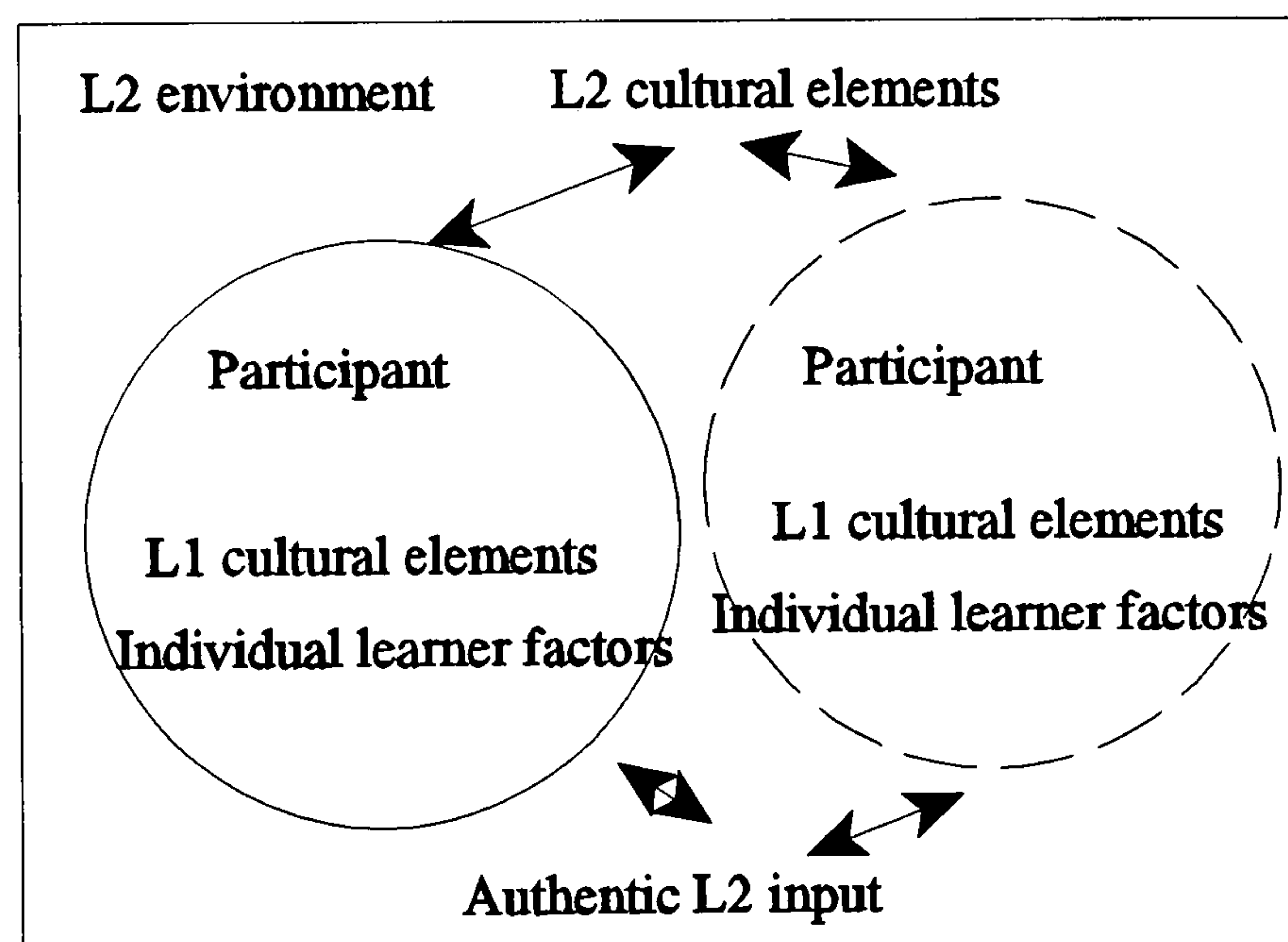
Summary

Discussions in this chapter provide the reader with background information on the participants and the research environment. Some characteristics of the participants, such as their L1 features in general and their previous experience of L2, and the features of the research environment, such as TL supporting programmes and university accommodation policies which may influence the frequency of the participants' contact with authentic TL input. The participants' L1 features in general can be regarded as part of the participants' L1 cultural elements, and their previous experience in L2 can be considered as part of the individual learner factors. The characteristics of the research environment can be seen as part of the L2 cultural elements. These general concepts are considered to be essential in the participants' SDTLL in a cross-cultural context, and will later be utilized in Figure 1.1.

The present research study consists of a group of eleven Taiwanese postgraduate students of ESL studying for academic purposes and their SDTLL in an authentic TL environment. Having had direct contact with the TL environment, the participants are confronting some cross-cultural experiences in relation to both their SDTLL and life in general in the research environment. Such cross-cultural experiences may lead the participants to positive outcomes, acquiring authentic and academic TL elements, and also to negative outcomes, such as culture shock and language shock. The interaction between some of the factors affecting the participants, such as L1 cultural elements and individual learner factors, and the factors in the present research environment, such as TL cultural elements and authentic TL input, can influence the participants' SDTLL.

The figure below, Figure 1.1., illustrates the circumstance of the interaction between the participants and the research environment when they first arrive in the research environment. The circular lines in Figure 1.1. are solid and dotted. The solid circular line indicates the participants who had no previous experience in an authentic TL environment when they first arrive in the research environment. The dotted circular line indicates the participants who had previous experience in an authentic TL environment when they first arrive in the research environment. It is important to mention that although some of the participants had experience in contact with authentic TL input, it was their first time to come and study in the research environment where the authenticity of TL can be very different from the authentic TL input which the participants had in their previous TL experience.

Figure 1.1. The interaction between an individual participant and the research environment - Model 1



According to Figure 1.1., individual participants can be considered as a culturally different entity when they first arrive in the L2 environment. The circular lines which separate the participants from the L2 environment represents the two possible degrees (solid line: marked cultural barrier; dotted line: less evident cultural barrier) of difference between the participant and the research environment. The interactions between the participants and the L2 cultural elements and authentic L2 input in relation to their SDTLL will be examined and discussed in detail in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven. A further

developed model of Figure 1.1. will be presented in Chapter Eight to conclude the outcome of the interactions between the participants and the L2 cultural elements and authentic L2 input in relation to the SDTLL of the present research study.

Before going on to the discussions of the participants' experience in SDTLL in the research environment, it is essential to understand some of the relevant theoretical discussions on second language learning (SLL) and cross-cultural issues. Chapter Two, which consists of theoretical discussions on issues related to SLL and SDL, forms the foundation of the present research study.

Chapter Two

The Background to Self-directed Second Language Learning

Introduction

This chapter serves to provide an overall review of the literature on: (1) second language learning (SLL) including a number of theoretical models, individual learner factors, environmental contextual factors, and cultural elements in language learning; and (2) self-directed learning (SDL) including discussions from self-directed language learning, self assessment and English for specific purposes (ESP). Discussions of the relationship of these theoretical models to a number of current research studies and to the present research study will also be presented.

2.1. Second language learning

Second language learning (SLL) is concerned with how learners learn an additional language after they have acquired their mother tongue language(s). The present research specifically aims to examine the procedure of second language learning from a learners' perspective. Although still in its developmental stages, SLL research has already produced insights from many perspectives. The following sections discuss a number of theoretical models of SLL which are considered to be core to the present research.

2.1.1. Theoretical models in second language learning

According to studies by Ellis (1985, 1994), Cook (1996), McLaughlin (1987), and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), over fifteen models have been developed in the field of SLL during the past twenty years. These models may be broadly categorized into three groups according to their contents or functions, as follows:

1. Socio-Psychology and culture
e.g. Gardner's Socio-Educational Model
Schumann's Acculturation Model

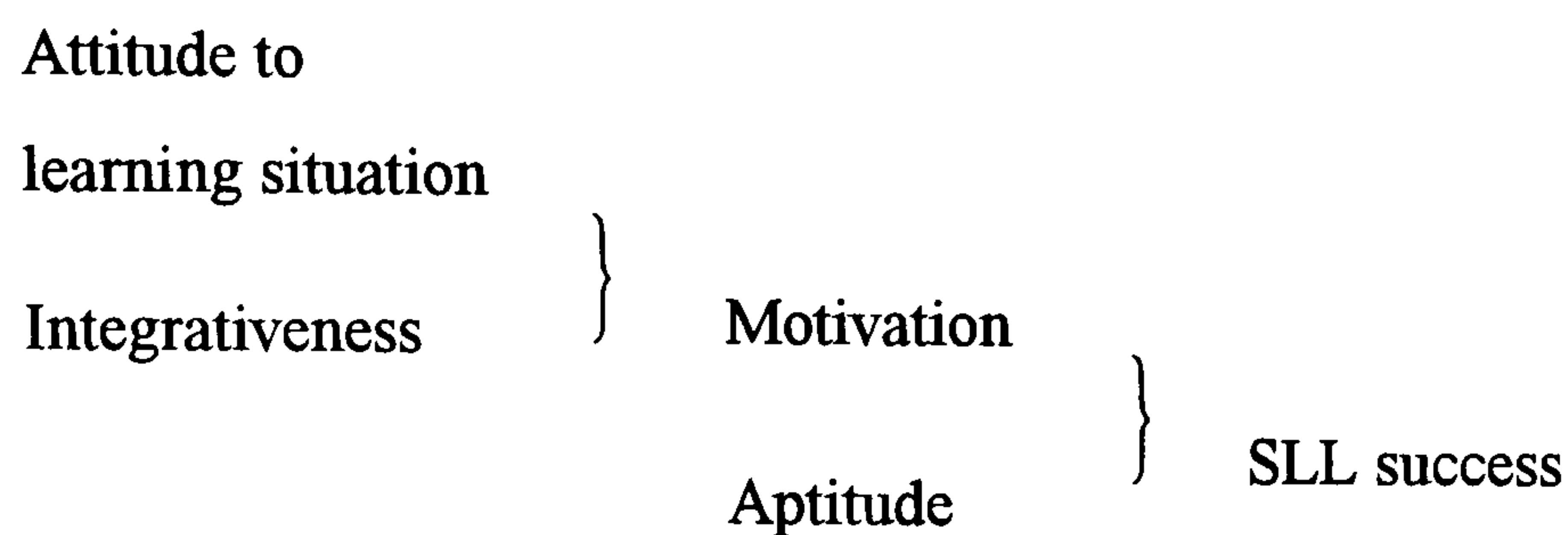
2. Universal Grammar and Interlanguage
 - e.g. Chomsky's Universal Grammar Model
 - Selinker's Interlanguage Theory
3. Multi-dimension
 - e.g. Givon's Functional Typological Theory

The first type of model, Socio-Psychological and cultural, stresses the social aspects of L2 learning. Models in the second category, Linguistic Universal and cognitive, emphasize the importance of the individual mind in L2 learning. Multi-dimensional models cover more than one perspective in relation to SLL. Due to the multi-characteristics of the present research, which focus on the participants' SLL motivation, and the sociocultural differences between the participants' L1 and L2 cultures and also their influence on the participants' SLL, reference to literature from several fields on a general level rather than to one field on an in-depth level is necessary. The following sections will review four models: Gardner's Socio-Educational Model, Schumann's Acculturation Model, Chomsky's Universal Grammar Model, and Selinker's Interlanguage Theory.

2.1.1.a. The Socio-Educational Model

The Socio-Educational Model was proposed by Robert Gardner (1985) and has been developing since 1960. Gardner (1985) explains the interaction of individual learner factors with the general features of society in SLL. The individual learner factors in this model comprise intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety. Among these four variables, the latter two are directly related to socio-psychological influences. Gardner further argues that the success of SLL is influenced to a certain degree by two main factors, motivation and aptitude. Motivation consists of two important elements: attitudes to the learning situation and integration. The former element includes attitudes toward teachers and learning courses, and the latter element concerns how the L2 learners regard the L2 culture reflection. Figure 2.1. below is a simplified figure which illustrates Gardner's Socio-Educational Model.

Figure 2.1. A simplified Gardner's Socio-Educational Model



(Cook, 1996, p. 168)

Based on this model, attitudes and integrativeness lead to motivation; motivation and aptitude lead to SLL success. Gardner explains that attitudes and integrativeness stem from the social milieu in which the L2 learners are placed. In addition, in Gardner's model the SLL success is, to a certain degree, influenced by the attitudes of L2 learners towards the L2 culture. Cook (1996) indicates that the socio-educational model applies to a situation where L2 learners have definite views on the people whose language the L2 learners acquire through everyday contact with them within the society.

Like other models of SLL, Gardner's Socio-Educational Model has received criticism from other researchers in this field. Au (1988) argues that there has been little effort expended on explaining what a cultural belief constitutes in Gardner's model; consequently, it is difficult to evaluate this model. Gardner (1988) points out that the problem of determining the beliefs generally held in a community is the key issue which makes it difficult to evaluate his Socio-Educational Model, although many examples of the constitution of cultural beliefs have been given by his work. Gardner (1988, p.102) gives his definition of a constitution of cultural beliefs as those existing in the social context in which the individual lives, and though one would expect that the individual might share them, the focus is on the milieu itself, not on the individual.

Gardner's four variables: intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety, are related to the linguistic and non-linguistic outcome of the participants, who are advanced L2 learners in the L2 culture. Situational anxiety, which refers to the difficulty in experiencing the L2 learning context, is the variable most relevant to the condition of the participants in the present research. On the whole, the participants in the present research have access to both informal and formal language learning experiences in an

authentic TL community. Under the circumstance of the emphasis on informal language learning experience, the consequences of SLL can vary according to the different degrees of situational anxiety, motivation, and cultural beliefs which the individual participants hold.

2.1.1.b. The Acculturation Model

In his work on the acculturation of American Indian tribes, Linton (1963) describes the process of acculturation as involving modification in attitudes, knowledge, and behaviour. The modifications mentioned by Linton were seen to consist not only of the addition of new elements to an individual's cultural background, but also the elimination of certain previous elements and reorganization of others. Consequently, the overall process of acculturation requires not only social but also psychological adaptation. Later Brown (1980, p.129) defined the term of acculturation as 'the process of becoming adapted to a new culture.' It is regarded as an important aspect of SLL, because language is one of the observable expressions of culture. A part of the process of acculturation is to learn the appropriate use of the target language (TL) in order to communicate in the TL community.

The Acculturation model in SLL is based on the work of John Schumann (1978). In Schumann's model (1978), acculturation is the causal variable in the second-language-learning process. Although the Acculturation Model is usually applied to the immigration situation, Gardner (1985) suggests that this model can also be applied to SLL. Consequently, this model can be used to examine L2 students studying in the L2 language, culture, and environment, which is the case in the present research. One condition which the present research and Schumann's model do not share is that, according to Schumann, his research subjects, immigrants, generally have low levels of TL skills and TL culture. In relation to TL competence, the present research participants, postgraduate students, generally had considerably high levels of competence in English before they came to study in England. Schumann's subjects have to improve their L2 to live and work in the L2 environment, while the present research participants have to improve their TL in order to achieve their academic success in a TL academic environment.

According to Schumann, the most important influence on SLL is the relationship between the social group of the TL learners and the social group of the TL speakers. Schumann indicates the relationship between SLL (SLA) and acculturation as follows:

Second language acquisition is just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language. (1978, p.34)

Acculturation in SLL is determined by the degree of social and psychological distance between the TL learners and the TL culture. Social distance is the consequence of a number of factors which affect the TL learners becoming a member of a social group in contact with the TL group. Psychological distance is the consequence of various affective factors concerning the TL learners as individuals. Schumann (1978) also lists different factors which govern social and psychological distance. These social variables determine whether the overall learning condition is bad or good. The following conditions (Schumann, 1978) which are regarded as 'good' learning situations are as follows:

1. The TL group and L2 group regard each other as socially equal.
2. Both the TL group and L2 group desire assimilation.
3. Both the TL group and L2 group expect to share social facilities.
4. The L2 group is small and not cohesive.
5. The culture of the L2 group is congruent with that of the TL group.
6. Both groups have a positive attitude towards each other.
7. The L2 group expects to stay in the TL area for an extended period.

When the situations are opposite to the good ones mentioned above, they are described as 'bad' learning situations. The psychological factors are regarded as affective in nature and they include: (1) language shock; (2) culture shock; (3) motivation and; (4) ego boundaries (Schumann, 1978). Social and psychological distance influences the success of SLL by determining both the amount of contact with the TL which the TL learners experience, and the degree to which the TL learners are open to the available TL input. Consequently, according to Schumann's Acculturation Model, TL learners who are in 'good' learning conditions will receive more target language input than those who are in 'bad' learning conditions. Additionally, according to the Acculturation Model, the TL learners are believed to be unable to convert the available TL input into intake efficiently when the

psychological distance is great (Ellis, 1985).

From the socio-psychological perspective, the Acculturation Model provides explanations of why some of the L2 learners are not able to achieve a native-like competence. This model addresses naturalistic SLL, where the TL learners have contact with the TL community. In an authentic TL community, learners are able to experience the views which TL speakers hold towards them. The attitude of the TL learners must also not be overlooked regarding points 2, 3, and 6 in Schumann's list of good learning situations. The natural language learning condition described in the Acculturation Model represents the language learning situation of the present research. The two factors, social and psychological, in the Acculturation Model provide sufficient explanations for some findings of the present research which can be seen and are further discussed in Chapters Four and Five of this thesis.

The Acculturation Model has successfully integrated research on the social psychology of SLL (McLaughlin, 1987). Nevertheless, it is believed that the process of SLL is far more complex than this, and there are some issues for which the Acculturation model fails to provide specific explanations. McLaughlin (1987, pp.125-127) presents critical comments from other researchers, such as the comment proposed by Brown (1980) in note 2 and Gardner (1985) in note 3 below, on the Acculturation Model:

1. little attention has been given to the possibility of changes in individual motivation and attitude as these changes can relate to SLL.
2. it is unclear how the variables, social and psychological factors, are to be measured or how the variables relate to each other.
3. Schumann (1986) claims a chain of causality: acculturation brings TL input which causes SLL. The causality can be bi-directional because success in SLL may change L2 learners' attitudes through positive learning experiences.

Since the present research study is multi-disciplinary and bridges the fields of social psychology of SLL, educational studies, applied Linguistics, and psychology, models from different fields therefore need to be utilized to set a general theoretical backbone to the present research study. The following section will focus on discussions from the Linguistics perspective.

2.1.1.c The Universal Grammar Model

The Universal Grammar (UG) Model was proposed by Chomsky in the 1980s and is a further development of his earlier ideas in SLL. Chomsky (1976, p.29) indicates that the UG is the system of principles, conditions, and rules that govern elements or properties of all human languages. Many of the theories proposed by Chomsky are related to child language development (e.g. Chomsky 1965, 1980, 1981), which will not be discussed in this section. Yet, some of his ideas have been invoked in SLL and have been increasingly applied from a linguistics perspective to explain how second languages are learnt (Rutherford 1986, Gass and Schachter 1989), and these ideas and related research form the core of the discussion in this section.

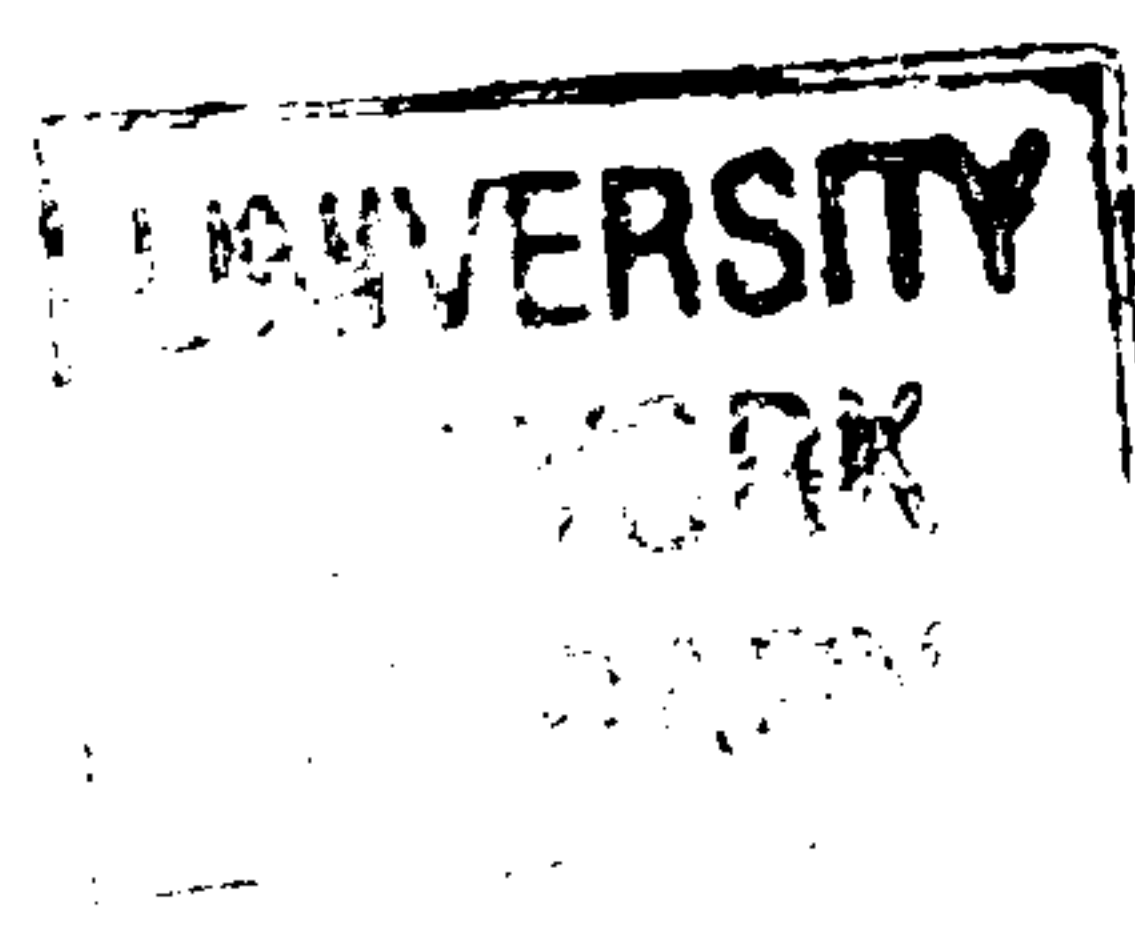
The UG provides an account of how the linguistic properties of the TL and the first language of TL learners may influence the course of development. Additionally, the UG attempts to explain SLA/ SLL in terms of independent language development, rather than in more general cognitive terms. The general claims of the UG are that language learning is based on the principles and parameters of grammar. Principles of language refer to aspects of human language stored in human minds, and parameters are aspects which are different from one language to another, within tightly set limits (Cook, 1996). In relation to the principles of language, the UG claims that human languages involve a principle/ knowledge of structure, such as structure-dependency, and that the structure is not just about the order of the words. For example, to make the following sentence into a question, it is necessary to know the structure of the sentence first.

Maria is the girl who is from Italy.

The correct way to make the above sentence into a question is to move the copula 'is' in the main clause to the beginning of the sentence, which is also one of the language principles in English.

Is Maria the girl who is from Italy?

Consequently, it is necessary to take the structure of the sentence into consideration in order to be able to produce a question in English. The UG claims that structure-dependency (one of the language principles), which human languages depend on, is an



important feature of human languages. This type of grammar has an impact on the nature of interlanguage, the knowledge of the L2 in the L2 learners' mind. In relation to the present research, since principles in the English language are different in many ways from the ones in Chinese, some of the participants may have difficulties in expressing themselves well in English on some occasions. For example, even though the participants know well enough that they have to use past tense verbs to describe what happened in the past, they may still accidentally use present tense verbs instead in a sentence, which can be very confusing for the listener. This specific error is caused by the different tenses of verbs in English which may confuse the participants or cause the participants simply to use the verb in the present tense spontaneously. In this case, the transformation of TL and L1 plays an essential role in SLL.

Parameters are aspects that vary in different languages. One important parameter discussed by Chomsky (1981) and other researchers (Jaeggli 1982, Rizzi 1982) is 'pro-drop' (PD) parameter among different languages. Languages such as Chinese, Spanish and Italian (+PD), permit empty subjects unless the overt expression of the subject is required, for example to show a switch in topic. For example, in Chinese it is possible not only to say 'Ta shuo' (he/she says) but also 'shuo' (says). Consequently, Chinese is a +PD language. On the other hand, in English, German and French, declarative sentences must have subjects. These languages are -PD languages. An early study (White, 1986), including speakers of +PD languages (Spanish and Italian) and speakers of a -PD language (French), is an important examination of the influence of the PD parameter in English language learning. On the grammatical judgement task in White's research, the +PD L1 group performed significantly poorer than the -PD L1 group on judgements of sentences with missing pronouns. According to this finding, the L1 knowledge of the L2 learners has an influential impact on the process of L2 learners' SLL. In other words, parameters from different languages play influential roles in SLL.

2.1.1.d The Interlanguage Theory

This section will focus on the early Interlanguage Theory, especially on the approach proposed by Larry Selinker. The term 'interlanguage' (IL) was first introduced by Selinker (1972) to refer to the interim grammars constructed by L2 learners in their SLL, and it is

thought to be distinct from both TL learners' L1 and TL. The IL theory has been applied principally to adult L2 performance, which is related to the present research, although later Selinker and his associates (1975) further developed the notion to apply to child L2 performance. Apart from IL, different alternative terms have also been applied by different researchers to indicate the same phenomenon, for example "approximative system" by Nemser (1971), and Corder's (1971) application of terms such as "idiosyncratic dialects" and "transitional competence" (Ellis, 1985). These terms, however, represent two related but different concepts: (1) the learner's system at a single point in time; and (2) the range of interlocking systems that characterizes the development of learners over time (McLaughlin 1987, p.60).

In the early IL theory, three approaches are evident: (1) the cognitive approach by Selinker (1972); (2) the linguistic behaviour approach by Adjemian (1976); and (3) the socio-linguistic behaviour approach by Tarone (1979). Tarone indicates that the IL is not a single system but a set of styles that can be used in different social contexts. Adjemian claims that the IL, just like other natural languages, should be analysed linguistically as rule-governed behaviour. Adjemian also suggests that the structures of the IL may be invaded by the L1, and consequently, L2 learners may use rules or items from their L1. Selinker emphasizes the influence of the L1 on the emerging IL.

Selinker claims that the IL develops over time as L2 learners employ different internal strategies to make sense of IL input and to control their own output. Selinker (1972, p. 37) states that there are five cognitive processes in SLL.

1. Language transfer: some elements of the IL may result from a transfer from the L1.
2. Overgeneralization of L2 rules.
3. Transfer of training: some elements of the IL may result from the language instruction they receive.
4. Strategies of L2 learning: some elements of the IL may result from a specific approach to the material to be learned.
5. Strategies of L2 communication: some elements of the IL may result from the ways L2 learners learn to communicate with native speakers (NSs) of L2.

(Ellis 1985, McLaughlin 1987)

These five learning strategies constitute the ways in which the L2 learners try to internalize the L2 system, and they are also the means by which L2 learners try to reduce the learning burden (Ellis, 1985). Discussions related to these five channels can be seen in Chapter Five of this thesis.

Additionally, Selinker regards the development of IL as different from the process of L1 development because of the stage of fossilization in L2 learning. Fossilization exists when learners stop elaborating the IL in some respects and this cannot be remedied by further instruction (McLaughlin 1987 and Ellis 1995). One fossilized error cited by Selinker (1972) is the French uvular /r/ in English. Another example of fossilization in communicative strategies is when some L2 learners stop learning L2 when they feel that they have learned enough to communicate (McLaughlin 1987). In relation to the causes of fossilization, Selinker and Lamendella (1978) claims that these are both internal and external. Fossilization can happen either when L2 learners believe that they do not need to develop their IL to communicate, or when changes occur in the neural structure of their brain as a result of age (Ellis, 1985). Fossilization, therefore, provides a possible explanation for the participants' short memory of English vocabulary.

According to McLaughlin (1985), the IL theory is an intermediate-level theory concerned with describing a limited range of L2 phenomena, and pays little attention to pedagogical concerns. Yet the learners' systems emphasized by the IL theory are relevant to the present research, which focuses on the language learners. The IL theory provides explanations for some of the learning difficulties among the research participants, which means that the IL theory is of value in the present research.

Having reviewed and discussed four theories of SLL, the next section reviews some of the theoretical discussions of the factors which influence individual learners in SLL. As described earlier, language learners are at the centre of the present research, and consequently it is important to draw attention to the factors influencing the individual learners' SLL and to see how these factors operate in the processes of SLL.

2.1.2. Factors influencing second language learning

Differential L2 learning performance or success has been one of the tasks heavily discussed and investigated by SLL researchers, such as Lightbown and Spada (1993), Skehan (1989), Ellis (1985, 1994), Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), Altman and James (1980), Cook (1996), and Freed et al. (1995). Various factors have been regarded as influential on SLL. According to the factors suggested by the above-mentioned researchers and combining these influential variables with the present research, the factors contributing to the outcomes of the SLL can be classified into two categories: (1) individual learner factors - learners themselves; and (2) environmental social factors - the TL learning environment. The subsequent discussions will indicate how these factors function in the process of SLL.

2.1.2.a. Individual learner factors

Some L2 learners have certain characteristics which lead them to more successful experiences in SLL, while some of the L2 learners have difficulties in reaching their own level of satisfaction when learning a target language. These individual learner variables (ILVs) have been identified as influencing learning outcomes. According to Altman (1980), Skehan (1989), and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), there are at least 30 ILVs which are regarded as influential in L2 learners' learning performance. Appendix B. shows the main ILVs indicated by Altman, Skehan, and Larsen-Freeman and Long. However, no attempt will be made to examine all of these 30 ILVs; discussions will focus solely on those which are relevant to the present research.

The four ILVs which will be further discussed in this section are: (1) attitudes and motivation; (2) language learning strategies; (3) personality factors; and (4) proficiency in the L1 and previous experience with L2. These ILVs are common to the findings of the three studies, though these three researchers conceive of them slightly differently. These four ILVs are discussed in alphabetical order and each of them has equal relevance to the present research. In addition, some of the ILVs in the sociological preference in Altman and James's study are relevant to the educational tradition will be closely examined in Chapters Four, Five, and Six in this thesis.

(1) *Attitude and motivation* The distinction between attitudes and motivation is not always clear in SLL research (Ellis, 1995). Initially, Gardner and Lambert did not distinguish between attitudes and motivation in their work. Later they (Gardner and Lambert, 1972) defined motivation as the L2 learners' overall goal or orientation, and attitude as the persistence shown by L2 learners in striving for a goal.

Brown (1981) also distinguishes between motivation and attitudes. According to him, there are three types of motivation: (1) global motivation, which is a general orientation to the goal of learning a L2; (2) situational motivation, which varies in relation to the situation in which learning takes place; and (3) task motivation, which is the motivation for performing particular learning tasks. Brown defines attitudes as the set of beliefs that learners hold towards members of the TL group and also towards their own culture. Most of Brown's definitions of attitudes and motivation, global and task motivation, correspond to Gardner and Lambert's senses of motivation and attitudes (Ellis, 1995). Yet, there is no general agreement about precisely what attitudes or motivation consist of, nor of the relationship between them. However, Gardner (1979) indicates that attitudes influence motivation, which is a factor affecting the process of SLL. In other words, attitudes are regarded as important and have an indirect influence on SLL.

Gardner and Lambert have investigated a number of different attitudes which they consider relevant to SLL, and Stern (1983) classifies attitudes into three categories: (1) attitudes towards the community and people of the TL; (2) attitudes towards learning the TL concerned; and (3) attitudes towards languages and language learning in general. Altman (1980) classified attitudes toward (1) the TL, (2) the TL culture or people, (3) language learning in general, (4) the TL teacher, and (5) the environment for learning. Among these possible attitudes which could have an indirect relationship with SLL, the learners' attitudes towards TL speakers is the one which has been most investigated. Most of the Canadian studies indicated that a positive attitude towards the TL was related to SLL success in the Canadian bilingual setting (van Els et al. 1984, p. 119).

In a series of studies, Oller and his colleagues (Oller, Hudson and Liu, 1977) claim that positive attitudes towards TL speakers correlate with SLL success. Their statement was

supported by the result of their study on the English as second language (ESL) learning of Chinese-speaking foreign students in the USA. In their research, Chinese-speaking foreign students in the USA who had generally positive attitudes towards the TL group were more proficient in ESL as determined by the result of a cloze test.

Motivation in SLL has been used to indicate the fairly stable long-term attitudes in the learners' mind. Two types of motivation introduced by Gardner and Lambert (Gardner and Lambert 1972, Gardner 1985) are instrumental and integrative motivation. Learners with an integrative motivation are regarded as to wishing to identify with the culture of the TL group, and they are seen as likely to maintain their L1 when they learn a TL. Learners with an instrumental motivation are motivated to learn a TL for utilitarian purposes, such as learning directed at passing examinations, meeting an educational requirement, furthering career opportunities, or improving social status. Language learners with an instrumental motivation are more likely to lose their L1 or fail to develop the ability to express certain kinds of functions in their L1.

Ellis (1985) indicates that the results of the empirical research based on Gardner and Lambert's framework are mixed and difficult to interpret, and he concludes the results from the work on Gardner and Lambert to be that:

1. Attitudes and motivation are important factors, which help to determine the level of proficiency achieved by learners.
2. The effects of motivation/ attitudes appear to be separate from the effects of aptitude.
3. Integrative motivations can be more powerful in facilitating successful SLL in certain situations, but in other situations instrumental motivations may have stronger influence on the SLL.
4. The level and type of motivation is strongly influenced by the social context in which learning takes place. (Ellis 1985, pp.118-119)

(2) Language learning strategies and learning styles Research on learning strategies in SLL emerged from a concern with identifying the characteristics of effective learners. There have been various research studies conducted by different researchers into this field, such as: Wong-Fillmore (1976, 1979) on children's language learning strategies (social and

cognitive strategies); Naiman, Frohlich, Todesco and Stern (1978) on the good language learner (GLL) research; Rubin (1981) on young adult learners' language learning strategies (cognitive strategies); and O'Malley et al. (1985) on secondary-school ESL learners' language learning strategies (metacognitive, cognitive and social mediation strategies). No attempt will be made to discuss all of the above research studies, but O'Malley et al.'s work, which is most relevant to the present research, will be examined.

According to the research done by O'Malley et al in 1983, 638 independent strategies were identified in the nineteen high-school age ESL student interviews (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). These 638 strategies were classified into three categories: metacognitive, cognitive and social mediation strategies. Appendix C indicates the learning strategies classified by O'Malley et al.'s studies (1985).

O'Malley et al. further claimed that intermediate-level students tended to use proportionately more metacognitive strategies, such as self-direction strategies, than students with beginning-level proficiency according to the results from their study. This statement responds to one of the characteristic elements of the present research, postgraduates' self-directed language learning. The participants with a post-intermediate level of TL proficiency have full control of their TL learning including learning contents, access and methods, and they also self-monitor and evaluate the outcomes of their SLL.

The participants in the present research may adopt proportionately more metacognitive strategies but less cognitive strategies in their SLL. Cognitive strategies were used by the participants, such as using dictionaries and combining their prior TL knowledge with newly acquired TL elements in order to communicate with others and to write academic assessments. Consequently, O'Malley et al's study provides a framework through which to characterize or classify the learning strategies of the participants in the present research.

With regard to learning style in general, it is suggested that different learning style relates closely to different cultures (Kolb *et al.*, 1995). Some classroom cultures encourage their students to participate and to experiment in class activities, such as UK classrooms; while some students are not expected to speak or to ask questions in the classroom, such as

students from Asian cultures. Having been educated in a passive learning environment, receiving knowledge at all times, learners may have been cultivated with a preference in passive learning and may feel uncomfortable when they are situated in an experimental type of learning environment, such as the participants in the research environment.

(3) Personality factors The personality variables constitute a very mixed perspective. Some relate to well-established theories of personality (such as extroversion/introversion) but others are based loosely on constructs in general psychology (such as risk-taking). However, according to Cook (1996), Ellis (1994), Lightbown and Spada (1993), and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), a number of personality characteristics have been proposed as affecting SLL. The various personality characteristics proposed by different studies include anxiety, introversion/ extroversion, risk-taking/ sensitivity to rejection, self-esteem and others. In the present context, however, only the factors which are relevant to the present study, which are the ones indicated above, will be discussed.

Anxiety Everyone experiences anxiety at one time or another, but it is believed that some people may be anxious more often than others, or have more severe reactions to anxiety-producing situations, such that language learning would be impeded (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). The study of Bailey (1983), a diary of her own competitiveness and anxiety while learning French as a foreign language, indicated that her drive to compete with others hindered her SLL while at other times it motivated her to work harder. The rationale Bailey provided of the benefits of competitiveness was that facilitating anxiety was motivating.

Extroversion/introversion Some people relate to objects outside themselves while some respond to the interior world. It is believed that extroverted learners are more sociable, risk-taking, and lively, but introverted learners are more quiet and prefer non-social activities (Ellis, 1994). Rossier (1976) found a correlation between extroversion and oral fluency in his study. A study by Naiman et al. (1978) also indicated that 31 percent of the participants believed that extroversion was helpful in acquiring oral skills.

Risk taking/sensitivity to rejection Rubin (1975) has argued that good language learners are more willing to guess, or to use their TL knowledge to create novel utterances. These were later categorized as risk-taking behaviours by Beebe (1983). Ely (1986) investigated the risk-taking behaviour of university-level Spanish course students. Ely found that his participants' risk-taking behaviour was a positive predictor of their voluntary classroom participation, and the level of his participants' involvement positively predicted oral correctness.

Although Ely's study was done in the classroom, it can be correlated to out-of-classroom learning. On the other hand, the antithesis of risk-taking learning behaviour would be a sensitivity to rejection. Naiman et al. (1978) have hypothesized that individual learners who were sensitive to rejection might avoid active participation, and this lack of participation would then lead to less successful SLL.

Self-esteem Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976) proposed a three-level-model to account for self-esteem. Heyde (1979) later studied the effects of this model of self-esteem on performance on a French oral production task by American college students. The result of this study indicated that the participants' performance correlated significantly with all of the three levels, which means self-esteem has a positive influence on language learning. Another issue which is related to this aspect is ego boundaries. According to Guiora (1972), ego boundaries become more rigid with age. A new concept is more easily adopted when the ego boundaries are flexible. Consequently, some adult language learners, whose ego boundaries may have been fixed, may have a certain degree of resistance to acquiring new concepts in TL. This sense of resistance can lead to less success in SLL.

(4) Proficiency in the L1, and previous experience with L2 Concerning the importance which the L1 plays in SLL, Selinker, whose study was discussed in section 2.1. of this chapter, and other researchers of interlanguage, have provided a framework of how L1 can influence the outcomes of SLL. Strevens (1978) suggests that the extent of the learners' command of their L1 will affect their progress in SLL. This comment was later supported by a study conducted by Cummins et al. (1984), which examined the influence of L1 on L2 school language development. According to the study by Cummins et al. (1984), the

development of L2 language at school is partially dependent upon the prior level of L1 school language development.

This section has discussed the role of individual learner variables (ILVs) in SLL. There are various ILVs proposed by different researchers. Four of these variables were presented and discussed in this section: (1) attitudes and motivation; (2) language learning strategies; (3) personality factors; and (4) proficiency in the L1 and previous experience with L2. These ILVs can be regarded as ‘internal’ factors in relation to SLL because they are factors which operate from the learner’s perspective. On the other hand, there are other ‘external’ factors over which language learners may have less control, and to which they have to adjust themselves in the process of their SLL. The following section consists of a discussion of the external factors, or environmental cultural factors, in SLL.

2.1.2.b. Environmental cultural factors

Ellis (1994) classifies two types of language learning environments: the educational setting and the natural setting. Learners who develop their SLL in an educational setting, language classroom, basically “learn” the rules and principles of a TL through the instructions given by language teachers. Learners who develop their TL in a natural setting, uncontrolled authentic TL environment, are able to “acquire/ pick up” TL elements through their exposure to the authentic TL environment. These two terms, learning and acquisition, will be utilized only to describe the participants’ TL learning activities in the present research study, and no further attempt will be made to discuss the specific differences between the concepts of learning and acquisition. In addition, one concept needs to be clarified is that the environment of the present research study is regarded as an academic context which is different from the concept of educational setting, a setting for purely language learning.

(1) The natural setting Sociocultural and sociolinguistic factors are closely associated with a learning situation especially when in a natural setting for language learners (Stern, 1983). Within a social community there are different social functional groups, including social occupational, ethnic, cultural, religious, and other groups. Such various social groups provide TL learners with opportunities to experience the authentic TL culture and to use the TL in normal daily-life situations. The TL is therefore spoken

by the language learners in order to *communicate* with others, and not simply as academic-subject knowledge matter. TL learners actually have to use the TL wherever they go, such as to post offices, banks, supermarkets, and on other occasions. Under this circumstance, TL learners are, to a certain degree, forced to use the TL in a natural setting. By speaking the TL from time to time, the TL learners' communicative competence is expected to be improved and to be more fluent than was the case in their L1 environment, where the TL is rarely used by the TL learners.

(2) *Cultural distance* Cultural distance in the present research is not defined as the distance between the participants' L1 culture and British culture, but is also used to refer to an interaction of the factors of: (1) knowledge of/ familiarity with British culture; and (2) proficiency in English. L2 language learners in culturally and linguistically diverse environments from their L1 must learn to live a balanced life in two worlds: the innate world or cultural world of their L1; and the outer environment or cultural world of their TL. The culturally and linguistically diverse L2 learners not only have to learn the skills and knowledge of the TL culture and language, but also have to adjust themselves to a different cultural environment. Some L2 learners from a culture which is different from the L2 culture may have difficulties in adapting themselves, both culturally and linguistically, when they actually live in the authentic L2 environment. The discussions in this section will therefore focus on the cultural interactions of the L2 learners.

Issues related to cultural distance in the present research include: (a) a general influence of Confucianism; (b) culture shock and acculturation; and (c) sociolinguistic competence. The linkage between these three categories is based, first of all, on the differences between the participants' L1 and L2 cultures. It is understood that there is a considerable difference between the participants' L1 culture, Taiwanese Chinese culture, and their L2 culture, British culture. Such a wide cultural diversity has an influence on the transformation of the participants' attitudes towards the L2 culture after they arrive and later inhabit the authentic L2 environment.

(a) *A general influence of Confucianism* Confucius was born in China around 500 BC, and his teachings are mainly concerned with practical ethics of daily life (Chen and Chung, 1994). According to Hofstede and Bond (1988), the teachings of Confucius consist of four key principles: hierarchical relationships between people, the family as a basic unit, Jen (kindness), and the emphasis on education. Among these four principles, the hierarchical relationships between people is the most relevant to the present research in relation to the aspect of academic cultural differences. According to Confucius, the relationships between people are regulated by the Five Codes of Ethics, Wu Lun, which are based on the five basic relationships: ruler/ subjects, father/ son, husband/ wife, older brother/ younger brother and between friends (Chen and Chung, 1994). Juniors are required to give their seniors respect and obedience, and seniors owe their juniors consideration and protection. Such a model of hierarchical relationship can be extended to other relationships, such as the teacher student relationship, which is relevant to the present research.

Both teachers and students regard each other's roles in the classroom as part of a relational hierarchy (Chang and Holt, 1994). A Chinese saying demonstrates such a hierarchy: your teacher is your parent. Within this hierarchical relationship, students have respect for authority and they view their teachers as authority figures. Students will not challenge their teachers and they have a great respect for their teachers (Ho and Crookall, 1995). Teachers are the models of students' lives particularly what teachers preach in the classroom and how teachers behave in front of students. Students work very hard to show their respect, obedience and gratitude to their teachers and of course their parents. The social and academic 'role expectation' and 'role behaviour' play an important part in the teacher student relationship in the participants' L1 academic culture.

Learners, influenced by the Confucian emphasis on respect and obedience, tended to have different role expectations from their supervisors. According to Song (1995), students with Confucian influences usually show a profound respect for scholars and teachers. Teachers are regarded as not only experts in what they teach, but also as important spiritual guides in students' pursuit of knowledge. Under such circumstances, teachers are expected to impart knowledge and students to absorb whatever is delivered to them (Song, 1995). Teachers are specialists on the subjects they teach, and their explanations are authoritative

and definitive. Students educated under the influence of Confucian are therefore passive receivers of knowledge. Consequently, it is a challenge for passive learners, such as the research participants, to develop self-directed learning strategies, which is the centre of the present research study.

(b) Culture shock and acculturation The term ‘culture shock’ was first used by the anthropologist Oberg (1960), who regarded it as a condition which is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse.

These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life: when to shake hands and what to say when we meet people, when and how to give tips, how to give orders to servants, how to make purchases, when to accept and when to refuse invitations, when to take statements seriously and when not. Now these cues which may be words, gestures, facial expressions, customs, or norms are acquired by all of us in the course of growing up and are as much a part of our culture as the language we speak or the beliefs we accept. All of us depend for our peace of mind and our efficiency on hundreds of these cues, most of which we do not carry on the level of conscious awareness. (Oberg 1960, p.176)

Research since Oberg has regarded culture shock as a normal and expected reaction as part of the routine process of adaptation to different culture(s), and the manifestation of a longing for a more predictable, stable and understandable environment. The concept of culture shock implies that the experience of visiting or living in a different culture is an unpleasant surprise or shock, partly because it is unexpected, and partly it may lead to a negative evaluation of one’s own and/ or the other culture (Furnham, 1993). Oberg further indicated some symptoms of culture shock as follows:

excessive washing of the hands; concern over drinking water, food, dishes, and bedding; fear of physical contact with attendants or waiters; the absent-minded, far-away stare (sometimes called ‘the tropical stare’); a feeling of helplessness and a desire for *dependence on long-term residents of one’s own nationality*; fits of anger over delays and other minor frustrations; *delay and outright refusal to learn the language of the host country*; excessive fear of being cheated, robbed, or injured; great concern over minor pains and eruptions of the skin and finally, that terrible longing to be back home. (Oberg 1960, p. 176).

Among these symptoms proposed by Oberg, a desire for dependence on long-term residents of one's own nationality, and delay and outright refusal to learn the language of the host country, can be regarded as most relevant to the present research. Other symptoms proposed by Oberg may also have their influence on the participants' SLL, but these specific two symptoms play a more important role in relation to the aspect of SLL in the present research than the other symptoms do.

Culture shock is described as a psychological negative condition which happens to some people when they newly arrive in a different cultural environment. It is, however, not suggested that everyone who goes to live in or visit a new cultural environment has to experience culture shock. People with multicultural backgrounds or experiences may adapt more successfully or without any difficulties. Some people may regard their experience in a different cultural environment as enjoyable. According to Zuckerman (1979), sensation-seekers might not suffer any negative effects but may enjoy the stimuli of the unfamiliarity in a different cultural environment.

The stage following culture shock or culture unfamiliarity can be described as acculturation. The concepts of acculturation, adaptation, and assimilation not only interest SLA researchers but also attract the attention of sociologists and anthropologists in cross-cultural communication studies. Various researchers have proposed their definitions of acculturation, such as Teske and Nelson (1974), Marden and Meyer (1968), and Kim (1978). The table below gives a summary of the definitions of acculturation proposed by the above-mentioned researchers.

Table 2.2. Definitions of acculturation

Researcher	Definition
Marden and Meyer (1968)	The change in individuals whose primary learning has been in one culture and who take over traits from another culture.
Teske and Nelson (1974)	A dynamic process that may involve either groups or individuals in direct contact situations between cultures. The changes that take place can occur in one or both cultural groups and changes in values may be involved. Acculturation does not require a change in the reference group, internal change, or acceptance by the outside group or culture.
Kim (1978)	The process of cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural adaptation to the new cultural system.

According to the above-mentioned definitions of acculturation, one shared feature among these three definitions is that there is a *change* in a person when he/ she moves to live in a different cultural milieu. However, the degree of change or adaptation to a new cultural milieu will depend on the length of time for which a person stays in the new cultural environment. According to Kim (1988), there are two types of acculturation/ adaptation in relation to the length of time for which people stay in a new environment: (1) adaptation of long-term residents, such as refugees and immigrants living in a different environment from their L1 culture; and (2) adaptation of short-term residents, such as international students, diplomats, and overseas employees of multinational corporations. Because of the different lengths of time for which people stay in a different environment, they may have different concepts of how much they have to change in order to adapt to the new environment.

Generally speaking, long-term residents may need a higher degree of permanent change than short-term residents in a new environment because of the necessities of the new environment, such as the sense of engagement and attitude towards the new culture. Giles and Johnson (1981, 1986) claim that an interethnic situation relating to the strength of identification with one's own ethnic group has a negative impact on the development of the TL. In other words, the weaker the participants' claim to membership of their home culture is, the greater the TL will be developed (Kim, 1988).

(c) Sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence To learn a TL is not only to learn the linguistic codes but also to gain access to the accumulated records of the TL cultural experience. Through participation in the TL culture, TL learners are able to improve not only their TL competence but also the sociolinguistic competence of their TL. Sociolinguistics comprises two aspects: micro-sociolinguistics and macro-sociolinguistics, a study of how social structure may influence the way people talk and how language varieties and patterns of use correlate with social attributes such as class, sex, and age. It is also a study of what societies do with their languages, that is, attitudes and attachments that account for the functional distribution of speech forms in society, language shifts, maintenance, and replacement, and the delimitation and interaction of speech communities (Wardhaugh, 1998, p.13).

Recent research in Japanese SLL (Marriott 1995, and Siegal 1995) indicates that learners of Japanese as a second language (JSL) were able to gain certain aspects of sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence but were still deficient in their L2 sociolinguistic competence (Freed, 1995). Marriott (1995) indicates that the participants in her study, six high school students aged from fifteen to eighteen, acquired basic knowledge and competence in a Japanese sociolinguistic aspect, politeness, during their one year stay in Japan. These six students were described as not capable of this aspect before their exchange experience. Nevertheless, Marriott also states that these students somehow still had trouble in using an appropriate honorific style in their conversations. In Siegal's (1995) study of two women living and studying in Japan, her participants had the desire to speak politely and they knew that honorifics were necessary if they wanted to speak competently in Japanese. Both of them were somehow ambivalent about using honorific language in their L2. Siegal argues that such results were due to the learners' conscious and unconscious desires to maintain their image, and therefore the use of their L2 might deviate from native L2 speaker norms. According to the results from these two research studies, learning a L2 in an authentic L2 environment benefits learners' sociolinguistic competence but because of other possible factors, such as length of time, and individual learner variable factors, the authenticity of the L2 environment can influence L2 learners' SLL in relation to their sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence.

(3) *Linguistic distance* The Chinese languages (Mandarin and other dialects) are considered different from English in most linguistic aspects, such as the fact that Chinese is a tone language but English is a stress language. For Taiwanese learners of English, some of the fundamental linguistic differences between these two languages may cause a great deal of difficulty in their TL learning. However, the participants in the present research have already reached the academic requirements needed to study at an English university, and may confront different levels of learning difficulties, such as accuracy and preciseness of the use of words, and the proper ways of presenting ideas and arguments in their research work. Such aspects are related to an area which goes beyond the solely linguistic aspect and links more to the L2 culture and the academic culture, in particular, in the present research.

According to Kim (1988), learning a TL also enables TL learners to *think* in the way that the TL native speakers think because language patterns and thought patterns are closely interrelated. To be able to think and present ideas like native TL speakers could be suggested to be the most urgent task for the participants in the present research, since at the final stage of their studies they are expected to present their work in L2 at a certain level so as to be able to achieve academic success.

(a) *Language shock* According to Schumann (1978, pp.31-32), language shock is described as the language learner's fear of making mistakes and having doubts about accuracy when adults learning to speak a L2. Schumann's study, however, was mainly focussed on SLL of immigrants, and consequently language shock happened to his research participants when they learned to *speak* a L2. However, the researcher would like to extend the examination of language shock to *writing* in the L2, to the situation where the participants in the present research confront another stage of language shock, the written form.

Schumann's language shock is caused by two factors: (1) the lack of training and practising in speaking the TL before learners arrive in an authentic TL environment; and (2) the differences between the TL learned previously by the learners in their L1 environment and the TL which learners have to accommodate themselves in the new TL environment. For

example, EFL students may learn American English (AE) in their L1 environment and they go to study in the UK where British English (BE) is spoken.

A study conducted by Chang (1991) revealed some of the English language learning situations in Taiwan and China. According to Chang, whose study was of language learning strategies used by overseas Chinese students, including thirty-seven Taiwanese and thirteen Chinese, in the United States, forty-three of her research participants indicated that they rarely spoke English in their English classes since they mainly read, translated or simply listened to their English language instructors in the classes. Because of the lack of training in speaking and listening in their TL, learners are expected to have doubts in speaking their L2 when they first arrived in a L2 environment.

In relation to the second factor - the differences between TL1 and TL2 - the TL instructional material used by the Taiwanese students is mainly produced in the USA or consists of texts written by Taiwanese/ Chinese authors (Chang, 1991). Additionally, in Taiwan, English language programmes on the radio are mostly taught by Americans, and the only English speaking radio station is dominated by AE speakers. As a result, students in Taiwan are more familiar with AE than with BE. .

The second experience of language shock, extended from Schumann's language shock in speaking form, is caused by: (1) the lack of training in academic writing; and (2) differences in thinking and writing styles between learners' L1 and L2. The causes of the second round of language shock are more difficult to cope with than the first experience of language shock. In relation to Schumann's language shock, learners may overcome it by communicating with others in their daily life, because the best solution to the lack of speaking opportunities and the unfamiliarity with TL is to talk to others to get the sense of the language itself. Yet when confronted with the language shock in written form, which occurs in the context of English for academic purposes (EAP), learners may need to seek out support, if it is available, or to make more efforts to enable themselves to overcome this second experience of language shock. The language shock in written form is suggested to be related to learners' TL writing skills, which according to Kroll (1990), is a complex and ongoing process.

Li (1994), whose survey and analysis was based on the average scores in the composition and translation sections of the English examinations in JCEE of the high school students between 1982 and 1993, indicates that in order to improve Taiwanese students' writing skills, it is necessary to modify the predominant instruction method of English language teaching in Taiwan, the grammar translation method, and to introduce native English-speaking teachers to strengthen Taiwanese students' writing skills. However, without proper formal training in L2 writing, Taiwanese TL learners are expected to confront different degrees of difficulties in writing a piece of academic work in their L2 when they study for academic purposes in an authentic TL environment.

The different degrees of difficulties in writing may result not only from the participants' TL competence, but also from the area beyond TL competence - the differences of thinking and writing styles in the different cultures, which is not an instantaneous skill to grasp and is also regarded as part of a cultural system which demands a great deal of time and effort in order to be transferred from one cultural system to another. Detailed discussions in relation to this particular aspect can be seen in Chapter Four, in which discussions mainly focus on the interactions between the cultural differences of the participants' L1 and L2 cultures. The subsequent discussions are on the language learning difficulties of the participants caused by both the linguistic and cultural differences between the participants' L1 and L2.

(b) L2 language learning difficulties Two issues have to be taken into consideration when discussing TL language learning difficulties in the present research, and these two issues are: (1) TL competence and TL learning purposes; and (2) cultural differences between learners' L1 and L2. Different levels of ESL learners may have different degrees of learning difficulties in relation to different levels of TL competence, and the different learning purposes of the TL. For example, ab initio levels of TL learners may have more obstacles in making a sentence which is grammatically correct, while learners who learn the TL for academic purposes, such as the participants in the present research, may have less obstacles in making a grammatically correct sentence but more difficulties in making an appropriate sentence to either represent an idea to link ideas in order to present their academic work either verbally or in written form.

Additionally, learners from different cultural backgrounds may face different learning difficulties regarding the linguistic and cultural differences between their L1 and L2. For example, linguistically, ESL learners who are native German speakers may have less trouble in memorizing the English vocabulary than ESL learners who are Mandarin Chinese speakers, because the German language and culture have more close links to English than Mandarin Chinese. Apart from the linguistic components, TL learners who learn the TL in an authentic TL are actually able to experience sociocultural differences between their L1 and L2. Consequently, TL learners with high levels of L2 competence in an authentic TL environment may face learning difficulties which are not only linguistic but also sociocultural.

The first half of this chapter, including sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2., has dealt with issues relating to SLL. Four models in SLL have been presented and discussed: Gardner's Socio-Educational Model; Schumann's Acculturation Model; Chomsky's Universal Grammar Model; and Selinker's Interlanguage Theory. Because of the social and cultural characteristics of the present research, Gardner's Socio-Educational and Schumann's Acculturation Model are discussed in detail to support theoretically some of the issues examined by the present research, such as the role of motivation in the participants' SLL, and the importance of acculturation in L2 learners' adaption to a TL environment in relation to their SLL.

Having acknowledged the theoretical rationale to the issues relating to the present research, the following section will focus on the specific learning method utilized in the present research, self-directed language learning. In addition to this learning method, other relevant aspects including TL learning access, TL self-assessment, and TL learning purposes will also be discussed and presented to provide insights into the present research.

2.2. Self-directed learning (SDL)

The concept of self-directed learning (SDL) has captured the interest of many adult educators, and it is also one of the few areas of research in adult education with an extensive research-based body of knowledge (Garrison, 1989). Regardless of the importance of SDL to adult educators, inquiry into the nature and processes of SDL grows

continuously as evidenced by the extensive number of thoughtful and insightful publications in recent years, such as Long and Associates 1989, 1990, 1991, and Candy 1991. This section, however, will only review the theoretical aspect of the concept of SDL, and no attempt will be made to evaluate the practice of SDL in adult education, which is less relevant to the present research. However, it is intended within the present study to connect the concept of SDL with language learning (see section 2.2.1.), to establish the theoretical background for the present research.

Research into SDL, emerging from Tough (1965), whose interest is in learning projects, and Knowles (1970), whose philosophical concern is with adult learners, has increased in quantity and quality over the past decade. The research by Tough (1965) was the first major study in adult education which has been identified with SDL. Tough, however, did not use the term SDL in his early publications but used terms such as self-instruction and learning without a teacher. His learning projects included independence in learning and isolated learners. According to Tough (1967), independent learners are able to:

...assume most of the responsibility for planning... strategy, maintaining... motivation, and making certain throughout the learning process that everything necessary for success is done. The initiative, responsibility and control reside in the learner, not in someone else.... (Tough 1967, p.4)

The above statement by Tough indicates that the responsibility and success of learning will depend only on the individual independent learners under SDL. Following closely on Tough's work are the philosophical ideas proposed by Knowles. Knowles emphasizes the behavioural aspect of SDL. According to Knowles, who was the first person to define SDL:

In its broadest meaning 'self-directed learning' describes a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. (Knowles 1975, p.18)

With regard to the above definition by Knowles (1975), there are three principles in the concept of SDL: (1) a self-initiated process of learning that emphasizes the individuals' ability to plan and to manage their own learning activities according to their learning needs

and goals; (2) a characteristic of learners with personal autonomy; (3) a way of organizing instruction that allows for greater learner control.

2.2.1. Self-directed language learning (SDLL)

The terms 'self-direction', 'self-directed learning', 'autonomy' and 'self-access' have been more and more frequently used in educational discussions (Gremmo and Riley, 1995). Although these terms are used interchangeably by some researchers, it is necessary to clarify and define these terms carefully in order to provide a clear theoretical framework of the present research.

Dickinson (1987) defines the terms of self-direction (SD), self-access learning (SAL), and self-directed learning (SDL) as follows:

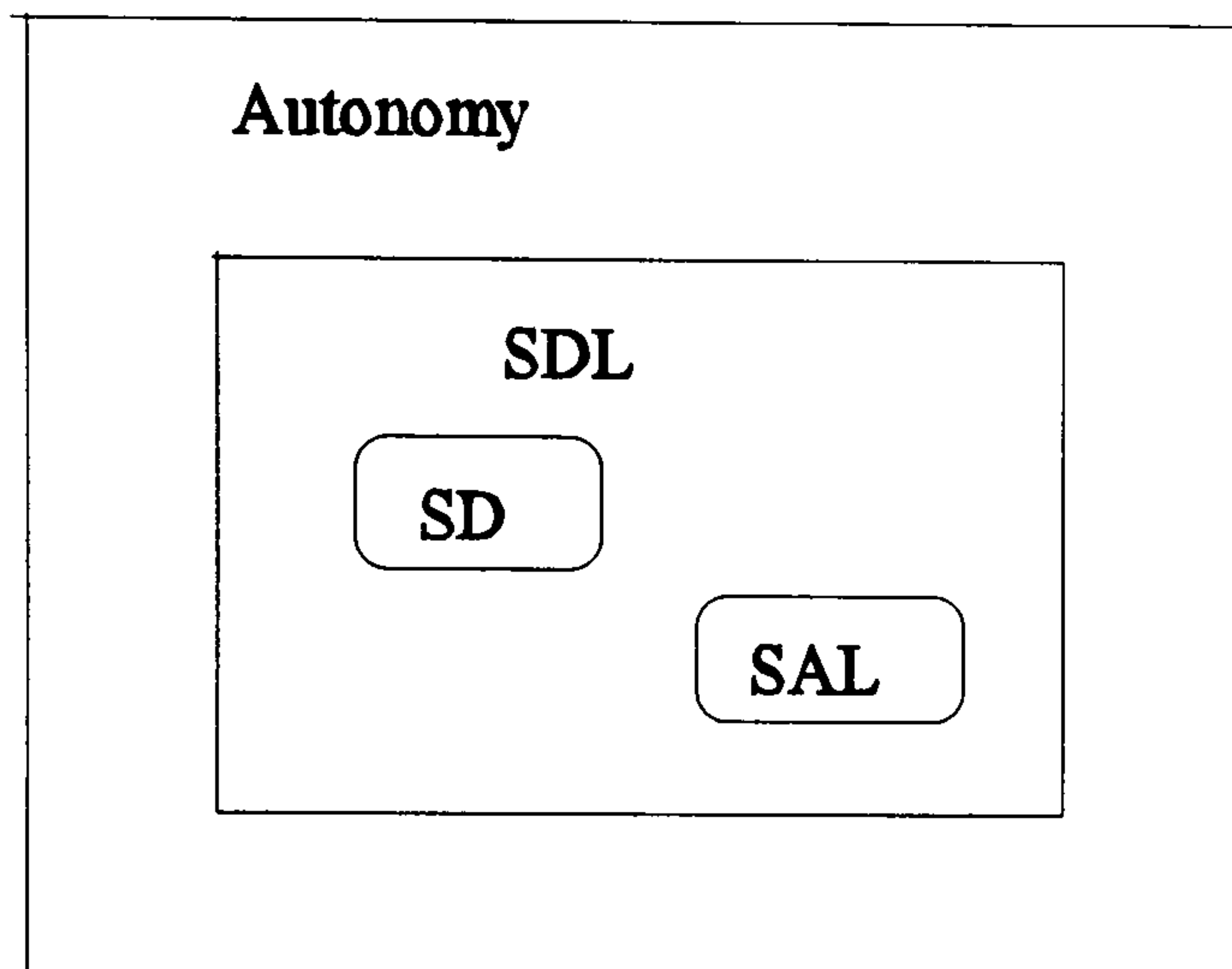
The term *self-direction* is different from the others in the list in that it refers to attitudes rather than techniques or even modes of instruction. *Self-access learning*, or individualised instruction, for example, refer to modes of learning in that they are concerned with the activities of the learner, the teacher and their interaction. *Self-directed learning*, in contrast, describes an attitude to learning in which the learner accepts responsibility for his learning, but he does not necessarily carry out courses of action independently in connection with it. (Dickinson 1987, pp.11-12)

According to Dickinson (1987), SD refers to a particular attitude towards learning in which learners are prepared to take responsibility for their own learning. SDL refers to a specific learning situation in which learners retain responsibility for all aspects of the management of their learning but will probably seek expert help and advice to aid their learning. Even when learning in conventional classes, learners can retain responsibility for their own learning. SAL refers to the learning modes which learners adopt in their learning activities. Self-access (SA) refers to the design and organization of resources and learning modes (Benson, 1992).

A system or organization with the function of self-access refers to the fact that learners are able to access the resources and information themselves. Additionally, autonomy, according to Chene (1983, p.39), refers to the fact that one can and does set one's own rules, and can choose for oneself the norms one respects. In other words, autonomy refers to one's ability to choose what has value and to make choices in harmony with self-

realization (Chene 1983, p.39). The relationship between these terms will be illustrated in the figure below.

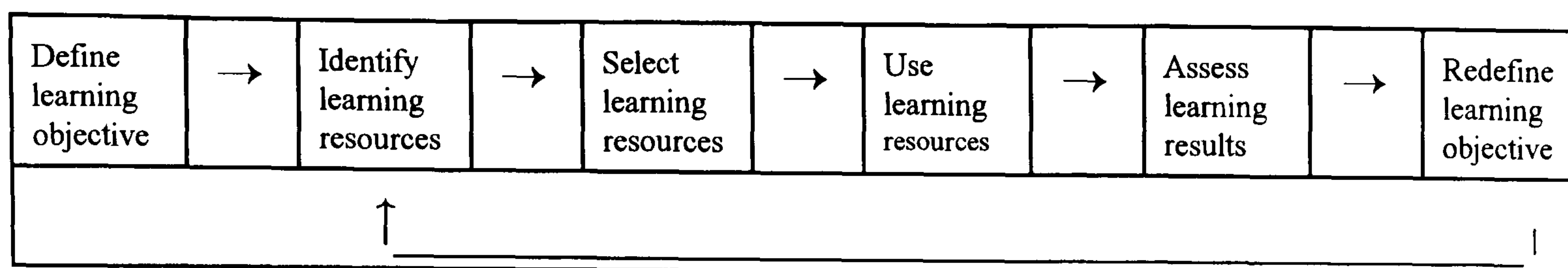
Figure 2.2. The relationship between autonomy, self-directed learning (SDL), self-direction (SD), and self-access learning (SAL)



The concept of autonomy is described as a global term which contains the concept of SDL, SD, and SAL. SDL is described as a concept which consists of SD and SAL. SD refers to the attitude to learning and SAL refers to the modes of learning which are different from each other and do not belong to or overlap with each other.

Another important and necessary concept in SDL is self-assessment. Without the stage of self-assessment, SDL is not able to function properly because SDL, like other learning processes, is a learning circle which depends on a series of redefinition of learning objectives by the learners. Learners' learning objectives change over time on the path of the learning process. In SDL, learners first of all take the initiative to define their own learning objectives, and then they identify learning resources. After having identified learning resources, they select the resources, use the resources, evaluate their learning then redefine their learning objectives. After having refined their learning objectives, learners come back to the learning circle of SDL again. The figure below illustrates the procedure of SDL.

Figure 2.3. The procedure of self-directed learning (SDL)



With its essential role in the SDL, self assessment is as important as self-access to the participants' self-directed TL learning in the research environment. The consequent discussions will therefore focus on self-access and self-assessment in SDLL.

2.2.1.a. Self-access in self-directed language learning

As described in the previous section, self-access refers to the learning modes of learners, which allows learners to choose the most suitable task and media to facilitate their learning activities. A self-access system (SAS) is therefore regarded as a necessary supporting body to the success of SDL. In other words, the accessible learning materials, to a certain degree, attribute the success of SDL. With its importance to SDL, self-access is also regarded as an essential role in self-directed language learning (SDLL) in the present research.

According to Miller and Rogerson-Revell (1993), there are four types of SASs in SDLL: menu-driven, supermarket, controlled-access, and open-access. A menu-driven SAS is designed specifically for language learning. All materials are categorized, and the information held in such a system is usually categorized according to skill, level, topic, function, and so on, and is often cross-referenced. Users of such systems usually require a certain amount of pre-training and practice to be able to use the facility efficiently. An example of menu-driven SAS is found in CRAPEL (Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues) at the University of Nancy, France. A supermarket SAS displays materials under marked categories: listening, reading, phonology, games, and so on, according to learner levels. Learners may independently gain access to the system and easily find the area they wish to study.

A controlled-access system is organized as a specific set of materials closely related to work covered in language classes, and the classification of materials is usually very simple, such as Worksheet 1, 2, and so on. Learners would have little or no control over what they choose to study in such self-access systems. An open-access system is usually part of a library, and is open for use by language learners and to other library users. The material held in such systems may be separated from the main library or it may be classified with other material (Miller and Rogerson-Revell 1993, p.229).

In addition to SASs, computer technology and information technology (IT), such as information on the Internet (which is, according to Sussex and White 1996, a global system of computers linked by optical cable, telephone connections, and satellites), can be regarded as another important resource in the modern society supporting SLL. Basically, anything which can be heard and seen in the TL in the research environment is regarded as a resource to facilitate the participants' SLL. Detailed discussions on the non-academic and academic resources utilized by the participants can be seen in Chapter Five of this thesis.

2.2.1.b. Self-assessment in SDLL

The importance of self-assessment can be classified into two areas: (1) the importance to the learning process; and (2) the importance to the concept of SDLL. Researchers such as Gremmo and Riley (1995), Oxford (1990), and Dickinson (1987), indicate that self-assessment is highly important in successful SDLL. By self-assessing their language learning, language learners are able to develop an awareness of their language learning process, which is beneficial to the process of learning. Oskarsson (1989) claims that there are six functions of self-assessment which are beneficial for the process of learning: (1) to promote learning; (2) to raise levels of awareness; (3) to improve goal-orientation; (4) to expand the range of assessment; (5) to share assessment burdens; and (6) to benefit post-course effects. Points five and six are closely related to language classroom setting where assessments can also be conducted by language teachers.

According to Blue (1994), the initial purpose of self-assessment is for learners to measure their present level of competence in different skills and then perhaps to compare it with their target level. According to the outcomes of self-assessment, learners are able to redefine their priorities in TL learning, which is regarded as an important stage in SDLL. By redefining or redetermining their learning priorities, learners are actually taking responsibility for their own language learning process, which fulfills the ultimate requirement of SDLL, that of being responsible for one's learning. Dickinson (1987) also proposes three justifications for self-assessment, which indicate that self-assessment is important in SDL.

- By assessing their own learning process, learners start to gain the ability to evaluate their language competence, which is beneficial in their learning process.
- Self-assessment is one of the areas which learners should learn to facilitate the development of autonomy in SDL.
- Self-assessment is one way to free instructors to continue with other parts of the learning process.

Having reviewed issues related to SDLL, including self-access and self-assessment in SDLL, the following section will focus on issues related to the purpose of TL learning.

2.2.2. English for specific purposes (ESP)

English for specific purposes (ESP) focuses on the English language learning purpose of learners, and refers to the whole range of language resources (Robinson, 1980). Robinson further indicates that there are three elements in ESP: (1) time; (2) age; and (3) purposefulness.

(1) Time According to Perren (1974), the time factor is classified as an element of pedagogic practice of ESL, as a research study concentrated on learner-centred TL learning. From the learner's perspective in the present research study, the time factor is regarded as significant. Perren (1974) indicates that teaching a language to adults for special purposes often implies an intensive course. Johns (1993) also claims that teachers in ESL are expected to perform miracles with students in the shortest possible period of time.

As teachers face time pressure in their teaching of ESP to their students, simultaneously, learners of ESP have to struggle to take in as much information as possible as they are either in ESL courses, if available, or in a situation where they have to identify their own learning purposes, and also acquire specific skills by themselves within a limited of time. The participants are described as learners in the latter situation, where they have to guide themselves into a new territory of English language learning. The time factor, no doubt, plays an essential role in the participants' learning processes.

(2) *Age* Most of the learners of ESP are adults or adolescents (Robinson, 1980). Requirements from jobs or employment drive people to learn skill-related English, and also students to study for academic purposes in English speaking countries, such as England for example. People in these situations are adults or adolescents. In the present research, all of the participants are adults.

(3) *Purposefulness* The purpose of the language learning in ESP is paramount (Stevens, 1977). Learners are constantly aware of the purpose of their language learning, either for occupational or academic requirements, because their learning motivation is purpose-oriented. Additionally, learners of ESP are usually studying in order to perform a role. The measure of success for students, for example, learning English for academic purposes is whether they can achieve their academic success. The focus of successful performance in ESP is on overall English performance, especially the communicative aspect, rather than on knowledge of the rules of English (Robinson, 1980). In order to establish its credibility, ESP has undertaken detailed analyses of learners' needs. According to Mackay and Mountford (1978), there are three types of purposes in ESP:

- occupational requirements, e.g. for international telephone operators, civil airline pilots, etc.
- vocational training programmes, e.g. for hotel and catering staff, technical trades, etc.
- academic or professional study, e.g. engineering, medicine, law, etc.

(Robinson 1980, p.6)

The discussions which follow will focus on the English for academic purposes (EAP) which is the most relevant category to the present research study.

2.2.2.a. English for academic purposes (EAP)

English for academic purposes (EAP), a sub-division of ESP, refers to study through the medium of English, regardless of the subject matter of the studies (Robinson, 1989). The focus of EAP is therefore on the use of English in the academic domain, while the content of EAP depends on the different academic subjects of individual learners. The acquisition of English in EAP will vary according to individual learner's academic subject. For example, students of Chemistry may be more familiar with vocabulary related to chemical products while students of Music may have a bigger vocabulary of musical terms. Apart from the use and the content of EAP, one specific type of competence is regarded as essential for learners of ESP/ EAP: communicative competence.

As mentioned earlier in this section, because of the goal-oriented nature of the ESP/ EAP, a measure of successful performance is not knowledge of the rules of English but the overall performance in English. TL communicative competence, therefore, plays an important role in this respect. According to Robinson (1980), the ability to be able to communicate or interact successfully in English is an essential element in ESP/ EAP. English in ESP/ EAP is no longer regarded as a set of facts, as it is in English for educational purposes (EEP), to be assessed, but is a medium, a means which is used to communicate and interact with others verbally or in written form to achieve the specific goals of individuals.

The discussions in the second half of the present chapter concentrated on issues relating to SDL. The importance of self-access and self-assessment in SDLL has been highlighted. The individual-oriented learning of ESP/ EAP is regarded as the centre of the participants' SLL in the research environment. Three factors, time, age, and purposefulness, are the essential elements in the ESP/ EAP of the present research.

Summary

This chapter serves as a framework for the theoretical aspects of SDLL in the present research. First of all, the four models in SLL, the Socio-Educational Model, the Acculturation Model, the Universal Grammar Model, and Interlanguage Theory, were presented, and issues related to these models were reviewed to fulfill the multi-discipline

quality of the present research study. Among these four models, Gardner's Socio-Educational Model and Schumann's Acculturation Model are closely related to the present research because of the distinct characteristics of the TL learning motivation and the sociocultural differences between language learners' L1 and L2 cultures. The theoretical statements in relation to the aspects of motivation/ attitude, and acculturation of Gardner and Schumann's models, provide a solid ground on which some of the issues raised by the present research can rest.

In relation to individual learner factors in SLL, motivation and attitude, personality factors, and previous experience with L2 are regarded as relevant to the present research study. In addition, some of the personality factors, such as anxiety, extroversion/ introversion, risk-taking, and previous experience with L2 have their impact on the process of SLL. Some of these factors, such as personality, are partially related to the differences between learners' L1 and L2 cultures, which lead the discussions into Section 2.1.2.b. environmental cultural factors.

Cultural distance and Linguistic distance are seen as two important elements in SLL and are considered relevant to the present research study. Because of the differences between learners' L1 and L2 social and academic cultures, learners confront difficulties, culture shock. Through the process of acculturation, learners are able to gain TL sociolinguistic competence, which is missing in the previous TL education learners receive in their L1 environment.

Because of the linguistic distance between learners' L1 and L2, they face another type of psychological stress, language shock. Language difficulties associated with language shock are problematic and are difficult for the participants to overcome because these difficulties are not only related to linguistic aspects but also to cultural aspects, which are far more complex and require a longer period of time to be conquer.

In the context of SDLL learners have the initiative to improve their TL learning. They decide what, where, how, and when to learn the TL. In the system of SDLL, self-access and self-assessment are regarded as two essential components to the operation of the

system (see Figure 2.5). Self-access refers to the learning modes and self-assessment promotes the learning process, and these two components which function to raise learners' autonomy in SDLL are the philosophical principle of SDL.

Learners of specific purpose-focussed, EAP, tend to pay a great deal of attention to their academic work because it is their first priority regarding their SLL. According to Robinson (1980), communicative competence appears to be fundamental to a successful performance of the learners of ESP/ EAP because learners of ESP/ EAP are using English as a medium to achieve their academic excellence in an English-speaking academic environment. Knowing the linguistic rules of English may help learners of EEP to pass examinations, but learners of EAP may require a higher level of communicative competence to enable themselves to take part in academic discussions and debates.

Having reviewed relevant theories and issues in the context of SDTLL, the following chapter will focus on discussions regarding methodological issues linked to present research study.

Chapter Three

Research Methods and Design of the Study

Introduction

The purposes of this chapter are twofold: (1) to make a clear statement of the main aims of the study and to provide an overview of the general design and approaches adopted in the research; (2) to raise some of the issues involved in doing research and to give evidence of the precautions taken while doing the research. Discussions in the present chapter are classified into four categories: (1) the nature of research; (2) the research approaches adopted; (3) other related issues; and (4) the methodology of the analysis and presentation of the research data. Discussions of specific issues encountered at different stages of the present research study will be presented within the relevant context under these four headings.

3.1. The nature of the research

Research is regarded as one of the major means by which human beings set out to grasp and to understand the nature of certain phenomena, namely, to discover truth. According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), research refers to the process of obtaining and analysing information and data. Social research refers to the collection and analysis of information on the social world, and educational research is based on the world of education. The present research, focussed on the area of language learning of a specific group of students in a cross-cultural context, is, therefore, classified within the category of the combination of social and educational research.

There have been numerous research studies carried out to observe language learners' learning processes from different perspectives (Discussions see Spolsky, 1989; Ellis, 1994, 1995; Hatch and Brown, 1995). However, there have been relatively few empirical studies which have addressed, in a carefully-controlled and in-depth manner, the specific questions of the experience of self-directed language learning in an authentic target language

environment. Although research has been done and discussions are available in relation to autonomous language learning (see Pemberton et al., 1996) and self-access language learning (see Gardner and Miller, 1994), the language learning activities do not take place in an environment where English is spoken as a mother tongue language. Consequently, the present research may serve as a pioneer inquiry into this specific area of language learning. In order to gain insights into the language learning experienced by the Taiwanese graduate students, the qualitative tradition was believed to be the most appropriate one to adopt in conducting this research. The design of this research comprised two aspects of the qualitative tradition: (1) a case study approach; and (2) interviewing, and one aspect of the quantitative tradition: the diary study method, which will be discussed in detail in Section 3.2.

3.1.1. The main aims of the study

The main aims of the study were: (1) to discover the factors which influence the Taiwanese graduate EFL learners' self-directed language learning in an authentic target language environment and how these factors affect their language learning activities; (2) to reveal the language learning difficulties encountered by these self-directed language learners and how they cope with these problems; and (3) to find out about the language learning strategies used by this specific group of adult self-directed language learners.

This study sets out to examine the self-directed language learning experiences of Taiwanese graduate students at a British university. It is known that issues related to language learning differ according to the individual language learners, e.g. child or adult learners (Krashen's acquisition - learning hypothesis, 1983), TL learning purposes (EEP, ECP or EAP), Asian or European language learners, and the different settings of the language learning environment, e.g. mother tongue (L1) or authentic target language (L2) learning setting, the learning environment of inside and outside the classroom, and the method of language learning: teacher-guided or learner-centred. Consequently, issues relating to adult TL learners, TL learning purposes, learners with a Chinese ethnic background, and TL self-direction in an authentic TL environment are the areas which the present research sets out to explore.

3.1.1.a. The main characteristics of the present research study

Four concepts representing the main characteristics of the present research study: (1) the research participants, (2) the research environment including the authenticity of the TL, (3) the TL learning of the participants, and (4) the time factor, will be addressed in this section. First of all, the participants of the research study were a group of eleven Taiwanese postgraduates studying for academic purposes at a British university. This group of students were studying at this academic institute for either master's or doctoral degrees. The purpose of their English language learning was therefore regarded as for academic purposes.

Secondly, the environment of their language learning was an authentic target language setting which was very different from a controlled EFL learning setting, the classroom. The language input provided by this authentic environment was uncontrolled and unplanned. The participants would have opportunities to talk to people with heavy Yorkshire or Irish accents which language students have never come across in a language classroom in Taiwan, where standard English or modified English is always provided by language teachers or instructors who tend to be NSs. However, some of the research participants had previous experience of contact with authentic and non-standard English in England, Wales, USA, and Canada when they had either studied for academic purposes or attended English language courses. The contents of the conversations which the participants had would differ from time to time and from person to person in this authentic environment because they had more opportunities to talk to people in natural situations, such as, in a post office buying stamps or in a bank applying to open a bank account. Yet in the classroom, topics of conversation and the language used in relation to the specific conversations may have been selected in advance by language teachers to avoid confusion among the students. Furthermore, in the authentic environment, the language learners are exposed to a natural setting which comprises not only the target language itself but also the cultural element of the target language. Table 3.1. below contrasts the differences between the participants' previous TLL in Taiwan and TLL in the context of the present research study.

Table 3.1. The TLL of the participants in Taiwan and in the present research study

TLL of the participants	Purposes of TLL	The main method of TLL	The learning environment of TL	TL input	The opportunities for encounters with TL cultural elements
Taiwan	EEP	Teacher-guided	EFL	Modified: controlled and selected	Limited AE
The present research study	EAP	Self-directed	ESL	Authentic: uncontrolled and unselected	Various of BE in general

EEP: English for educational purposes

EAP: English for academic purposes

EFL: English as a foreign language

ESL: English as a second language

AE: American English

BE: British English

The cultural element is best learned and experienced in its natural setting because there can be certain items or phenomena which are not available in the learners' mother tongue cultures, such as the fact that it is rare to see cheese in Taiwan, so it is very difficult to explain to learners what cheddar is. Additionally, some items cannot be translated into other languages because they do not exist in learners' mother tongue culture, such as Yorkshire pudding. In Mandarin Chinese, pudding refers to a kind of dessert which has a very soft texture and sweet flavour.

Thirdly, the TL learning strategy of the participants was self-directed language learning, which allowed the participant to decide what to learn, how to learn, and when to learn. They had total control over their language learning activities which was different from learners who acquire a target language in a classroom, where the contents of learned language are usually controlled by language teachers. Fourthly, one essential element of

this study was the time factor. The time span of the participants' stay in this environment was one or two years for master's degrees and three years for doctoral degrees. The time factor had an impact on the participants, such as in the increase of the participants' confidence through speaking the target language, and the increase of the participants' self-identity, that is, being Taiwanese. The findings from this study will be further discussed in later chapters.

3.1.2. The schedule of the present research study

This study included three phases: phase one, a piloting period including two small-scale studies; phase two, the main research period including four stages; and phase three, the writing-up period. Table 3.2. below indicates the schedule of the study.

Table 3.2. The timetable of the present research study

Phase one	Piloting period	
	1995 October	The study commenced
	1996 January	Phase one study commenced at the University of York
		Phase one, stage one of the study commenced
	1996 March	Phase one, stage two of the study commenced
	1996 June	Phase one study terminated
		The end of the Phase one of the study
Phase two	Main research (field work) period	
	1996 October	Field work commenced at the University of York
		Phase two, stage one of the study commenced
	1996 December	Phase two, stage two of the study commenced
	1997 January	Phase two, stage three of the study commenced
	1997 March	Phase two, stage four of the study commenced
	1997 March	Field work terminated
		The end of the Phase two of the study
Phase three	Writing-up period	
	1997 July	Phase three of the study commenced

The main purpose of the two small-scale piloting studies carried out in phase one was to first investigate the issues relating to this particular field and then to set the scene for the follow-up phase two of the study, the main research period. The findings from the two small-scale piloting studies in phase one served as an essential backbone for the main

research carried out in the phase two of the study, which will be further discussed in section 3.1.3. In addition, apart from the two interviews, the participants were also requested to keep a specially-designed language learning diary to inform the researcher about their daily language learning activities (see Appendix E for a copy of this diary). By studying the diary kept by the participants, the researcher was able to get a deeper and broader picture of participants' language learning activities and patterns. This deeper understanding helped the researcher to build a solid foundation for the follow-up main research period.

The main aim of the four sessions of interviews carried out in phase two of the study was to gather as much in-depth information as possible on the language learning experience of the participants over a period of time which allowed the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the participants' language learning experiences chronologically. As in the previous phase one study, alongside the four interviews, the participants were requested to keep a specially designed language learning diary to provide the researcher with information about their daily language learning activities over this period of time. This chronological/ longitudinal element was considered as a fundamental feature of the present research study.

3.1.3. The key research questions

The present research study is mainly based on the qualitative research tradition and was designed to discover and explore the phenomena existing in the area of adult self-directed language learning in an authentic target language environment. Consequently, the research questions of the study should be general enough to permit exploration but focussed enough to delimit the study (Marshall and Rossman 1995). Marshall and Rossman (1995, p.27) further point out that questions should be linked to the problem, and they may be site-specific because of the uniqueness of a specific program or organization.

In the present research study, the interview questions addressed to the participants were linked to the areas in which the research interests were located. Each question was designed to explore the issues in an in-depth manner, such as the link between the following questions - "*what* are the factors influencing your self-directed language learning

here in England?” and “*why* and *how* do they influence your learning?” The *what* question gave the participants opportunities to tell the researcher the influential factors in their language learning and the following *why* and *how* questions provided the researcher with access to the functions and operations of these specific influential factors in the participants’ language learning. Additionally, the questions addressed to the participants were site-specific because the location of the participants’ language learning activities were taking place in one specific site, the University of York, but not elsewhere in England.

According to the main aim of this research and the findings from the data analyses completed in March and June 1996, there were several key issues which appeared to be essential. The data analyses completed in March and June 1996 were the two small-scale studies of phase one of the study. As explained in section 3.1.2, this study included three phases: phase one, a piloting period including two small-scale studies; phase two, the main research period including four stages; and phase three, the writing-up period.

The findings drawn from the two small-scale stage studies and the information provided by the diaries kept by the participants in phase one indicated certain issues which needed further investigation. These issues were classified under three headings, also the main foci of the study: influential language learning factors; language learning difficulties; and language learning strategies. The research questions relating to these three categories are as follows:

1. Influential language learning factors
 - a. What are the factors influencing your self-directed language learning at the University of York, England?
 - b. How do these factors influence your self-directed language learning?
2. Language learning difficulties

In relation to the four language skills,

 - a. What kind of language learning difficulties do you have?
 - b. How do you cope with these difficulties?
3. Language learning strategies

In relation to the four language skills,

 - a. How do you organize your self-directed language learning/ immersion activities?
 - b. What are the resources you access to learn/ immerse yourself in the target language, English?

- c. Do you self-assess your language learning process? How?

Additional questions were added to these key interview questions when related issues were mentioned by the participants during the four interview sessions. As there were four sessions of interviews carried out with the participants during the second phase of the study, interview questions were further developed according to the results of prior interviews. These further developments of prior interviews enabled the information collected from the participants to be more in-depth. The four sessions of interview questions can be seen in Appendix D.

3.2. The research approaches adopted

There are two major traditions to research which are known as the quantitative and the qualitative. The primary research tradition adopted in this study was qualitative and the research approach used in this study was a case study. The research methods applied in this study included individual interviews and diary studies, which are regarded as closely related to the quantitative tradition.

3.2.1. The use of a qualitative tradition

The philosophical underpinnings of a qualitative research approach direct researchers to several key features that characterize the research. Qualitative researchers believe that the research settings are unique and different from the laboratory environment, therefore research results cannot be replicated, and they assert that the basic subject matter of human nature and society cannot be stated and analysed numerically (Hammersley, 1989). Lindlof (1995) indicates that qualitative researchers seek to preserve the form and content of human behaviour and to analyse its qualities, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations.

Qualitative researchers usually begin a study out of a personal and scholarly fascination with a phenomenon, and continue to respect its integrity while carrying out field activities. Studies using qualitative methods often focus only on a partial set of relationships in group life or on one aspect of a scene. Lindlof (1995) further points out that qualitative research methods can be distinguished from quantitative methods in that they do not rest their

evidence on the logic of mathematics, the principle of numbers, or methods of statistical analysis. Actual talk, gestures and other social action can be the raw material of the data analysis in different research studies.

“Qualitative methods permit the evaluator to study selected issues in depth and detail. Approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry.” (Patton, p. 13, 1990)

Qualitative researchers also examine the data for descriptions, or patterns, and hypothesize relationships between phenomena, then return to the setting to collect data to test the hypotheses. Consequently, the research is a process that builds the theory inductively over a period of time, step by step. Field and Morse (1985) state that the data of qualitative research may largely consist of transcriptions of interviews, observations of the setting and of the subjects, and that data of this kind are meaningful to others, and considered 'rich' and 'deep'. However, data generated by qualitative methods are difficult to manage for the purposes of analysing and writing a report, as they cannot be readily transformed into numeric codes for statistical manipulation and in this respect they are often regarded as 'soft' data.

The qualitative research process can be exceedingly time-consuming both for the collection and the analysis of data. In contrast to quantitative research, the number of subjects in the qualitative study is necessarily small and samples are selected by researchers. The qualitative researcher selects informants who are willing to talk and establish relationships of trust with the researcher, who is in a key position and has special knowledge of the phenomena.

The decision to employ a qualitative tradition for the present research study was based on the main interest and design of the present research study. First of all, the main interest of the present research study was to investigate the specific phenomenon of how a certain group of Taiwanese EFL learners self-direct their language learning in an authentic target language environment. The importance of individual variation or individual differences of language learning rather than group effects was emphasized by this research. The

researcher aimed to look for the actual language learning activities and the individual language learning experience of a group of Taiwanese graduate students who studied for academic purposes at one British university. The existing issues in this area were the main concern of the study. The researcher's intention was to accumulate as much in-depth information relating to issues existing in this area as possible.

Secondly, the design of the present research study was a chronological/ longitudinal research consisting of three different phases of research activities. There were three phases of this study, as outlined in section 3.1.2. Two data analyses, completed in March and June 1996, were defined as the initial stage of this study. Findings from the second data analysis, completed in June 1996, served as the framework for the following main field study of this research. The questions asked in the main field study of the research were based on the findings from the data analyses completed in phase two of this study.

The different phases of the study allowed the researcher to observe the changes in the participants' language learning activities and patterns chronologically and this chronological aspect was also the strength of this research. It was considered important to analyse the participants' TL learning experiences sequentially over time and to observe closely on their TL learning processes and management of learning objectives and activities. The main aim was to provide insights into the pedagogical considerations regarding self-directed learning in general, and to make suggestions for future curriculum design in relation to learning English for academic purposes in specific.

The qualitative research tradition permits the researcher to study selected issues in depth and detail. In order to have close and chronological observation of a specific group of individual learners, the qualitative research tradition was, therefore, regarded as the most appropriate approach for the researcher to employ for this study. The following section will discuss the characteristics of the case study, which was adopted in the present research study.

3.2.2. The use of a case study

The present research aims to investigate the participants' language learning activities and their changes in learning patterns over a period of time. Consequently, a case study which involves the continuous assessment of some aspect of human behaviour over a period of time and intervention effects replicated in the same subject(s) over time (Cohen and Manion, 1995), appeared to be the most appropriate approach to be adopted in the present research study. Various researchers have different definitions of case-study. For example, Webb (1990) indicates that the term 'case study' is considered to be synonymous with ethnography, participant observation, qualitative observation, and field study.

Patton (1990) points out that case-study involves organising research data by specific cases for in-depth study, and cases can be individuals, programmes, institutes and the purpose is to accumulate comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest. Burgess (1984, p.2), however, suggests by quoting Wolcott's statement that it is the cultural perspective, not the research technique, that distinguishes ethnography from other work. Hammersley (1992) indicates that the difference between a case study and ethnography is trivial, and recommends a qualitative approach, in which researchers participate in people's lives for an extended period of time to ask questions.

“Case study refers to the collection and presentation of detailed, relatively unstructured information from a range of sources about a particular individual, group, or institution, usually including the accounts of subjects themselves.” (Hammersley, p.93, 1989)

Case study research is different from research conducted on samples. According to Stenhouse (Burgess, 1985), sample-based research is established by the quantity to which the findings in the sample are to be generalized, while in a case study the relationship between a case, or a collection of different cases can be regarded as one sample. In other words, the population of a sample varies in case study research. Additionally, a case study is regarded as a systematization of experience in which interpretations are handled carefully to prevent experience from becoming opinionated (Burgess, 1985).

A case study, which can be understood as the study of an instance drawn from a class or as the study of a bounded system (Nunan, 1995), enables the data collected to be in-depth and rich in texture. According to Patton (1980), qualitative data derived from a case study provides:

“ Detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviours; direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes and beliefs, and thoughts; and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records, and case histories.” (Patton, 1980, p. 22)

Data collected through interviews and diaries from the participants in this research provided the researcher with detailed description of the participants' language learning activities and their personal experience in living and learning a language in an authentic language environment. The detailed descriptive information accumulated from the interviews with the participants revealed that not only the linguistic competence of the participants, but also their socio-cultural competence, was essential for them to be able to study for degrees and to self-direct their language learning in an authentic language environment. The descriptions from the in-depth interviews indicated that the participants' insufficient knowledge of the culturally different discourse world of the British English was also one of the difficulties the participants had to conquer during their stay in this authentic English environment.

By using case studies, researchers select an instance or instances from a group of objects and phenomena to investigate and then go on investigating the way the selected specific instance(s) function in context. There are three fundamental strengths for the researcher in adopting a case study as a method of this longitudinal empirical research. The first strength of a case study is in accumulating in-depth information from a specific research context. In the present study, a case study allowed the researcher to investigate issues related to the area of self-directed language learning in an authentic language environment and to reveal existing phenomena within the context of such a specific instance. Secondly, the researcher was able to acquire information relating to personal experience from this case study, such as that the participants had to adjust themselves to the differences between

British culture and Chinese culture. Thirdly, this case study can provide a database of materials which may be further reinterpreted by other researchers and the insights uncovered by this case study can be adopted to immediate use for other purposes.

However, a major problem associated with the use of a case study is its deficiency to put the 'case' in a wider historical and social context (Vulliamy, 1985). In order to overcome this methodological imperfection, the context of research environment and its convention were taken into consideration in data analysis of the present research study. In addition, due to the reliability and validity of a case study can be problematic, it is difficult to generalize from its findings (Bell, 1993). With regard to such concern, triangulation (see Section 3.3.3) is therefore utilized for the implementation of the present research study to increase the reliability and validity of the data.

In the field of applied linguistics, the case study has been an important research method applied by researchers to investigate the language learning processes of first and second language learners. In order to investigate adult Taiwanese advanced EFL learners' self-directed language learning processes, the case study is regarded as the most appropriate research method for this study. By adopting this particular research method, this study was able to investigate the specific aspects of adult Taiwanese university-level EFL learners' self-directed language learning which are rarely explored by researchers in the field of second language acquisition (SLA).

3.2.3. The use of in-depth interviews

The goal of this qualitative research was to collect as much detailed, richly textured, person-centred information as possible. Consequently, in-depth interviews, a data-gathering technique to collect detailed, and person-centred information from one or more individuals, were regarded as the most appropriate method to elicit and collect the information from the participants for this research.

“ Research interview is an unusual method in that it involves the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals.” (Cohen and Manion, pp. 271-272, 1994)

Table 5.3. indicates four categories of interviews, as classified by Cohen and Manion (1989). According to Cohen and Manion, the interviews of the present research study are considered to be the focussed interviews.

Table 3.3. Four categories of interviews

Category	Features
The structured interview	The content and procedures are organised in advance.
The unstructured interview	Open situation, having greater flexibility and freedom.
The non-directive interview	Minimal direction or control is exhibited by the interviewer and the respondent has the freedom to express his subjectivity fully and as spontaneously as he chooses or is able.
The focussed interview	Focusses on a respondent's subjective responses to a known situation in which he has been involved and which has been analysed by the interviewer prior to the interview.

(Cohen and Manion, 1989)

Interviews are defined as conversations with a purpose, yet they are different from ordinary conversations. Qualitative interviews emphasize the turn-taking of questions and answers. Interviewers direct the discussions in a desired direction by asking most of the questions. Patton (1987, p. 108) indicates that in-depth interviewing involves asking open-ended questions, listening to and recording the answers, and then following up with additional questions. He further points out that:

“ We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions. We cannot observe behaviours that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meaning they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter the other person's perspective.” (Patton, 1987, p. 109)

In-depth interviewing provided the main source of data in this study since the researcher was not able to closely observe each of the participants in their self-directed language learning activities. By doing interviews with the participants, the researcher learned about things that cannot be observed directly, such as, what factors influenced participants' language learning activities and how these factors influenced the participants. By talking

to the participants, the researcher was also able to understand how the participants felt about their role in this specific language learning activity and why they had this specific feeling about their TL activities. They may have felt encouraged because they were totally in control of their own language learning activities and they did make progress in this aspect. On the other hand, they may have felt frustrated because they did not think that they had made any progress in their self-directed language learning.

By having conversations with participants, the researcher was able to verify, validate, or comment on data obtained from diaries they kept. Because the diaries were distributed and collected on a weekly basis and the interviews took place at the beginning and end of terms one and two, the researcher could confirm with the participant whether he/ she was preparing for assessments because his/ her diaries indicated that he or she devoted a large amount of time to reading academic material. The researcher used the information provided in the diaries to confirm with all of the participants in the interviews. However, one interview conducted with little reference to the information from the participants' diaries was the first interview which took place in the week one of term one when the first week of diaries was not fully completed by the participants.

Interviewing is a data collection method extensively used by qualitative researchers, and it may be the overall strategy or one of several methods employed in a study. In this study, interviewing is combined with the use of specially designed diaries to collect data. Qualitative in-depth interviews are regarded as much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories. Researchers explore a few general topics to help uncover the participants' perspective. In this research, the researcher would first ask a general question such as "what factors influence your self-directed language learning?" By addressing this question to the participants, the researcher expected to receive some general and broad answers. Then, based on these general responses, the researcher would be able to further trace the details by asking the participants more specific questions.

One fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is to explore the participants' perspective on the specific phenomenon which is the main interest of the qualitative research. With their focus of inquiry clearly in mind, researchers tactfully ask questions and actively listen to the participants in order to understand what is important to know. For example, one of the participants told the researcher in one of the interviews that she thought that the English were very 'cold.' In order to understand her definition of 'cold,' the researcher then asked a further question "What do you mean, 'cold' and why do you feel this way?" This participant therefore went on explaining her own feelings which provided the researcher with a personal experience which later was also found to exist in other participants' experiences. To be able to uncover participants' perspectives on certain phenomenon was an essential component of this research and in-depth interviews were the most appropriate method to employ in this study.

The open-ended approach used in in-depth interviewing elicits subjective, idiosyncratic responses from each interviewee, and interviewers must be prepared for highly variable answers. Kaufman (Gubrium and Sankar, 1994) indicates that, by asking open-ended questions, researchers learn not only what is pertinent to the individual participant about the specific topic, but also things about the identity of the individual participant and how the participant defines and constructs him/ herself in relation to the subject matter at hand. In this research, the researcher received different answers from the participants by asking them the same question. The researcher was therefore able to elicit different information from different participants on each aspect.

Apart from the above-mentioned issues relating to in-depth interviews, there are some other issues which emerged as important during the process of the interviews with the participants of this study. One important point which has to be made, however, is that all of the participants were highly cooperative in participating in this research, which was due to one of the cultural norms in Taiwan. For example, when the participants were asked to arrange interviews with the researcher, they would first ask the researcher when was the best time for the researcher to conduct the interviews with them, but not directly indicate their own preferred time. In general, people in Taiwan tend to adjust themselves to cooperate with others rather than asking other people to cooperate with them. Because of

this cultural characteristic, the researcher did not have too much difficulty in arranging and conducting interviews with the participants.

In relation to the interviews in this research, there are several practical and methodological issues which need to be discussed. These issues include: (1) equipment used in the interviews; (2) copies of interview questions; (3) the participants; and (4) languages used in the interviews. Anonymity was employed in the present research. Before conducting the interview with the participants, the researcher had asked permission from the participants beforehand to tape record what they said in the interviews and promised the participants that all of the information they provided in the interviews was strictly confidential and that the information would be only used in the research. All the tape-recorded interviews conducted with individual participants were later transcribed by the researcher for the use of data analysis in this research.

Issue one: equipment used in the interviews Various pieces of equipment were used to enhance the process and the results of the in-depth interviews used in this study. A tape recorder, a walkman, was employed all the time during all of the interviews with the participants. There was one mini microphone linked to the recorder which the participants could either hold in their hand(s), pin onto their tops or leave on the desk in front of them while doing the interviews. There was also a pair of earphones connected to the recorder of which the researcher put one in her ear during all of the interviews to detect any possible malfunction of the machine. During all of the interviews with the participants, the recorder never had any malfunction such as to interrupt the process of interviews. The only occasion which caused an interruption to the interviews was when a tape was finished and the machine stopped automatically.

One notable feature of the interviews with the participants was that all of the participants owned a walkman of their own. Some of the participants compared the functions of the researcher's tape recorder, a walkman, with their own before the interviews took place. Some of the participants even suggested that the researcher use their own walkmans to tape record the interviews because their walkmans were more up-to-date and were more advanced in functioning than the researcher's walkman. In a way, all of the participants

were quite comfortable talking while a walkman was used to tape record the interviews since they were familiar with the machine used.

Moreover, the participants' experiences of singing in KTV (Karioke Television) in Taiwan, a place where small rooms are available to rent by hour with the facilities of a TV and two microphones in each room where people can sing or talk in front of their friends, may also have helped the participants in speaking while a walkman was used. Consequently these experiences help them to be unafraid of having a microphone in front of them or pinned onto their clothes. Some of the participants even preferred to hold the microphone which they thought a situation reminded them of their pleasant experience of singing and having entertainment in KTV. "Machine phobia" (Walker, 1985) seemed not to exist among the participants in this research. All the interviews took place in either the researcher's room or the participants' rooms. The participants and the researcher were segregated from others during the interviews which allowed the two parties to concentrate on answering and asking the research questions during the interviews.

Issue two: copies of the interview questions During the period of the two pilot case studies were conducted, some of the participants indicated that they did not mind whether or not they had a copy of the interview questions before the interviews. During the main study, the researcher gave out the interview questions to the participants one or two minutes before interviews were carried out. The participants were given some time to scan through the questions and they could ask the researcher if they had any questions about the interview questions. On certain occasions, the participants chose to do the interviews without previewing the interview questions, which is the issue relating to the participants to be discussed in the next section.

Issue three: the participants All of the participants in this research were full-time students at the university. In other words, some of them had to attend lectures or seminars and some of them had to have supervision with their supervisors during the day on weekdays. Consequently, most of the interviews were made either on week day evenings or over the weekends when the participants had more free time to do the interviews. As indicated in the discussion in the previous section that sometimes some participants chose not to

preview the interview questions at all before the interviews took place, which was due to that they had stayed in the lab or research room or had been working for a long period of time, or attending several lectures or having supervision and, therefore, preferred the researcher to read the interview questions to them directly. In order not to make additional demands on participants who had a long day of work, the researcher read out the interview questions to some of the participants who preferred 'hearing' the interview questions to 'reading' them. However, the participants confirmed to the researcher that they understood the research questions after the interview questions were read.

Another relevant issue concerned the condition of the participants while having the interviews. On several occasions, some of the participants were either ill from flu or tired from working all day while having the interviews, therefore, their responses to the questions was not very satisfactory because they tended to speak less. These situations, however, happened only occasionally, i.e. three times with the different participants of the present research. Most of the time, the researcher would request the participants to have the interviews done on the days when they did not have too much work to do.

Issue four: languages used in the interviews In order to avoid any linguistic difficulties and to allow all of the participants to fully express themselves during the interviews, the mother tongue languages, both Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese, were used between the participants and the researcher, depending on which language they felt more comfortable to use. During the interviews, Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese were used by the participants but sometimes the participants used English lexical items mixing with Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese in the interviews. Speaking in mother tongues in the interviews allowed an equal opportunity for all the participants in the research to express their views. Some of the participants in this study had been in this country for some time, and consequently may be more comfortable expressing their views in English than the ones who have just newly arrived in this country and might have less control of the target language.

Additionally, there was also the factor that the participants would be more confident speaking in their mother tongues in front of the researcher than speaking the target language, English, because they might feel embarrassed or uneasy when they made mistakes in speaking English in front of the researcher, who was also Taiwanese. Consequently, the target language ability of the participants and cultural norms were two important issues for the researcher to consider, and eventually the researcher decided to conduct the interviews with the participants in their mother tongue languages. The rich and in-depth information provided by the participants would appear to justify this decision.

Some of the participants used only Mandarin Chinese throughout the interviews. These participants were the second generation of the Chinese migration in 1949. People who belong this recent migrant group are more comfortable speaking Mandarin Chinese, since most of them are originally from the northern part of China, where Mandarin Chinese is mainly spoken. Taiwanese, a division dialect of Min mainly spoken in the southeast region of China, is commonly spoken by Taiwanese whose ancestors migrated to Taiwanese in the last two hundred years. Participants who belong to the offspring of these earlier migrants are more comfortable speaking in a mixture of Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese. Among the eleven participants of the present research, nine of them are the offsprings of the earlier migrants and all were able to communicate in Taiwanese.

Occasionally, some of the participants used a single English word to indicate what they intended to say during the interviews. Those who would use English words varied in different interviews. The participants' different use of mother tongue and target languages in the interviews can be explained by four factors: (1) the length of participants' stay in this authentic target language environment; (2) their confidence in using the target language; (3) the sense of their own self identity, being proud of being Taiwanese; and (4) the fact that some items were not available in their mother tongue culture, so they had to use English words to indicate what they meant to the researcher. The following paragraphs will explain these four factors.

Factor one: the length of stay According to interviews made in October 1996, some participants who had been in this environment for a year or more used Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese or English words to tell the researcher of their language learning experience, while some of the participants who had just arrived in this environment at that time only used Mandarin Chinese or Taiwanese in the interviews. For participants who had been in this environment for some time, some English words simply came to them naturally. Meanwhile, according to the interviews made in January 1997, some of the participants who arrived in October 1996 would occasionally use English words in the interviews, which indicated that they were more used to the target language than when they had just arrived in October 1996.

Factor two: confidence in using the target language Some of the participants were quite confident in using English words or phrases in interviews conducted in October 1996 despite the length of their stay here. For example, one of the participants who was newly arrived at the end of September 1996 was nevertheless quite confident in using some single English words in the interview carried out in October 1996. On the other hand, one of the participants, despite having been in this environment since October 1994, had less confidence in using the target language. He would double check with the researcher whenever he said a single English word in the interviews. Consequently, the participants' confidence in speaking the target language is another factor influencing their uses of the mother tongue and the target language.

Factor three: self-identity Self-identity, on the other hand, also played an important role in the interviews. Some of the participants were so proud of being Taiwanese that they used mainly Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese. Some of them even indicated in the interviews that English was only a tool they used to study for a degree. They would never use English again after they completed their study here. Some of them indicated that they would only speak their mother tongues when they talk to people from Taiwan and some of them thought it was inappropriate and unnecessary to speak English to people from Taiwan since English is not their mother tongue.

Factor four: unavailable items in mother tongue culture Finally, one reason why the participants would use English words instead of Mandarin Chinese or Taiwanese was because certain items were not available in their mother tongue culture. For example, “fish and chips” is not a dish available in the participants’ food culture, and therefore the participants would simply say “fish and chips” directly. Most of the instances which happened in these circumstances were objects which can be seen or observed.

By contrast, there is one situation where the participants would solely use Mandarin Chinese or Taiwanese to express themselves in the interviews. The participants would have to use their mother tongue languages when using certain items or adjective words the participants did not know in English, or on the other hand, things which the participants liked to say did not exist in the target language culture. For example, one popular Taiwanese snack, which is made of sweet potato flour, filled with some savouries, is not available in British food culture. Consequently, the participants would have to use the Taiwanese language to indicate this item. In this case, using Taiwanese is more appropriate than using Mandarin Chinese since it is a very traditional Taiwanese snack and is only available in Taiwan.

On the whole, even though all of the participants were capable of expressing their own opinion in English, the first languages were still regarded as the most direct, natural and convenient way for the participants to express their opinions, experiences and feelings.

3.2.4. The use of a diary study

Diaries, in this case, were a useful source of data and could provide some information on self-directed language learning in relation to the everyday life of an individual. Through the use of a diary study, it is possible to understand the specific language-related activities in which the participants participate on a daily basis. The scope of the diaries was generally restricted and the participants were asked to record the specific things which are of interest to researchers. By studying the diaries completed by the participants, the researcher could accumulate insights into the issues relating to the interests of the research.

“ Diaries, logs, and journals are important introspective tools in language research.” (Nunan, p. 118, 1992)

According to Long (1983, p.19), diary studies have been particularly interesting in view of the light that they have cast on personal variables in language learning. Diary-keeping for the purpose of gaining in-process/ on-going data only from the late 1970s, with Schumann and Schumann’s (1977) introspective study of their experiences in learning Farsi and Arabic. Bailey (1991) indicates that the diary study is a first-person account of a language learning experience documented through regular entries in a personal journal and then analysed for recurring patterns. Diaries, therefore, provide researchers with an valuable opportunity to “observe” the participants’ language learning process.

Since the researcher was in a position to accumulate information on the participants’ language learning experiences, the specially designed language learning diaries were used to record the participants’ self-directed language learning activities which took place in the participants’ everyday life. Studying the diaries kept by the participants could lead to more productive discussions in the interviews conducted by the researcher. For example, the researcher could ask the participants what reason made them spend more time on reading activities during a specific week. The participants would therefore have the opportunity to tell the researcher the reason for the differences in their activities, such as the timing of their academic assessments.

Diaries also created researcher-participant and participant-participant interaction. In the interviews, the participants were able to tell the researcher about issues relating to self-directed language learning which had affected them. Some of the participants also talked to each other about their own language learning activities in some of the social gatherings among the Taiwanese students .

Each of the participants were asked in the interviews whether they were influenced by other participants’ language learning activities or experiences if they had discussions together. All of the participants pointed out that the discussions they had provided them with information related to language learning or language learning experiences by others.

Yet the participants had the choice to decide which activities and what resources were most suitable and valuable for them to adopt in their personal learning process. It was hoped that these strengths would eventually enhance the outcome of the data collection for this study.

Diary studies, like other research methods, have both strengths and weaknesses. One of the significant advantages of diary studies is that diaries provide insights into processes of language learning which would be difficult to obtain in any other way. On the other hand, one essential critical question in relation to diaries is how realistic they are, since nobody really knows what the participants actually do in their everyday life. This is, however, related to the ethical issues of doing research which will be further discussed in Section 3.3.1.

In the present research study, the diaries were delivered and collected according to a regular routine. Mondays were the day for the researcher to give out the diaries to the participants and to collect the completed diaries from the participants. The language used in these diaries was English and each set included two sections. The reason for the researcher to use English in the diaries was because the contents of the diaries were clear and simple and would not cause any confusion to the participants. The researcher, however, provided each participant with a written instruction of how to keep the diaries and verbal explanations of the diaries were also provided by the researcher to each participant. The participants were requested to tick specific items to represent their everyday language activities and they were also encouraged to put down their thoughts in any language which they felt comfortable to use.

It is notable that only two of them chose English rather than Mandarin Chinese to describe their thoughts in the diaries. One of them indicated in the interviews that she had relatively few opportunities to write in the TL, consequently she regarded writing sentences in the TL in the diaries as a chance to practise her TL writing skills. The other participant had been in the research environment for three years when the study was conducted, and she pointed out in the interviews that writing in the TL could be easier for her than writing in Chinese characters which usually took her more time to describe things. In addition, she

indicated that sometimes she forgot how to write some Chinese characters due to the fact that she seldom had the chance to write in Chinese in the research environment.

There were two sections in the diary. The first section was designed to investigate the kinds of materials which the participants accessed and the contents of language learning/immersion activities to which the participants devoted themselves every day. A second section of this diary was designed to accumulate the thoughts, relating to the four language skills, of the participants in relation to the target language learning/immersion in this authentic target language environment. Participants were asked to fill in and to write down their thoughts while keeping their diaries, which provided the researcher with additional information on their language learning activities. The participants in this research could use their first languages to express their thoughts which would make the information more precise and accurate. A copy of the diary is available in Appendix E.

3.3. Other related issues

The quality of research relies heavily on the researcher's ability to obtain information, and to be persistent and sensitive in eliciting information from the data during the process of analysis (Field and Morse, 1985). Qualitative research encompasses multiple data collection techniques. The major methods of data collection used in qualitative research include participant observation, in-depth interviewing, and the collection of relevant documents. The discussions in this section will focus on the specific issues related to data collection in this research. The methods adopted in this study included in-depth interviews with the participants, language learning diaries kept by the participants, and the analysis of related documents. These methods were regarded as being the most appropriate approaches to gather data for this research in relation to the quality and the main aims of this study.

Since this qualitative research was aimed at investigating the language learning process of EFL self-directed language learners, in-depth interviews with the individual participants and collection of the specially designed language learning diaries kept by the participants were regarded to be the most important tools to gain understanding of participants' language learning activities which cannot be constantly observed by the researcher.

Therefore triangulation, which is defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection, plays an essential part in the data collection of this study (for more discussion see Section 3.3.3). The following paragraphs will discuss issues related to the data collection methods utilized in this study.

3.3.1. Ethical issues

The present research, which focussed on the participants' personal language learning experiences and activities, was immediately involved in certain aspects of the participants' private life. Consequently, to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of each of the participants, some ethical issues relating to the participants and the researcher have to be addressed and emphasized. Kayser-Jones and Koenig (Gubrium and Sankar, 1994) point out that the right to privacy suggests that the participants have control over when and how communication about themselves should be given to others, and confidentiality suggests that an agreement has been made which limits access to private information on the participants. Issues which are regarded as relevant to the present research study, including privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, will be discussed in detail in the following paragraph.

Privacy Information relating to research participants' physical and mental condition, personal circumstances and social relationships, which is not already in the public domain can be regarded as private to individuals and can be considered as sensitive information. It is suggested that the greater the sensitivity of the information, the more safeguards are necessary to protect the privacy of the research participants (Cohen and Manion). Cohen and Manion (1994, p.365) indicate that the right to privacy may easily be violated during the course of an investigation or denied after it has been completed, and at either point participants are considered as vulnerable. The data accumulated relating to the individual participants' TL learning experience and personal daily TL learning activities through interviews and diaries is, therefore, regarded as information that is highly private.

Anonymity To protect the participants of the present research study and their identities, anonymity was employed. Each of the participants was given a code, such as Participant 1 or 2, by the researcher to represent the participants' real identities in the research. By doing so, the participants were protected so that the information collected did not embarrass or in other ways harm them. This representative code was only known by the researcher and the individual participants.

An agreement, however, had been made between the participants and the researcher about the use of the information they offered in the interviews. The information provided by the participants could only be used and directly quoted in the present research. Under the protection of anonymity and the trust between the individual participants and the researcher, the participants were expected to be more comfortable and confident in providing the researcher with authentic information about their language learning.

On the other hand, anonymity was also applied to the researcher's writing and verbal reporting. The researcher should not relate specific information about the participants to others and should be particularly careful of sharing information with people at the research site who could choose to use the information in other ways. Apart from anonymity, one ethical issue relating to the researcher was that the researcher was obliged to tell the truth while writing-up and reporting the findings of the research. It is every researcher's obligation to report what the data reveal in research. Fabricating or distorting data is the ultimate sin of a researcher.

Confidentiality The promise of confidentiality is regarded as another method to protect participants' right to privacy. By doing so, researchers are in no way making the information known publicly. Four techniques, deletion of identifiers, crude report categories, microaggregation, and error inoculation have been identified by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) to allow public access to data and information without betraying confidentiality. Regarding to the present research study, deletion of identifiers was the only technique utilized to protect the participants' right to privacy.

3.3.2. The sampling of the participants

This case study was designed to be a piece of chronological research. Consequently, the size of the sample was not the main concern of the study as long as there was sufficient in-depth information available from the participants to reveal the issues existing in this area. The chronological aspect was the fundamental feature of this research. To accumulate, as fully as possible, in-depth and rich information from the participants, over a certain period of time was the strength of the present research study. The researcher was able to observe the changes and the patterns of language learning activities of individual participants through the interviews and the diaries kept by the participants.

In relation to the aspect of the sampling of the participants of the present research study, the time factor was an important issue to be taken into consideration. The participants were expected to be able to devote themselves fully to this study during a certain period of time. Two stages of sampling of the participants of the present research study were carried out during Weeks 0 and 1 of the 1996/97 academic year. Table 3.3. below indicates the procedures of sampling of the participants.

Table 3.4. The procedures of sampling of the participants

Stage 1: Week 0, Term 1, 1996/97 academic year	
Number of Taiwanese students continuing their studies in 1996/97 academic year	15
Number of Taiwanese students deciding to participate in the present research study	8
Stage 2: Week 1, Term 1, 1996/97 academic year	
Number of Taiwanese students starting their studies in 1996/97 academic year	7
Number of Taiwanese students deciding to participate in the present research study	3
The total number of Taiwanese students participating in the present research study	11

The first stage of the sampling process was that the researcher asked all of the Taiwanese students at the University of York in person whether they were willing to participate in the main field work of this study, which would commence at the beginning of the 1996/97 academic year. This procedure took place at the beginning of October 1997, in week 0 of the 1996/97 academic year. Some of the Taiwanese students, at that time, had either finished their studies and were preparing to leave this country or had left the country. Consequently, there were only fifteen Taiwanese students who would continue their studies in the following 1996/97 academic year.

Among these fifteen students, eight (four females, four males) decided to take part in the study. These eight students also took part in the two small-scale studies in phase one of this research. The reasons for the six students who decided not to participate in the research were either that they had to go back to Taiwan to do their field work in the 1996/97 academic year, or were about to complete their PhD studies at any time of the 1996/97 academic year.

The face-to-face interactions allowed the researcher to explain the purposes of the study to individual participants and then to answer any questions the participants had in relation to this research. After understanding the purpose of the study and the kind of work the participants would have to do as soon as the research commenced, some of the participants joked by telling the researcher that they would have to “behave well” since the researcher would be able to look into their personal life by reading their diaries. This instance explained another characteristic of this research, which was the close relationship between the participants’ personal life and the present research study.

The second stage of the sampling procedure was through the information offered by the president of the Taiwanese Student Association York (TSAY) when the researcher asked the newly arrived Taiwanese students if they would like to participate in this research at the beginning of October, 1996, week 1 of 1996/97 academic year. There were ten new students coming to study at the University of York at the end of the October 1996. Only seven students were, however, asked by the researcher during week 1 of the 1996/97 academic year because, at that time, the researcher had no knowledge of the other three

new students and had no access to them until the end of October 1996. Among the seven students, three of them (one male, two females) showed the researcher their interest in taking part in this research. The four who decided not to take part in the research indicated that they would be very much engaged in their own studies and would have difficulty in fully participating in the research.

Finally, it appeared that eleven participants out of twenty-five Taiwanese students excluding the researcher, would be interested in taking part in this research. There were six females and five males among these eleven participants, and eight of them, four females and four males, had taken part in two small-scale research studies carried out in the piloting period of the present study. Consequently, most of the participants were familiar with the purpose and the requirements of this research. In relation to the selection of the participants in this research, the researcher had never made any particular effort in sampling the participants but the participants made their own decision whether to be involved in the present research study.

3.3.3. Triangulation

The validity of this study relies on the triangulation, the comparison of data collected from different methods to ensure the rigour of the data as a whole and to achieve a wider measure of inter-subjectivity. All of the participants in this research showed their desire to know more about their language learning progress and therefore they participated in this research. They were willing to provide their personal learning experiences in interviews and to record their daily language activities by keeping the diaries. Triangulation allows the researcher to collect the data as accurately and as fully as possible.

“One important way to strengthen a study design is through triangulation, or the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena or programs. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches.” (Patton, p.187, 1990)

Stone (1994) indicates that the strength of case studies has been accepted by social scientists, but case studies are still criticised for lacking in scientific rigour and for being susceptible to personal standpoints and prejudices. Stenhouse (1980) indicates that the

problem of field research in case studies is to accumulate sufficient evidence to make it accessible to subsequent critical assessment, to internal and external criticism and to triangulation. To ensure sound data for subsequent interpretation, the process of triangulation was engaged in the present research study. Triangulation is defined by Cohen and Manion (1994, p.233) as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour.

“ No single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival causal factors... Because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of observations must be employed. This is termed triangulation. I now offer as a final methodological rule the principle that multiple methods should be used in every investigation.” (Denzin, p.28, 1978)

It is suggested that the use of triangular techniques in the social sciences may explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data (Cohen and Manion, 1994).

Three types of triangulation have been suggested by Cohen and Manion (1994): (1) methodological triangulation; (2) time triangulation; and (3) investigator triangulation. With regard to the present research study, two types of triangulation were utilized, methodological and time triangulation. In relation to methodological triangulation, Burgess (1984) indicates that there are two kinds of methodological triangulation: (1) within method; and (2) between method. The between method of methodological triangulation refers to when more than one research method is used to justify the findings, which are generalized from the data.

Two data collection methods were utilized in the present research study, in-depth interviews and diary studies. Data accumulated from diaries kept by the participant was used to support and justify the qualitative data collected from in-depth interviews with the participants. In relation to time triangulation, data of the present research study was collected from individual participants over a period of time, which allowed contrasts and comparisons of TLL to be made between individual participants.

3.4. Analysis and presentation of data

Data analysis is considered as the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. It can be a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, but creative and fascinating process. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), qualitative data analysis searches for general statements about relationships among categories of data and builds grounded theory. The challenge in qualitative data analysis is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal (Patton 1990, pp.371-372). Data collection and data analysis work together, hand in hand, to promote the emergence of substantive theory grounded in empirical data in qualitative studies. This section highlights the issues related to data analysis and presentation of data.

3.4.1. Transcription of interviews and information from diaries

All of the tape-recorded interviews were transcribed by the researcher into manuscripts in Chinese characters and later some of them were translated into English as the researcher used them as quotations in this thesis. Though Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese are totally different in syntax, phonetics and semantics, these two languages, however, do share the same writing system of Chinese characters. All of the completed manuscripts were categorized in terms of the representative code given to the participants.

Information from the diaries kept by the participants was translated by the researcher into the total hours, weekly, termly and during the whole period of the research, which the participants devoted to various activities related to self-directed language learning. The researcher calculated all of the numbers and double-checked the results twice in order to reveal the accurate time of each participants' language learning activities. Details of the results from the diaries can be seen in Appendices F, and G.

3.4.2. Data analysis and presentation of data

The purpose of qualitative inquiry is to produce the findings, and the culminating activities of qualitative inquiry include analysis, interpretation, and presentation of findings. Yet the data generated by qualitative methods tend to be voluminous, and consequently, how to analyse the data efficiently and appropriately becomes an important task in the procedure

of doing research. Various methods of data analysis are proposed by different researchers in the field of research methodology. Burroughs (1975, p. 151) indicates that data analysis can be considered under four headings: (1) the tabulation of the data; (2) the summarizing of the data; (3) the analysis of the data for hypothesis-testing purposes; and (4) the analysis of the data for inference-drawing purposes.

Burroughs further explains that headings one and two conclude essential elements of a research while elements under headings three and four are not necessarily always pursued. The data analysis of this research is considered as elements under these four categories. Facts revealed by the present research were presented in the forms of lists or tables in the stage of data analysis and some of the lists were later presented in the findings chapters of this thesis. Summaries drawn from the data analysis will be also presented and discussed in the findings chapters of this thesis. The analysis of the data will be concluded on the basis of the facts revealed in the interviews with the participants and diaries kept by the participants. The analytical procedure of the present research will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Stage one: organizing the data After having finished the transcriptions of the interviews, the manuscripts of the transcriptions were separated individually, that is, the transcriptions of the interviews with Participant 1 was put together under the heading of 'Participant 1' in a file. In other words, the transcriptions of the interviews made with individual participants were put in the individual files which were classified by their representative codes. The researcher is the only person who knows "what" was said by "whom". The researcher then read through all of the transcriptions and came to the stage two of the analytical procedure.

Stage two: generating categories, themes, and patterns At this stage, the researcher tried to generate categories, themes and patterns according to the participants' answers to each interview question. For each of the participants' answers to each interview question, the researcher tried to find the general categories of answers to the questions. For example, by reading through all of the participants' answers to a specific interview question such as "What are the factors influencing your self-directed language learning here in the UK?",

the researcher put down and made a list of all of the factors mentioned by the participants. Then, the researcher used the factors mentioned by the participants as headings and under these headings the researcher wrote down the participants' representative codes if the factors were mentioned by the participants in the interviews. An example can be seen as follows:

Table 3. 5. An example of stage two of the analytical procedure

Interview 1:	Week 3 - 4, October 28 - November 9, 1996
Number of the participant:	11
Q: 1	Influential factors
	Research topic - 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11
	Friends - 1,2,4,6,7,8,9,11
	Culture - 1,2,3,5,6,7,9
	Psychological reason - 3,4,6,8,9,11
	Living environment - 3,4,6,7,9,10
	Mass media - 3,5,7,8,9,10
	Personality - 4,9
	Part-time job - 7

Stage three: searching for alternative explanations of the data Having concluded the lists of factors on the basis of what the participants said in the interviews, the researcher then looked into the manuscripts again and tried to find the explanations for each factor mentioned by the participants. The researcher would choose the appropriate representative quotations from the transcripts and then translate them into English to be used later in the writing-up stage. It is not necessary for the researcher to translate all of the transcripts from the interviews into English, only the ones which are going to be quoted and used in the findings chapters of the research.

Stage four: writing the report This is the final stage of the analytical procedure. The researcher selected the representative quotations from the data to support the findings from the research. The data collected in the diaries kept by the participants are to be used to support the findings drawn from the aspect of the participants' daily language activities and preferences. This is also one of the most important stages of a research study because in this stage the findings of the research will be presented in a written form to interested

readers or researchers.

The data analysis in this study was based on content analysis. Patton (1987, p.149) indicates that content analysis involves identifying coherent and important examples, themes, and patterns in the data. By doing content analysis, analysts look for quotations or observations that go together. Patton (1990, p. 375) points out that the focus in analysing qualitative data comes from the evaluation of research questions generated at the very beginning of the inquiry process, during the conceptual, question-focussing phase of a study.

In the present research study, interviews with the participants were analysed individually because the variations between individuals were the primary focus of the study. The researcher carefully read through all of the transcribed manuscripts of interviews and noted down the general differences in language learning experiences of individual participants. After studying through and organizing the interviews conducted with each of the eleven individual participants, the researcher identified and categorized the primary themes and patterns of the collected data. At this stage, certain fundamental issues relating to this research were revealed, such as the fact that the cultural element played an essential part in participants' self-directed language learning activities. At the following stage, the researcher searched for explanations and quotations from the interviews made with participants to support the findings of this research. The final stage was the presentation of the data.

Writing up a qualitative report cannot be separated from the analytical process. In reality it is a fundamental stage of the data analysis procedure. Researchers have to choose particular words to summarize and reflect the complexity of the data. Taylor and Bogdan (Marshall and Rossman, 1995) suggest that there are five different approaches to presenting data. Among these approaches, that of the presentation of data gathered through in-depth interviews and diaries kept by the participants is the approach used in the phase of writing up the data analysis of this study.

The reason for the researcher to adopt this approach is linked to the wish to enhance the accuracy and the quality of this study itself. This research aimed to investigate the existing phenomena of adult self-directed learners learning a target language in an authentic target language environment. The facts revealed by this study, such as influential language learning factors, language learning/immersion problems, and language learning strategies, are valuable and beneficial to Taiwanese EFL learners who study for academic purposes in an authentic English language environment. Learning from the findings of this research, this specific group of language learners will have an increased understanding of learning a target language in a new environment. In addition, the findings of this research can help to inform native EFL educators as to how and why some of the Taiwanese EFL learners use specific learning strategies, and the nature of the common problems they come across in language learning.

Discussions in the following section will reflect issues relating to the methodological aspect in the conduct of the present research study.

Size and location of the present research study Due to the lack of social contact with other Taiwanese students in other universities in the UK, the present research study did not include Taiwanese students who studied in different academic environments, who might have brought other possible insights into the context of SDTLL. Taiwanese students who study in a larger university with different academic courses than the research environment, or on a campus located in metropolitan cities such as London or Leeds, may have different TL learning experiences than the participants who study in a less populated university located in a rural area. In addition, students attending universities which make EFL courses compulsory or free of charge may also have a different experience than the participants in the present research study where students have to pay for attending EFL courses.

Time span of the study Due to the limited time span of the present research study, the data was not able to cover the participants who later completed their study and prepared themselves to leave for Taiwan. These participants may provide the present research study with their thoughts on how they prepared themselves in relation to their four language

skills to assist their academic achievement throughout the final stage of their studies. Particularly, their experience in developing their TL writing skills at the final stage may bring more insights into the second experience of the language shock, which is closely related to the TL writing competence. In addition, these particular participants may have suggestions on what the University can do in different stages of the academic year to facilitate their TL learning and their academic lives.

The role of the researcher The present research study was conducted in an open manner which indicated that the participants were aware of the researcher's interest in investigating their TL learning activities. The participants made their own decision in allowing the researcher to investigate their TL learning activities in the research environment by the conduct of interviews and diary-keeping. According to Erikson (1967), the advantage of such an open manner in the conduct of the present research is that it reduces ethical problems; for example, it avoids the ethical problem of misrepresenting the role of the researcher in entering the participants' routine of TL learning activities (an investigator not an assessor), and it also avoids the ethical problem of misrepresenting the nature of the research in which the participants are engaged (an investigation not an assessment).

The disadvantage of the use of such an open approach is that the participants might not behave as they would naturally do. However, the longitudinal feature and the triangulation of the present research has made the collected data reflect as closely as possible to the reality of the participants' SDTLL.

Summary

This methodology chapter demonstrates the research questions, research strategy, data collection methods and data analysis of the research which aims to investigate the insights of adult Taiwanese university-level EFL learners' self-directed language learning in an authentic target language environment. The content of this chapter serves as a framework for the study.

The research questions used in the main field study were further developed from the findings of the two small-scale studies completed in March and June 1996. They were open-ended questions which allowed the participants in this research to fully express their target language learning/ immersion experiences, obstacles and strategies in this authentic target language learning environment. Moreover, these three aspects were also the dimensions which this study aimed to explore in revealing the insights and existing phenomenon in this research context. The research approach used in this study was a case study which provided an opportunity for the researcher to concentrate on this specific instance and to identify issues relating to the study.

The data collection methods adopted in this study included in-depth interviewing and diary distribution. In-depth interviewing of individual participants allowed the researcher to explore a few general issues at first, and then to help uncover or discover the participants' perspectives on the issues relating to the study. The languages used in the interviews were Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese, which were the mother tongue languages of the participants. By speaking mother tongue languages, the participants were able to express their thoughts more accurately and effectively.

All the interviews were tape-recorded for analysis in the data analysis stage. Studying the diaries kept by the participants allowed the researcher to acquire a basic understanding of the daily language learning/ immersion activities of the participants. Apart from ticking the items which identified the participants' language learning activities, durations and contents, the participants were also encouraged to write down their thoughts in relation to their daily target language performances, which would supplement the information provided in the interviews. It was expected that the data collected from these two sources would benefit the outcome of this study.

Data analysis was an essential part of this research work. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995) there are five essential stages in the analytical procedure but the analytical procedure adopted by the researcher for the present research only included four of these: (1) organizing the data; (2) generating categories, themes, and patterns; (3) searching for alternative explanations of the data; and (4) writing the report. The second stage is

generally regarded as the most difficult stage among these four and the final stage is the most fundamental stage of the analytical procedure. The data analysis in this study was based on content analysis, which involves identifying coherent and important examples, themes, and patterns in the data.

The present chapter provided a general view about the design and approaches used in the study. The following four chapters will provide descriptions of the findings from four interviews conducted with the participants. According to the analysis of the collected data, in-depth interviews and diaries kept by the participants, the findings were classified into four categories which also relate to the fundamental findings of this research: (1) cultural elements; (2) environmental contextual factors - the facilities and resources which the participants apply to self-direct their language learning; (3) the learner's perspective - the participants' self-directed language learning in an authentic language environment, and (4) the transformation - how the time factor influences the participants' SDTLL.

Chapter Four

Culture conflicts in self-directed language learning (SDLL) in an authentic TL environment

Introduction

L2 learners whose language learning is carried out in an authentic L2 environment are expected to experience aspects not only of the learning activity of L2, but also other aspects resulting from the complex systems of a society. According to Bochner (1982), societies consist of many facets, such as linguistic practices, class structure (or different social groups), physical and geological features, leisure patterns, and so forth. These different aspects of societies can be generally described as the concept of culture, and they are regarded as different from one society to the other.

The participants in the present research study, a group of postgraduate students from Taiwan studying for academic purposes in an English academic institute, represent a culture, Taiwanese Chinese culture, which differs from their L2 culture, British culture. The participants are consequently expected to have a different L2 learning experience compared with their prior L2 learning experience in Taiwan. The encounter of these two different cultures cause some conflicts, which in the present research play an essential role in their SLL in relation to learning preferences, self-access and self directed learning (see discussions in Chapters Five and Six), TL learning difficulties (see discussions in Section 4.2.), and the participants' transformation of SLL (see discussions in Chapter Seven).

Before continuing the discussion of the consequences of the cultural contact of the research participants, it is essential to gain an insight into the different types and dimensions of cross-cultural contacts to facilitate an understanding of the participants' role and some of the factors influencing their SLL in the research environment. The research participants experience a type of cross-cultural contact which is identified by Bochner (1982) as cross-

cultural contact between members of different societies, where the society of the research environment is different from the participants' L1 society. Bochner (1982) suggests that there are two types of cross-cultural contact: (1) between members of the same society, such as Black and White Americans; and (2) between members of different societies, such as tourists, overseas students and immigrants and their respective hosts. Table 4.1. below indicates the analysis of the type of cross-cultural contact and contact variables of the participants in the research environment. This table is an analysis of the cross-cultural contact of the research participants based on Bochner's dimensions of cross-cultural contact (Bochner 1982, p. 9).

Table 4.1. Dimensions of cross-cultural contact of the participants

Type of cross-cultural contact: between the participants in the present research and the members of the TL society.	
<i>Contact variables</i>	<i>Type</i>
1. On whose territory	1. Foreign territory: TL society
2. Time-span	2. Medium-term: from a year to four, five years
3. Purpose	3. Purpose: Academic - study for a degree
4. Type of involvement	4. Participation and contribution: economic and academic aspects
5. Frequency of contact: low - totally segregated from the TL local community, medium - partial segregated from the TL local community, high - the society is their behaviour setting for the conduct of their lives.	5. Medium: life on the campus, a segregated environment from the general public, may have less contact with local people than life off campus
6. Relative status and power: political aspects	6. Unequal: no political status or power is given
7. Numerical balance	7. Minority
8. Visible distinguishing characteristics	8. Language, race and religion

Factors such as life on the campus and the academic purpose of the stay in the research environment are specific to the present research study and have significant influence on the participants' SDTLL. These two factors can reduce the participants' potential of medium contact with TL elements to the minimum due to their strong academic orientation and desire to stay in the TL culture for only a certain limited of time based on the requirements from their research studies.

“... I don't know many English people and I have very little contact with English. The campus is a very closed learning environment to me, not an open one. The main purpose for me to come here (academic purpose) has preoccupied the majority of my time here and learning English is only my second priority... I feel that as long as I can communicate with my supervisor in English, I am able to write in English then the rest is not important...” (Participant 3, Interview 1)

“... The most important matter in my life here is my research work. I spend a lot time and energy on doing my research. I don't have time to chat with others after I come home from work. I'm very exhausted after coming home from the lab. Honestly, I have very little time to learn English because I need a lot of time to do my research. I need to finish everything in the final year of my study. I once had more time to talk to others in the first two years of my study here...” (Participant 5, Interview 1)

“... The purpose for me to come to York is to study for a master's degree. Everybody is very concentrated on his/ her own study and has very little time to speak to NSs, unless it is in the class...” (Participant 9, Interview 1)

One issue regarding the participants' contact with TL elements in the research environment is that ten of the eleven participants in the present research inhabited student accommodation on the campus, where, according to the student record centre at the University (1996, 1997, 1998) 50% of the occupants are overseas students. Under such circumstances, the participants therefore have more chances to have frequent contact with other overseas students and less opportunities to have frequent contact with local people NSs on the campus. According to the participants, full participation in the TL environment is not desired due to their academic concern and life on the campus. According to Bochner (1982), full participants in a society are unlikely to be able to segregate themselves from frequent contact with members of the other group within the same society, but the degree of intimacy of contact between the different members in a society is likely to be variable, ranging from the close to the superficial.

“... I often socialise with Chinese so that I have very little time speaking English. The only occasion to speak English is talking to my housemates, who are all overseas students...” (Participant 11, Interview 2)

The visible distinguishing characteristics of the participants, especially language, accent and physical appearance, provide inescapable cues to their ethnic origin and imply their status in the TL society as strangers. Religion may not be as visible as race, but can be a highly salient aspect of the participants in the research environment. Having identified themselves more with NNSs than NSs of TL in the aspects of culture and language - ESL learners, the participants tend to have less stress while talking to NNSs in the research environment due to the presence of people in a similar TL situation, a similar cultural background, and a greater tolerance of non-native accents and grammatical errors by NNSs. Some other causes of nervousness while talking to NSs will be discussed in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, and conclusion in this regard can be seen in Chapter Eight.

“... When I speak to Asians and other NNSs, the contents of our talk is more important (than linguistic rules). I am not afraid of making errors. I feel more stressed while talking to NSs. I usually try not to speak too much in case of making more mistakes to embarrass myself...”
(Participant 11, Interview)

“... I was very nervous when I went to pub for the first time because most of the people there were English and there was no oriental people at all. I felt very nervous even when I went to pub with Taiwanese students at the first few times. I felt nervous and didn't like to order drinks but it's a bit better now...” (Participant 9, Interview 4)

“... I feel less stressed while speaking to EFL students but sometimes I find out that although I don't have pressure while talking to EFL students, I sometimes don't understand what they talk about because their pronunciation is not very clear so I have to guess what they try to say. Another problem is that when you talk to English people, sometimes you don't understand what they are talking about because they speak too fast or they use some special words. I feel stressed while talking to NSs because I'm afraid of making mistakes. If you make mistakes while talking to EFL students, they may not notice the mistakes. Yet, if you know that EFL student's English is a lot better than you, then I will feel the pressure. In other words, once you talk to a person whose English is better than yours then more or less you feel the pressure, because you are afraid of being laughed at the mistakes you make. I know some people they don't care. Another problem is the accent. We are all foreigners so naturally we speak with an accent...” (Participant 1, Interview 2)

According to the analysis of the eight different contact variables in Table 4.1., the participants are regarded as ‘newcomers’ or ‘strangers’ in the research environment, and such a social role is expected to induce anxiety, as confirmed by Heiss and Nash (1967), Nash and Wolfe (1957), and Rose and Felton (1955). Such anxiety may influence not only the participants’ process of SLL but also their academic achievement. The following discussions will therefore focus on the cultural and linguistic distance between the participants’ L1 and L2 and the consequences of such distance.

4.1. Cultural distance and culture shock

Cultural distance in the present research not only refers to the distance between the participants’ L1 culture and their L2 culture, but is also regarded as an interaction of the factors of : (1) knowledge of/ familiarity with British culture; and (2) proficiency in English. Discussions in relation to (2) proficiency in English can be seen in the second half of this chapter, 4.2. Linguistic distance. Discussions in the first half of this chapter are related to (1) knowledge of/ familiarity with British culture. The concept of British culture is classified into two categories in the present research: social culture and academic culture. A product of the cultural distance is culture shock, which is described as anxiety that results from losing all the familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse (Oberg, 1960). Culture shock in the present research is classified into two categories: (1) socioculture shock, and (2) academic culture shock. The cause of culture shock in these two categories is due to the unfamiliarity of the L2 culture in general and the L2 academic culture specifically.

4.1.1. Social cultural distance

The participants in the present research, who are from the culturally diverse environment of their L1, have to learn to live a balanced life in two worlds: the innate world of their L1 culture; and the outer environment of their TL culture. The innate world of L1 culture here refers to some of the cultural norms which have been established into people’s minds ever since they were born in the L1 environment, such as issues of inborn or genetic psychology, as indicated by Klineberg (1982). The innate world, closely related to long term influence from the family, school education, L1 society and L1 cultural norms, may be regarded as more difficult to modify or change than lifestyle. Personality traits have

been identified by the participants as influential on their TL learning and social contact in the research environment.

“... I am a passive type of person. I think that if you are not familiar with others, then you don't know what to chat and how to chat. Sometimes I feel that my English is so poor that I'm more passive (to interact with others). I think the main problem is my personality - passive... ”
(Participant 9, Interview 3)

“... My personality influences me a lot. I like talking to people. I like talking to others unless I don't have time or I have pressure from work or I'm not in a mood of talking. As long as that person is a nice person and likes to chat then I will chat with him/her...” (Participant 10, Interview 4)

“... The education we have in Taiwan teaches us that whatever the teachers say is always correct/right. They give you an order asking you to do whatever then you just go and do it. Here we have to do everything ourselves and they (supervisors) just check to see if it is ok. I come here to study and the problems I encounter with are not only my language competence but also the way of thinking, the way of doing things. It is not easy to cope with so many problems at the same time...”
(Participant 3, Interview 4)

One particular issue which is related to the social cultural distance in the present research is the attitude of L2 native speakers towards ESL speakers. Living in the research environment, the participants are able to feel directly what sort of attitude in general the L2 native speakers hold towards them. A positive attitude will help to diminish the distance between different groups, and a negative attitude may increase the distance. One of the participants indicated in the interviews that a friendly attitude showed by NSs she met was an important indicator for her in deciding whether to continue her conversation with them or not.

“... Those English people are less patient and less considerate. Whenever I come across these unfriendly English people, I don't feel I like them at all. Since I don't like them, then we usually don't have any good conversation. It's different to talk to Irish people though. I feel very easy while talking to my Irish housemate. She's very friendly. She won't say anything when you make a mistake. But when you misunderstand (what she said), she will point it out in a very polite way. She'll never laugh at the mistakes you make. She's very considerate. She knows that you're foreign student so as long as she understands what you say then it's good enough. She's so friendly that I don't feel the pressure while talking to her...” (Participant 9, Interview 4)

Argyle (1982) indicates that different variables can be used to explain the differences in social interaction between cultures: (1) language; (2) non-verbal communication; (3) social rules; (4) social relationships; (5) motivation; and (6) concepts and ideology, and he has also shown how these variables can differ from culture to culture. Among these six variables, Argyle (1982) points out that language is the one of the most important differences between cultures and also one of the greatest barriers. The participants in the present research, whose TL competence has reached the requirements of the university (TOEFL 550+), may therefore have less difficulties in dealing with everyday conversations.

“... Basically I feel more pressured while talking to NSs. When I talk to my supervisor or someone who I just know, I always worry about my English is not good enough which will make them impatient and disturbed. I feel frustrated and stressed under such circumstances. I feel less stressed while talking to NNSs whose English is easier for me to comprehend because they are not NSs, and they don't have special accents. Even they do have special accents, they don't speak very fast. I feel that they (NNSs) are able to understand the situations we are in so that I don't feel so stressed while talking to them...” (Participant 6, Interview 2)

“... It is not a problem for me to speak daily conversational English. I don't care because as soon as people see me they know it right away that I'm not a NS. I just speak as I like and it doesn't matter if I make some mistakes. I found out that NSs speak in a very casual way too. They will say 'that thing' if they don't know the proper name for an object they want. Last time when I was in the financial office, there was an American asking for a certificate but he didn't know how to say it so he just said 'that thing'. I thought, well, we NNSs can speak like the way they (NSs) do too. At least, I know that was a certificate. They (NSs) speak in a very casual way. Last time, this lady (housemate from Australia) kept saying 'you know, you know' and skipped all the other things by saying 'you know'. I don't think that they (NSs) speak in a formal way all the time...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

Life experience in a foreign country can be described as an additional value to studying abroad. ESL overseas students may feel that they wish not only to experience L2 culture but also to improve their L2 competence while associating with TL speakers. This, however, depends on whether local L2 native students have the motivation of wanting to experience the social life of other cultures and the motivation of wanting to help other ESL overseas students in improving their L2 competence.

“... I feel that English people are not willing to talk to you unless you can speak English very fluently. I asked my boyfriend (who is English) about it and he confirmed my statement...” (Participant 1, Interview 2)

A study conducted by Jackson (1997) looking into support services for overseas students at a British university, revealed that overseas students including students from Asia, Europe, north American and other parts of the world found difficulties in integrating into English students' social lives. The motivation of overseas students can be described as consisting of two concepts: social and linguistic purposes. For social purposes, overseas students who have been actually living in the L2 environment may feel that they want to know more and to experience L2 culture and its social life, which may be very different from their L1 culture.

“... (I think to) know more about the culture is very essential to language learning. I often think that the more you experience in your life, the better the way you think and your imagination will be reinforced which will improve your listening comprehension. We unconsciously learn some elements of their culture but we don't have to memorize them. Once you have the opportunities to come across certain occasions then you will be able to utilize what you've learned and it's very useful to your language learning...” (Participant 6, Interview 1)

In relation to the invisible boundary between the groups of local L2 native speakers and overseas students, the structure of social relationships in the L2 environment may be seen as another possible factor to offer explanations for the issue. As analysed by sociologists, there are two types of cultures: individualistic cultures, such as Australia, Germany and the United States, and collectivistic cultures, such as China, Korea, and Japan (Ting-Toomey, 1988). Overseas students from a collectivistic culture may have a stronger desire than those from an individualistic culture to attach themselves to a social group wherever they are. The L2 environment of the present research can be described as a less collectivistic culture than the participants' L1 culture, and consequently, the participants' social strategy may not work well because of the fundamental difference between the two cultures.

“... I think Taiwan Student Association York (TSAY) is very positive and beneficial. When I first arrived here and didn't know too much about everything, but I was able to adapt to the new environment fast because I was told how to do that. Now I can discuss things with them, for example I've never written any essays before and I don't know how to write. Now I can ask those who have the experience in writing essays how to write an essay. Consequently, it (TSAY) is very

helpful not only in our everyday life matters but also in our academic research matters...”

(Participant 2, Interview 4)

In relation to the aspect of concepts and ideology, the participants, who have grown up in an era of rapid movement and development of national identity in Taiwan, tend to have strong self and national identity (Hughes, 1997). Consequently, they may have the concepts and ideology of being proud of who they are and what they are. Their L1, including Taiwanese and Mandarin Chinese, appears to be one of the most important features showing their identity. With a rather strong sense of self identity in mind, the participants, such as Participants 3, 5, and 9, have less intention of assimilating into the L2 culture, which indirectly highlights the gap between the participants' L1 and L2 cultures. In this case, the language learning condition for these three particular participants is considered as a 'bad' learning situation according to Schumann's (1978) definition of a good learning environment (see discussions in Chapter Two), due to that they have less sense of assimilating with the TL group.

Participant 3 (see the quotation below) indicated that she did not care too much for English as a language, or for the research environment, an attitude which may therefore lead her TL learning into a non-integrative type of TL learning. This particular participant, however, defined herself as a highly academic-oriented TL learner by indicating her active learning attitude towards academic related TL elements. It is notable that most of the participants will have very limited of chance to use the TL in Taiwan unless their future job is relating to English language teaching at different levels of school in Taiwan.

“... Basically I don't like English at all. I have the sense of rejection to English so that I'm not open to the opportunities to learn the language. I know who I am (Taiwanese), and I know no matter how good my English is I'm still a member of the out-group, will never be a member of the in-group. So I'm not very active in learning English. I don't think I'll stay in England too long anyway, and I know as soon as I go back to Taiwan there is very little chance to use English. I feel that I've had very basic knowledge of the language and it's good enough for me so there is no need to spend more time on learning it. I don't have much time for that (learning English) either anyway...” (Participant 3, Interview 1)

Another additional issue which needs to be taken into consideration is that the social environment of the participants is a university campus, which can be described as a special setting compared with the normal L2 environment. On the campus, the proportion of people from different cultures is higher than it is off campus. Consequently, it may be easier for overseas students to associate with other overseas students on the campus, where they are accommodated by the university (see discussions in Chapter Five).

Four aspects have to be taken into account in the discussion of social cultural distance between the participants' L1 culture, and the research environment of their L2 culture: (1) motivation; (2) social relationships; (3) concepts and ideology; and (4) environment. Firstly, the social and linguistic motivation of the participants may not have any common ground with the motivation of the local L2 native students, and consequently the participants have difficulty in connecting their social life with local L2 native students. Secondly, the collectivistic culture of the participants may not work well among people of a less collectivistic, more individualistic cultural environment. Thirdly, with rather strong national identity in mind, the participants may have less desire to assimilate into the L2 culture, which may increase the cultural barrier. Finally, living in a special environment, the university campus, the participants may have less opportunities to experience normal L2 sociocultural life. The fewer contact opportunities with the TL people and culture may increase the social cultural distance between the participants' L1 and L2 cultures.

4.1.2. Academic cultural distance

Different countries have their specific academic cultures due to their educational traditions, which may be influenced by the different sociocultural rules of societies. The academic culture in the present research refers to two concepts: (1) teaching and learning styles; and (2) academic expectation. Two essential elements in the above two concepts are givers (teachers) and receivers (students).

“... My thesis writing is very important at this moment so I really want to write it well. You have such expectation but you don't know how to write because there is no feedback. My supervisor has never clearly indicated which part is not good and which part needs to be improved or changed. He just told me to have it proof-read by NSs. I really don't know how to improve my writing and I feel such a resource (NSs) is not available unless I pay for it. I have to spend time on looking for

the right person and pay to have the job done...” (Participant 4, Interview 4)

The participant from Taiwan, in this case, holds a different academic expectation towards her supervisor, the expectation to be led step by step, and at the same time her supervisor holds a different academic expectation towards his students, the expectation to see students self manage their own studies. Due to the different academic culture, the roles of giver and receiver have to acculturate themselves to minimize the distance between their academic expectation towards each other.

The importance of discussions in this section lies in how the receivers, the participants in the present research, perceive a new academic culture, then transform from one academic culture to another, and finally the influences of such a transformation on the participants’ SLL. The feeling of unfamiliarity is described as academic culture shock in the present research.

4.1.2.a. The differences in teaching and learning styles between Taiwan and the UK

According to Thorp (1991), who observed EFL students’ participation in the language classroom, there are several learning characteristics of Chinese students: (1) a strong group ethic; (2) a preference for a whole-class learning environment; (3) a preference for being guided and lesson preparation in advance; and (4) rote learning. Among these four concepts, concepts 1 and 2 can be described as a general pedagogic tradition of the participants’ L1 academic culture, and concepts 3 and 4 are the characteristics of the participants’ learning preferences, which are deeply influenced by Confucianism and the examination system.

“... I am very passive in language learning which is relating to my personality. Some people are very active. They will ask others when they don’t understand and try to make things clear but I don’t like to bother others. If you ask others all the time then your English will be improved faster but in a way you are bothering others. I will only ask when I know the person well...” (Participant 9, Interview 2)

“... I don't actively arrange my language learning opportunities. If I have the chance it's ok, if I don't have the chance it's ok too. I am not very active. I don't create opportunities deliberately. This is my personality. I don't go to church to talk to others. I know that a lot of people go to church for religious reasons but some people use it as an opportunity to talk to others to improve their English...” (Participant 1, Interview 3)

According to Altman and James (1980), there are seven different sociological preferences in relation to language learning activities, which also apply to general learning activities: (1) whole-class environment, (2) large-group environment, (3) small-group environment, (4) independent study, (5) self-instruction (programmed instruction), (6) learning with peers, and (7) learning with the teacher. Learners who are educated under the whole-class learning environment and have been always guided to study, such as the participants, may therefore have been cultivated with a learning preference for passive learning.

The idea of the hierarchical relationship of Confucianism is ingrained in the mind-set of Taiwanese people (Smith, 1991). According to Chang and Holt (1994), teachers and students regard each other's roles in the classroom as a part of the relational hierarchy. Within such a hierarchical system, students respect authority and they consider their teachers as authority figures.

“... I feel nervous while talking to my supervisor because she's my supervisor. I just can't regard her as my friend. The training from Taiwan teaches me the hierarchy. Teachers mean the elder. You have to respect the elder and never go across the line. I simply can't chat with her like friends. Although she's very polite, I feel very nervous in front of her...” (Participant 9, Interview 4)

“... I am afraid of seeing him (my supervisor) and I am afraid of my supervisor. I'm afraid of them (teachers) both in my L1 culture and L2 culture...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

“... I'm always nervous talking to teachers...” (Participant 2, Interview 2)

“... I feel pressure while talking to my supervisor. Sometimes I'm not able to fully express myself, sometimes I'm very nervous, sometimes I'm wondering how to discuss with my supervisor clearly the process of cause and effect in my work. Also because of the role of teacher-student relationship in our culture. Supervisors are very important to our study...” (Participant 6, Interview 4)

Students educated under a hierarchical system are not used to asking questions, a behaviour which is regarded as ‘face threatening’ to their teachers (Thorp, 1991). Students wait to be guided and told what to do, and they work hard to show their respect, obedience and gratitude to their teachers. The idea of showing respect, obedience and gratitude to their teachers has therefore been the guideline for the participants relating to their attitude of learning and how they consider their teacher-student relationship.

The examination system in Taiwan, which relies heavily on memorization, recitation and also analysis of the ancient classics, including Confucian teachings, is the only way available for students who wish to study in colleges and universities in Taiwan (Smith, 1991). To be able to have success in such a system, rote learning, memory and passive learning are therefore heavily emphasized in classroom learning. Consequently, rote learning is the learning method that the participants are most familiar with, which is very different from the educational emphasis of British universities, which emphasize the willingness to question orthodoxy and to consider new ideas (Allen, 1988). Because of the fundamental difference between the participants’ L1 and L2 academic cultures, the participants are likely to have a relatively strong sense of unfamiliarity when they *first* start their academic work in the new academic cultural environment, and such unfamiliarity is described as academic culture shock in the present research.

“... I feel that gradually I’ve come to face him (supervisor). He always questions me, asks me questions in relation to my study during our tutorials. I was once very used to the format that as soon as he finished asking me questions then he would tell me what he thought. So, what I had to do was just simply follow his ideas. But it was not beneficial to me, neither my academic work. Now, I learn to tell him that this is not very good for me I think that is better. He listens and then when he thinks what I say is reasonable then he’ll say ‘I agree’. I feel that, in a way, he tries to encourage me and to train me to defend my statements. Now I gradually give myself stimuli to train myself and to say something for myself, to defend for myself. (I) don’t like the old way (always listening to my supervisors)...” (Participant 3, Interview 2)

Participant 3 first encountered academic culture shock when she first started her study but such academic anxiety has later been reduced as later she started to cultivate her new learning style in the research environment.

4.1.2.b. The differences in academic expectation between Taiwan and the UK

With much influence from Confucianism, education in Taiwan lays rather strong emphasis on the importance of students' respect for and obedience to their teachers, which may lead the participants to have quite different expectations of their British supervisors or lecturers when they first start their course in the research environment (See discussions in previous section 4.1.2.a). It is worth mentioning that the process of transformation between the two academic systems is taking place without any formal support from academic bodies of either side, the L1 and L2 academic authorities.

“... I've known my supervisor for a long time but he is still 'the elder'. The cultural value we have from Taiwan teaches us to pay respect to 'the elder'. I feel nervous (while talking to 'the elder') though. The more I feel like to speak well, the worse my performance will be...” (Participant 8, Interview 3)

“... I feel that a lot time that we can use the same language, mother tongue, to discuss problems we have when we do our research work and this is the function I mostly use in TSAY. Everyone is very enthusiastic in helping each other. Apart from research work, we also gather for social purposes. It (TSAY) has its positive effects on both academic and recreation aspects...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

The participants are the ones who have to seek support or explanations for the academic cultural distance they come across, which means that the participants may have little understanding of how their previous L1 academic system differs from their L2 academic system until their courses actually commence in the L2 environment. TSAY consequently plays a significant role in assisting the participants to adjust themselves to the new academic culture by giving out personal knowledge and experience in the research environment to the newly arrived Taiwanese students.

4.1.3. Acculturation

The concept of acculturation utilized in the present research is based on the combination of the findings of three groups of researchers, Marden and Meyer (1968), Teske and Nelson (1974), and Kim (1978) (see Table 2.2.). Acculturation represents a change in a person when he/ she moves to live in a different cultural milieu. Kim (1988) proposes two types of acculturation: adaptation of long-term residents and that of short-term sojourners. The

participants in the present research are regarded as belonging to the latter category. Although the participants in the present research, seen as short-term sojourners, may require a lower degree of permanent change than long-term residents in relation to sociocultural aspects, they may need a higher degree of change or adaptation in relation to academic culture to benefit their academic success.

4.1.3.a. Acculturation in social and academic culture

The participants in the present research encounter two aspects of acculturation: (1) British/ English social culture in general; and (2) British/ English academic culture in particular. Due to the development of globalization and modern information technology, the participants have experienced and acquired a certain understanding in relation to the western style of life and culture when they were in Taiwan. Consequently, they have less difficulty in acculturating themselves into the general social culture aspect in the research environment. However, one specific aspect is regarded as important, which is the climate. Some of the participants have rather low learning motivation in the winter season in the research environment.

“... The weather here is too cold. I feel sleepy when it gets dark. Now it gets dark at four so naturally I feel tired easily. Plus, it doesn't get bright until eight so when I wake up at seven I fall back to sleep again. The weather has a very influential impact on me...” (Participant 2, Interview 2)

The participants, who have been living in a sub-tropical climate area, are used to warm/ hot weather and relatively similar lengths of day and night time over the four seasons. They have to adjust themselves to the relatively cold weather and short day-time of the winter season in the research environment. Weather, to a certain degree, directly influences the participants' learning motivation in general and then indirectly influences the participants' TL learning activities.

In relation to the academic culture, the participants are regarded as encountering more difficulties in assimilating themselves in the British/ English academic culture because of the totally different educational emphases between the participants' L1 and L2 cultures. However, some participants may find it easier to adapt than others.

“... I still have pressure while talking to my supervisor because I want to show him that I’ve been working hard. I don’t want him to feel that I’m a bad student. The social role/ position is not a problem but the content of my talk with my supervisor is a factor to cause the stress...” (Participant 7, Interview 4)

“... My supervisor and I are just like friends. I’m not afraid of her. I can tell her whatever I want...” (Participant 5, Interview 4)

Having not been aware about the differences between the two academic systems before coming to the research environment, the participants have had to adjust their learning methods from passive learning to autonomous learning, from knowledge-receiver to knowledge-organizer, from teacher-centred learning to learner-centred learning, from EEP to EAP, and most important of all, they have to adjust their attitudes and expectations in relation to their new teacher-student relationship. The acculturation of different academic cultures can be observed in some of the MPhil/DPhil participants.

4.1.3.b. The acquisition of sociolinguistic competence

One important feature of the participants in the present research in relation to the aspect of the use of TL is the acquisition of TL communicative competence. It is suggested that a language in its spoken form and in its written form may vary considerably in a number of different ways (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). Having learned English for educational purposes (EEP), learning English as a school subject in Taiwan, the participants’ TL reading and writing competence were considered to be relatively stronger than their communicative competence due to the educational emphasis of EEP, in which English is learned and regarded as a body of knowledge rather than a language to be used verbally.

“... I express things in my own way but I don’t think the way we talk and the way that NSs talk are the same. For example I often say that ‘the feeling is not good’ but my boyfriend told me that they don’t say it that way. So I asked him how they say it and he said ‘I feel like a shit’. I don’t mean like that and I don’t say it that way. I think it’s very strange...” (Participant 1, Interview 4)

One significant implication here is that slang and colloquial language which expresses strong negative feelings is not encouraged and appreciated in the participants’ L1 socio-cultural context, yet is very prevalent in the L2 culture particularly among students. This

is, therefore, an additional barrier for the participants to improve their L2 sociolinguistic competence.

According to Tarone and Yule (1989), the ability to use a language is described as communicative competence, and the key components of communicative competence, proposed by Swain (1980), are grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence.

Table 4.2. Three elements of communicative competence

Grammatical competence	Ability to understand and reproduce correct syntactic, lexical forms in a language.
Sociolinguistic competence	Ability to use a language appropriately in sociocultural contexts.
Strategic competence	Ability to transmit information effectively to listeners, and ability to use communication strategies to solve problems arising in the process.

(Based on Canale and Swain, 1980)

In the setting of EEP, the previous TL learning experience of the participants, grammatical competence is regarded as the system which is most emphasized and systematically developed. Under the circumstance of EAP in the present research, no attempt will be made to discuss issues related to the aspect of grammatical competence. The only component of communicative competence which will be discussed in the present section is sociolinguistic competence. Sociolinguistic competence enables language learners to understand how language is actually used in relation to the structure of society and its patterns of inner and outer relationships, and to avoid clashes and misunderstandings (Rivers, 1983).

“... I always feel that I can’t really understand the use of English language. They’re very different from what I’ve learned at school (in Taiwan), for example some phrases they use are not like what we were taught at school. It’s due to the different type of living environments and social groups, and the language used among students is different from the one teachers used in the classroom. I can’t understand some of the phrases they (English people) use. Another reason I think is because of their culture... sometimes I understand what they mean but actually I don’t use it at all, such as the word ‘cheers’. I think that word has originated from English culture. I didn’t know what it meant before (in Taiwan) until I came to England...” (Participant 9, Interview 3)

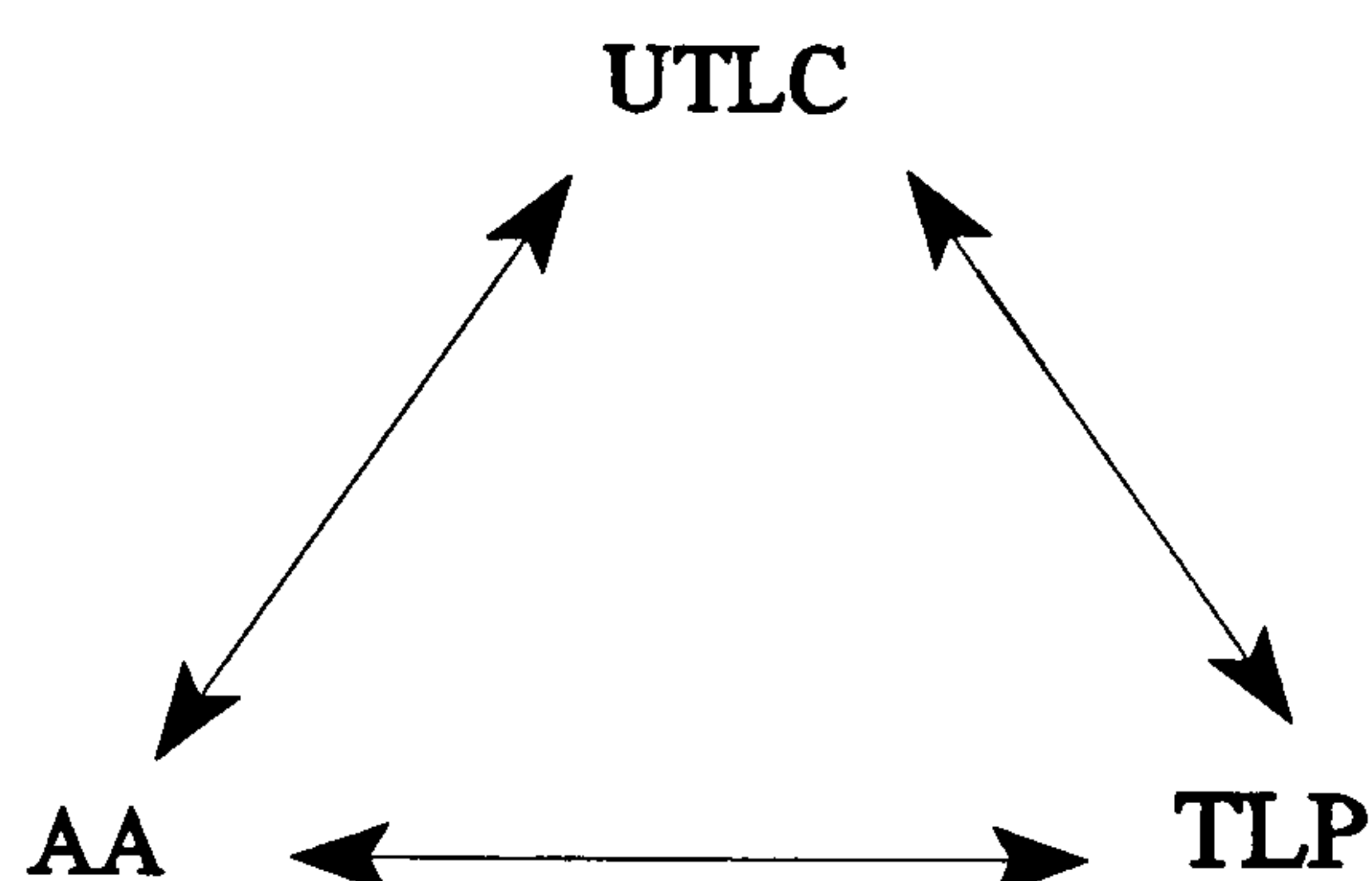
The participants, who, with a considerably rich knowledge of the L2, have had little or no chance to practise their oral competence in Taiwan, may consequently be able to learn more TL sociolinguistic elements in the research environment. The participants are entitled to more opportunities than they used to have to actually experience the TL spoken by people from different social groups and of different sexes and ages, and to observe and to acquire knowledge of how and what the TL society does with the TL.

4.1.3.c. The relationship between the understanding of TL culture, TL performance, and academic achievement

In the present research, the researcher had the opportunity to explore the degree of TL needed by the individual participants. This is, however, an area with relatively few empirical studies and observations in relation to understanding the actual TL needs of EAP learners and also their interpretation of the relationship between the TL culture/environment, their TL performance and their academic achievement in the TL environment. In the field of ESP/ EAP, it is suggested that the English language needed by a particular group of learners can be identified by analysing the linguistic characteristics of their specialist area of work or study (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). Barber (1962) has been regarded as the earliest researcher to define the nature of Scientific English, which also led the research into the nature of particular varieties of English, such as descriptions of written scientific and technical English by Ewer and Latorre (1969), Swales (1971), and Selinker and Trimbles (1976).

In Interview Four, the participants were requested by the researcher to indicate their personal experience of the relationship between the understanding of TL culture (UTLC), TL performance (TLP), and academic achievement (AA), and the results can be classified into three categories: (1) circular relationship; (2) linear relationship; and (3) partial relationship. The following five figures, Figures 4.1., 4.2., 4.3., 4.4., and 4.5. demonstrate these three types of relationship models from the present research.

Figure 4.1. Circular relationship model of understanding of TL culture (UTLC), TL performance (TLP), and academic achievement (AA)



The circular relationship illustrates a circular connection between UTLC, TLP, and AA. There is a mutual influence between UTLC and TLP, TLP and AA, and AA and UTLC. On the whole, these three components are connected to each other and have an influence on each others' development.

“... When you have stronger communicative competence then you will be able to reach a higher level of academic achievement. I think they (UTLC, TLP, and AA) are all connected. For example, our research area is in social science so that the more you know about their culture, the deeper you'll understand about issues related to your research subject. It (culture) has direct impact on your academic achievement. Additionally, how much you understand a culture will also depend on how strong your language competence is. Anyway, UTLC has very close relationship with AA. The more you understand a culture, the better your AA will be. Also, it is not enough just to simply understand a problem, you'll have to appreciate the problem and then express yourself to show others how much you know about the issue. Consequently, you need TLP to express your opinions. I regard these three components as one, and they're closely connected together...” (Participant 7, Interview 4)

Figure 4.2. Linear relationship of understanding of TL culture (UTLC), TL performance (TLP), and academic achievement (AA) - Model 1



The linear relationship - model 1, describes a linear connection between UTLC, TLP, and AA. There is a mutual influence between UTLC and TLP, and another mutual influence between TLP and AA. There is, however, no connection between UTLC and AA.

“... TLP has a connection with AA because your AA needs the help of your TLP. UTLC has a connection with TLP but I don't think there is a connection between UTLC and AA, unless your research topic is related to cultural aspects. TLP is one of the mediums to understand a culture so they have a very obvious connection with each other...” (Participant 4, Interview 4)

Figure 4.3. Linear relationship of understanding of TL culture (UTLC), TL performance (TLP), and academic achievement (AA) - Model 2

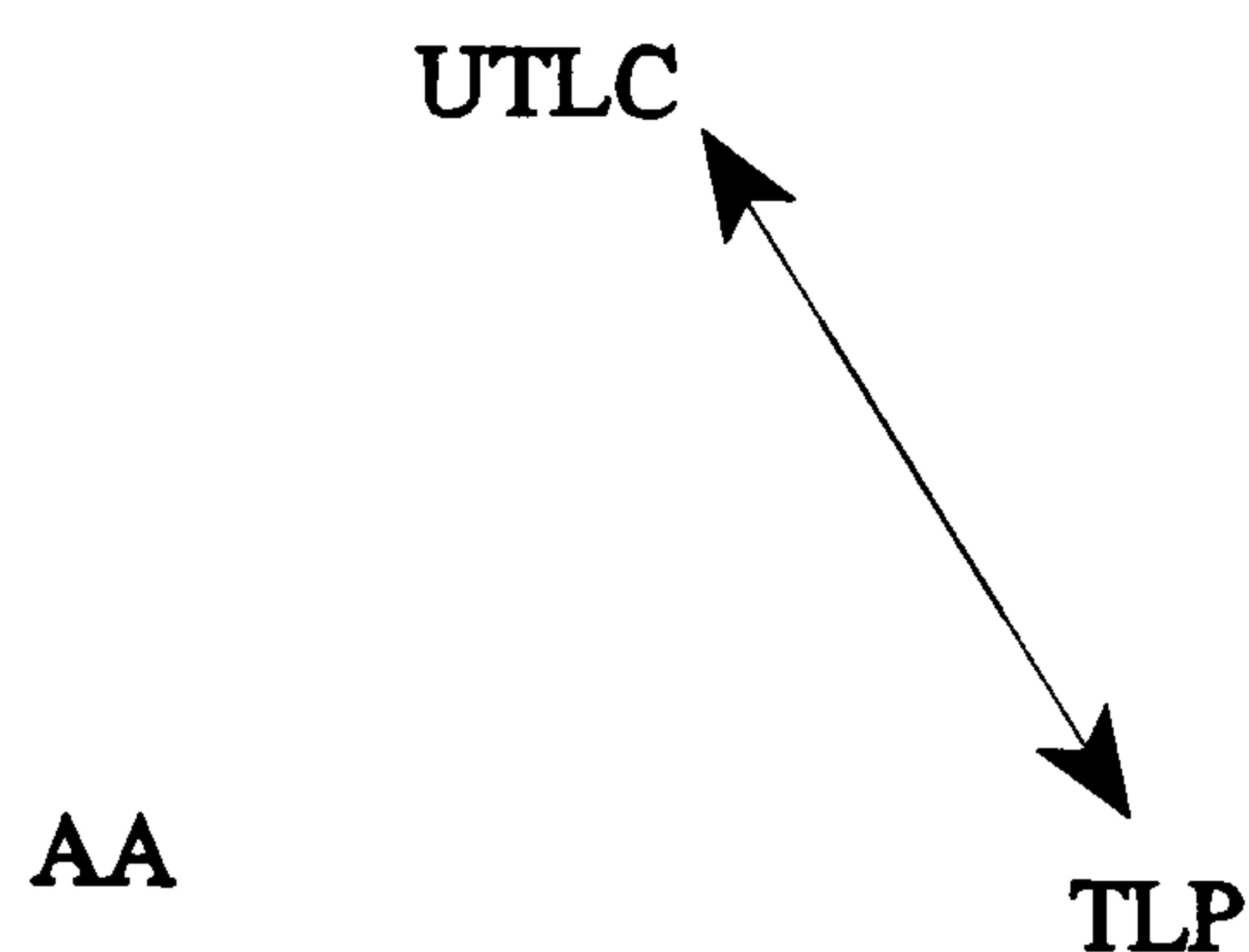


The linear relationship - model 2, indicates that there is an influential connection between TLP and AA, and AA and UTLC. TLP and UTLC have no influential connection within each other.

“... I don't think UTLC has any influence on my TLP. Perhaps I don't want to spend too much time on understanding TL culture but there is a very close connection between TLP and AA. For example, my academic work demands a lot on my writing skills, so the more I write the better I will be at writing, and the same situation can apply in reading. I think there a is strong connection between TLP and AA.. I watch TV news everyday to see what happens in this country and what their government does for their people. I found out that they (the British) pay very much attention to animal rights and I think this is part of their culture. There is no connection between my TLP and their issues related to animal rights. I'll understand such characteristics in their culture. Yet, my research is related to environmental education, which is quite related to their culture. Consequently, such an aspect (TLC) is related to my academic achievement...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

The partial relationship represents a disconnection between UTLC, TLP, and AA. There are two different models under this category.

Figure 4.4. Partial relationship of understanding of TL culture (UTLC), TL performance (TLP), and academic achievement (AA) - Model 1



The first type of partial relationship model indicates that there is an influential connection between UTLC and TLP, but there is no connection between UTLC and AA, or TLP and AA.

“... I don’t think that AA has any connection with UTLC or TLP, unless your research topic is related to these two areas. TLP has no direct connection with AA and that is why a lot of outstanding scholars do not have very good English competence. That their English is good may be due to the fact that they used to study in the States or England. Studying in English-speaking countries they’ll need such an ability (TL competence). I think AA has nothing to do with UTLC or TLP. There is a connection between UTLC and TLP but it’s not absolute. In fact, let’s have a look at the English learning process. At the very beginning, vocabulary learning is the soul of learning, and later come grammar and phrases. Having reached a certain level, you may have the chance to live in an English-speaking country, and you’ll have to tell some of the differences between certain lexical items. For example, a lot of vocabulary is explained with the same meanings especially in the English-Chinese dictionary. A lot of words will mean the same in Mandarin Chinese. If you understand the differences between certain lexical items you will benefit your TLP, which is connected to UTLC...” (Participant 6, Interview 4)

Figure 4.5. Partial relationship of understanding of TL culture (UTLC), TL performance (TLP), and academic achievement (AA) - Model 2

UTLC TLP AA

The partial relationship - model 2, illustrates that these three components are totally independent and have no influential connection with one another.

“... Dr. Y. Li, who has won a Nobel Prize, has reached the top in his research area. Does he speak English well? Not really. He indicated himself that he still speaks Taiwanese English. These (UTLC, TLP, and AA) are all related to your academic field. If you're doing research related to English literature, then you won't have good findings if you don't understand their culture in a very sensitive way. In that case, your AA reflects your UTLC. Yet in the field of science, there are no borders in between and there are no language problems. Things can be represented in signs, which has nothing to do with culture. We can discuss a very deep question in very simple English. There's nothing to do with language. So, in my field, there is no connection between UTLC, TLP and AA...” (Participant 5, Interview 4)

These five models of three types of relationships of UTLC, TLP, and AA in the present research indicate that individual TL learners such as the participants have certain attitudes towards the relationship between their understanding of TL culture, TL performance and academic success. In ESP/ EAP and self-directed TL learning, the participants have set their own TL learning targets, and have their own interpretations of how much they want to know about TL culture and how to achieve academic success. It is, however, notable that nine out of the eleven participants recognized that there is an influential connection between the understanding of target language culture (UTLC) and target language performance (TLP). Nine out of the eleven participants considered that their target language performance (TLP) would influence their academic achievement (AA). There are only four participants who regarded the understanding of target language culture (UTLC) as beneficial to their academic achievement (AA). These four participants are students of the liberal arts, academic subjects which may have closer links to the TL society and culture than those of science.

In addition, two particular participants, whose academic subjects are in the science field - computer science and biology - claimed that TLP has no influential impact on AA. They indicated that language is not the only means for them to communicate with each other, and that the related symbols and signs used in their field provide another means of communication, which may suggest that students in sciences may rely less heavily on TLP than those in the field of the liberal arts or social sciences, since language is not the only means for them to present their academic achievements. This may also explain why, in relation to the academic admissions criteria universities tend to have different language

requirements for students of the sciences and students of the liberal arts and the social sciences, due to the different degrees of language demands in these two academic fields.

4.2. Linguistic distance and language shock

The linguistic distance in the present research refers to the participants' familiarity with, and proficiency in, the L2 and does not refer to how different the participants' L1 and L2 are. The participants' L1, the Chinese languages (Mandarin and other dialects), are generally considered to be different from their L2, English, in most linguistic aspects, such as the fact that Chinese is a tone language but English is a stress language. Such fundamental linguistic differences may cause a great deal of learning difficulties for Taiwanese beginning learners of English. The participants, who have reached a high level of TL competence, are regarded as confronting different levels of learning difficulties, such as the accuracy and precision of the use of words, and the proper ways of presenting ideas and arguments in academic written work.

“... Sometimes we use some expression but they (NSs) don't say it that way. I think that there is a bit difference between what we learn and what they (NSs) actually use and say...” (Participant 1, Interview 1)

However, some basic learning difficulties, such as the accuracy of L2 pronunciation, can still happen among the participants due to the fundamental differences between not only the participants' L1 and L2 but also their L2 (AE) and L2 (BE). Consequently, discussions in this section will, firstly, focus on the linguistic distance between the participants' L1 and L2 in general, and then, the linguistic distance observed by the participants in the present research between American English, which has been learned in Taiwan, and British English, which has to be learned in the research environment.

“... The most difficult task for me is that I am not familiar with the language (BE) and I don't have a big vocabulary either. I ask my Canadian housemate to read and record some texts in the Radio Times for me. I use this way to get familiar with the language gradually...” (Participant 11, Interview 1)

Because of the differences between the participants' L1 and L2, and L2 (AE) and L2 (BE), and the lack of experience in using the TL in a natural situation, the participants may experience different degrees of doubt or uncertainty over using L2 in the research

environment. Such doubt or uncertainty in the use of a L2 is recognized as language shock. Language shock is described by Schumann (1978, pp.31-32) as experienced by adult language learners who fear making mistakes and have doubts about accuracy when they learn to speak a L2. Issues related to language shock among the participants in the present research will be discussed in Section 4.2.3.

4.2.1. Linguistic distance between L1 and L2

No attempt will be made in the present research to discuss specific linguistic differences between the participants' L1 and L2, which may be regarded as more relevant to the field of Linguistics. Nevertheless, some particular linguistic differences that were observed and indicated by the participants in the present research will be presented in this section to throw light on the learners' experience of SLL, which is the focus of the present research.

“... I think that I have a big problem in pronunciation. There is a big difference between the pronunciation of English and the pronunciation of Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese. Sometimes the word is very long and I just don't know where to put the stress when I pronounce the word, and I don't know how to pronounce it. Too many syllables...” (Participant 9, Interview 1)

The general linguistic differences observed between the participants' L1 and L2 in relation to pronunciation (phonetic system), the meaning of words (semantics), and grammar (syntax) are concluded and illustrated by the following table. The TL learning difficulties caused by the differences between the participants' L1 and L2 will be further discussed later in Section 4.2.4. of this chapter.

Table 4.3. General differences between the participants' L1 and L2

Factor	Consequence
Pronunciation (Phonetic system)	Level 1 - word: Sounds such as /r/, /m/, /n/, and /l/ can be mispronounced because these sounds are not available or less emphasized in the participants' L1. Level 2 - sentence: Difficulty in reaching the stage of L2 native-like because of the influence of the L1. In other words, the participants speak L2 with their L1 accent.
Meaning of words (Semantics)	Generally, the participants are able to use reference works, such as dictionaries, to find out the meanings of their new vocabulary. Difficulties can occur when some vocabulary in the TL is not transformable into the participants' L1 system and vice versa.
Grammar (Syntax)	Due to the solid TL education previously received in Taiwan, the participants seemed to have less obstacles in this respect. The participants are able to apply basic grammatical rules, such the one of basic structures of a sentence in English is S(subject) + V (verb)+ O (object). Such a basic rule, called the marked rule in the theory of Universal Grammar by Chomsky, provide the participants with a general TL linguistic knowledge which they can utilize to comprehend sentences written in TL. The participants are able to know whether it is a statement or a question when they read a sentence written in TL.

4.2.2. Linguistic distance between L2 (AE) and L2(BE)

The L2 the participants learned previously in Taiwan was American English (AE), and the L2 spoken in the research environment is British English (BE). There are differences between AE and BE which have been systematically discussed by linguists. However, no attempt will be made in the present research to discuss specific linguistic differences in an in-depth manner between AE and BE, as this is more related to the field of Linguistics. Nevertheless, this section will present and discuss the consequences of the language differences observed and indicated by the participants between these two systems of English, and how these differences influence their TL learning in the research environment. In addition, none of the participants had lecturers, or supervisors/ tutors who are AE speakers in the research environment.

“... People say ‘primary school’ here but I say ‘elementary school’. Whenever I say elementary school, people will correct me...” (Participant 3, Interview 3)

“... In Taiwan we learn American English but they use British English here. They use different words to represent the same things...” (Participant 10, Interview 2)

The language differences between AE and BE indicated by the participants were general. Participants 3, 10, and 11 pointed out their observation of the different use of vocabulary and expressions between AE and BE, which confused them in their use of L2 in interviews 1 and 2 of the present research. Participants 10 and 11 arrived in the research environment shortly before the first round of interviews was carried out, consequently, they were expected to have stronger feelings about the differences between AE and BE than the other participants, who had been living in the research environment for a year or more. Participant 3, who had studied in Canada for 2 years before she came to the research environment, indicated that the different use of vocabulary, expressions including different degrees of formality in speaking and writing which will be discussed in Section 4.2.4. in this chapter, and pronunciation between British English and Canadian English confused her, although she had been in the research environment for a year when the interview was conducted.

“... Now I can tell different accents but some of them I still have trouble with. You need time to get used to different accents and to pay more attention to how they pronounce some particular sounds in different ways, for example they may pronounce two or three words together. I need time to understand them...” (Participant 10, Interview 4)

It is, however, suggested by the present research that time is a key to easing the uncertainty in the use of BE. It seems to be the case that the longer the participants stay in the research environment, the more confident they will feel about the use of BE. The general differences between AE and BE mentioned by the participants only appeared in interviews 1 and 2. No comments were made in relation to such aspects in interviews 3 and 4 of the present research, which may indicate that the participants had become more accustomed to the use of BE. Detailed discussion regarding this issue can be seen later in Section 4.2.4. of this chapter.

4.2.3. Language shock

Language shock is described by Schumann (1978, pp.31-32) as adult language learners' fear of making mistakes and having doubts about accuracy when they learn to speak a L2. The fear of making mistakes and doubts about accuracy are regarded as the characteristics of language shock of the participants in the present research. The participants in the present research have such uncertainties not only when they speak the TL but also when they write in the TL, which is due to the student status of the participants, who not only have to use the L2 in verbal form but also in written form in the research environment. Consequently, the researcher would like to extend Schumann's definition of language shock to a wider context, which means that language shock can happen not only when the learners speak the TL but also in situations when they write in the TL.

“... I don't know how to spell that word and don't know how to pronounce it properly. Sometimes I hear people say that word and then I try to say it but sometimes people just don't understand it, because my pronunciation is not correct... Writing is another big problem. Sometimes you want to present an idea in English but it is different from how we do it in Chinese. People just don't understand what you want to present. There is a distance between what you want to express and what you write in words. This is a big difficulty for me to cope with...” (Participant 3, Interview 3)

Because of the characteristic of language shock in the present research, which happens at times in relation to speaking and at others in relation to writing, there are issues related to language shock to be raised and discussed under these two circumstances. The following discussions will focus on the issues related to these two experiences of language shock revealed by the present research. It is worth mentioning that the revelation of issues related to language shock in the present research was due to the longitudinal time scale of the present research, which enabled the researcher to observe some unique characteristics of SLL of the participants in the research environment, such as the change in the language learning focus of the participants. The following discussions will bring insights into these issues.

4.2.3.a. Issues related to the first experience of language shock

Due to the lack of oral practice of the TL in their previous TL learning experience in Taiwan and the fundamental difference between AE, which had been learned by the participants, and BE, which is used in the research environment, the participants were first confronted by language shock in the aspects of speaking and listening in TL.

“... Accents are difficult. If that person speaks slowly and I’m also more familiar with his accent then I will be able to understand more, but if that person is from the English countryside or from the north or India, I won’t be able to understand him, totally incomprehensible. Some of my classmates have very strange accents so I always try to avoid talking to them. I’m afraid of talking to them because they understand what you (I) talk about but I don’t understand what they talk about at all...” (Participant 11, Interview 2)

The participants who previously had never experienced authentic AE or BE will have a different degree of language shock than the ones who previously had experienced authentic AE or BE before they arrived in the research environment. The competence in listening comprehension and speaking of the participants had actually been challenged to a different degree in the new environment. Different pronunciations of the L2 they learned in Taiwan, and various accents of the TL in the UK had an immediate impact on the participants when they arrived in the research environment. Having difficulties in understanding what they had heard in various occasions in the new environment contributed to their doubts over the accurate use of the TL when they had to respond to others, which is identified as language shock in the oral form.

“... When we first arrived, we had to get accustomed to the language (BE) which is an important influential factor. If you are able to get used to the language well, then you will be able to make better progress in your study. I think it’s important to have some language preparation before coming to study here. When you first arrived here and people often say ‘pardon me’ to you, you will feel very much frustrated. Of course not everyone (NSs) here is so impatient...” (Participant 10, Interview 4)

It is suggested by the present research study that the first experience of language shock is easier to conquer because the longer the participants stay in this authentic TL environment the more comfortable they will feel when they speak and listen to others who may have different accents. The TL will later become part of the participants’ life, because it is the

main communicative means with people who are not Chinese language speakers in the research environment. To be constantly exposed to the authentic TL environment and to use the TL in their everyday life on the campus are the keys to easing the first experience of language shock.

4.2.3.b. Issues related to the second experience of language shock

The second experience of language shock occurs when the participants are at the stage of writing up their study in the research environment. Due to the lack of training in TL writing in their previous TL learning experience in Taiwan, the participants, who came to study in the UK for the first time, have to fight to write in TL formally for the first time in the research environment. It is notable that Participant 3, who studied for academic purposes at one of the Canadian universities before coming to study in the UK, also experienced language shock in writing in the TL. It is due to the fact that assessments of the courses which Participant 3 took in Canada were based on multiple choices and cloze tests which require very little TL writing skills.

“... When I was writing the second essay I felt that I’ve improved and was able to write better than the first essay in relation to the way I use vocabulary. I knew which word I could use and where to put it. My supervisor did not understand some sentences in my first essay but they were not grammatical errors. I think that was Chinese English, so she couldn’t understand. I don’t think there are mistakes in the way of my descriptions but foreigners can’t understand what I mean in those sentences. The reason is that I use Chinese ways to present my idea. I write in English but I can’t think in English. I use Chinese ways to write English sentences. There is no grammatical error but I just don’t understand why they don’t understand me. She just said that she didn’t understand those sentences. I don’t think that it’s grammatical issue. It’s something deeper than that - the matter of logical thinking. I don’t know how to solve the problem. I should find a solution to this problem as soon as possible...” (Participant 2, Interview 4)

Due to the lack of training and knowledge in TL academic writing, the participants faced another difficulty - they were expected to perform at the same level as other native English speaking students to achieve their academic success in the research environment. The lack of training in writing and academic writing is, to a certain degree, easier to resolve than another fundamental factor: the different way of thinking and writing or presenting style in Chinese academic writing.

“... We EFL students tend to use our own ways from our culture to express things. It is difficult to use some of their local expressions to present your idea. Although you understand what they talk about but you just don't use their expressions to present your idea. I still use the patterns in my mother tongue to present my idea...” (Participant 4, Interview 3)

The lack of training in writing is regarded as a factor contributing to the second experience of language shock. The different styles of writing and presenting ideas between the participants' L1 and L2 writing styles can be regarded as an important and fundamental factor in the second experience of language shock of the participants. The Chinese thinking and writing styles have been cultivated in the participants since their primary education, and consequently, it may take the participants different lengths of time to get used to and to get familiar with another style of thinking and writing in the TL depending on whether they had previously experienced the authentic TL prior to their studies in the research environment. In addition, the SDLL context of the present research study allows the participants to take the initiative to identify their own language learning objectives, consequently they have different expectations regarding their individual TL writing competence. It is suggested by the present research study that the combination of the internal factors: (1) lack of academic TL training in writing; (2) the different writing styles between Chinese and English; and (3) the different expectations of TL writing competence of the participants, and the external factors: (1) language requirements from their individual courses; and (2) the advice from their supervisors, contribute to different degrees of language shock among the participants in written form.

4.2.4. TL learning difficulties

Most of the issues relating to TL learning difficulties will be discussed in due course, while some of the issues closely link to aspects of environmental contextual factors and individual learner factors, such as the various accents spoken by TL native speakers in the research environment in relation to the listening aspect, individual psychological reasons in relation to the speaking aspect, and the influence of L1 on the L2 performance, which will be further discussed later in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis.

The TL learning difficulties identified by the participants are considered as one of the unique findings of the present research. The TL learning difficulties which the participants confronted may have less similarities with those of their European counterparts but may share more commonalities with their Asian counterparts, due to the similarities of general cultures and languages which the participants share with EFL/ ESL learners from Asia. Tables 4.5., 4.6., 4.7., and 4.8. indicate the TL learning difficulties in relation to four language skills identified by the participants.

“... The most difficult part in writing up my thesis at the moment is how to describe the environment, such as the location of the schools, and the descriptions of the environments of the schools. You don't know which English vocabulary you can use to describe and how to use it properly...” (Participant 4, Interview 1)

Vocabulary is identified as a general learning difficulty among the participants across the four language skills, especially in the aspects of listening and reading, which are categorized as passive skills. Items of vocabulary received in passive skills are regarded as passive or receptive vocabulary and items of vocabulary received in active skills such as speaking and writing are considered as active or productive vocabulary (Hatch and Brown, 1995). Table 4.5. below illustrates the concepts of vocabulary learning.

Table 4.4. Concepts of vocabulary learning

Genre	4 language skills	Definition of learned vocabulary (based on Haycraft 1978)
Active	Speaking and Writing	Productive vocabulary: lexical items that language learners understand and which language learners can use constructively.
Passive	Listening and Reading	Receptive vocabulary: lexical items that language learners recognize and understand in context, but which language learners cannot produce correctly.

One vocabulary learning situation, suggested by Crow and Quigley (1985), which relates to passive skills is when language learners may learn core or basic meanings of lexical items sufficiently to understand what they hear or read but without getting information about the syntactic restrictions, register appropriateness, or collocations to be able to produce the lexical items by themselves. It is, however, believed that language learners may have a better understanding of a lexical item when they use it actively, in which situation they are in control of their choice of words.

Being located in a natural setting, the participants come across various types of situational TL input which is less controlled than it is in the language classroom. Consequently, some unfamiliar lexical items can stand out as an obvious obstacle when the participants are involved in exercising passive skills. The participants are in more control of their use of vocabulary in performing active skills, and even when there is vocabulary they do not know they can always replace it with another similar lexical item, describe it with other words, or consult with others or available references to maintain the ongoing conversation or writing.

“... Sometimes I don't know which vocabulary is often used by the English people. For example, when we talk about developing photos, they use the words 'developing' and 'processing'...”
(Participant 6, Interview 2)

Vocabulary learning is fundamental for the participants, who learn the TL in an authentic environment, because they have to know lexical items related not only to their academic studies but also to their everyday life, which has a very close connection to the TL environment. Because of this characteristic of the TL learning environment in which the participants are located, they are able learn new lexical items from time to time as long as they are exposed to the TL input. Nevertheless, the quantity of lexical items learned by the participants may depend on their individual needs from the TL.

“... My attitude towards language learning is of intentional learning. Whenever I come across new lexical items, I will either put it down or remember it if I think it's a good vocabulary term...”
(Participant 7, Interview 1)

The learning of vocabulary is divided into intentional learning and incidental learning. Intentional learning is considered to be learning activities where are planned for, designed or intended by learners or instructors, while incidental learning is regarded as a by-product of doing or learning something else. It is suggested that learners tend to learn more vocabulary in incidental learning than in intentional learning (Hatch and Brown, 1995). Relating this point to the present research, there is no evidence to prove that the participants, who self-direct their TL learning in the research environment, learn more vocabulary from incidental learning than intentional learning, but it is certain that the participants learn more lexical items related not only to their academic work but also to everyday life in the research environment than they used to do in Taiwan, where

vocabulary learning was for formal educational purposes.

“... Living in an authentic TL environment is very helpful to listening, because you have many opportunities (to listen to TL). When you go shopping, you have the chance to know what words they use and how they use them...” (Participant 10, Interview 2)

4.2.4.a. Listening

In the four sessions of interviews with the participants, ten different learning difficulties were identified by the participants: accent, vocabulary, slang, speed of speech, listening comprehension, ways of expression (AE vs. BE), accuracy, individual speakers, idiom and contents of speech. Among these ten learning difficulties, accent, vocabulary, and slang, were mentioned by three participants in all the four interviews, which may indicate that these three particular obstacles were regarded by some of the participants as constant obstacles in their SLL in the research environment. The following table indicates the obstacles in the aspect of listening and the frequency of the participant in the present research.

Table 4.5. TL learning difficulties of the participants in relation to listening

4 language skills	Interview - 1	Interview - 2	Interview - 3	Interview - 4
Listening	1. Accent (5) 2. Vocabulary (4) 3. Slang (2) 4. Speed of speech (1) 5. Ways of expression (AE vs. BE) (1)	1. Accent (8) 2. Vocabulary (3) 3. Listening comprehension (2) 4. Slang (2)	1. Accent (4) 2. Vocabulary (3) 3. Listening comprehension (1) 4. Slang (1) 5. Speed of speech (1)	1. Accent (6) 2. Vocabulary (5) 3. Individual speaker (2) 4. Slang (2) 5. Listening comprehension (2) 6. Idiom (2) 7. Speed of speech (2) 8. Content of speech (2)

Numbers in brackets following each item of learning difficulties indicate the frequencies of participants.

Accent

Accents are described in general as consisting of pronunciation and they may vary not only regionally but also socially (Wright, 1996). Consequently, people from different regions and social groups may speak with different accents. The participants, who had been educated in AE and had relatively few opportunities in using the TL before they arrived in the UK, come to experience a new dimension of the TL in the research environment because of the fundamental differences between the two TL learning environments: EFL and AE in Taiwan and ESL and BE in the research environment.

Confronting various accents was indicated by the participants to be one of the learning obstacles in their SLL in relation to the listening aspect of the research environment. Participants 9, 10, and 11 were the ones who mentioned in all of the four interviews that they had difficulty comprehending various accents in the research environment. It is notable that these three participants were those who had newly arrived in the 1996/97 academic year and all of them pointed out in all of the four interviews that one of their TL learning difficulties in listening was the variety of accents. Consequently, this may suggest that a certain length of time may be needed by these participants to adjust themselves to a new environment where the TL is spoken by members of different regions and different social groups.

“... Having been here for some time, I’m now getting more used to the accents of people around me, such as classmates or housemates, and am able to understand most of their conversation. But, I still can’t understand our cleaning lady. I still remember the first time she came in and asked me a very short question, and I simply stood there trying very hard to figure out the question for 1 to 2 minutes. I simply can’t understand her. The other morning she asked me a question and I couldn’t understand at all, and then she went on talking to my classmate, who came over for some tea. So I sat there and listened to their conversation and gradually I found that I could understand some sentences said by our cleaning lady...” (Participant 9, Interview 2)

Other participants, such as participants 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9, who had been in the research environment for more than a year when the present research was conducted, also indicated that they had difficulty when confronting people speaking with different accents in the research environment. It is notable that Participants 3, 4, and 7 who had experienced authentic TL input in their previous studies in England, Wales, and Canada also found it

difficult to comprehend different accents in the research environment. It suggests that for the majority of the participants in the present research more than a year of adjustment to the variety of accents spoken in the research environment is essential.

Vocabulary and slang

Although the participants had been learning English since junior high school in Taiwan, the size of their acquired vocabulary may be still insufficient when they have to actually use it to communicate with others in the research environment, where the TL is considered as a main means of communication. On the other hand, people have their own individual choice and use of vocabulary according to their region, gender, age, occupation, education, and social group (Hatch and Brown, 1995). The encounter with unfamiliar lexical items is therefore regarded as part of social interaction between people from different regions and social backgrounds. Additionally, life in an authentic TL environment is suggested to involve different aspects of life, which means the use of words may differ widely according to the different situations in which the participants are engaged. The participants may come across different uses of words in academic discussions, a formal use of the TL, and in grocery shopping, a less formal or informal use of the TL.

“... I still don't understand their slang. Some of the slang is very simple, only a combination of one or two words but with different meaning. I still don't understand...” (Participant 9, Interview 1)

“... (I think) slang is used mostly by young people, and children. It's more difficult for me to talk to children. It'll help me to understand them if I know more about their background and culture. I always believe that if you want to learn a language well then you'll have to go to their country and live with them for some time...” (Participant 6, Interview 1)

In the less formal or informal situations the participants may have the chance to experience another part of the TL, slang, which can be commonly used among the local native TL speakers. Slang, part of a language used by native speakers, is regarded as part of the local TL culture which is not learned by the participants in their previous formal TL education in Taiwan. Consequently, the participants may have difficulties in understanding other speakers in a conversation because of the unfamiliar linguistic input.

Regarding the participants' insufficiency of vocabulary, three findings have been made by the present research study: (1) the vocabulary previously learned by the participants is not sufficient in terms of quantity; (2) the vocabulary the participants previously learned from the text books is regarded as formal vocabulary and may be less used or on some occasions even replaced by slang in the authentic TL environment; and (3) the vocabulary the participants previously learned in Taiwan may be seen/ used more in the AE context than in the BE context, which may lead to learning difficulties in the aspect of listening to the confusing ways of expression (AE vs. BE) mentioned by Participant 11.

Speed of speech, individual speaker, idiom, and content of speech

Being situated in the authentic TL environment, the participants are able to experience authentic TL input from various speakers, which is very different from the TL input they used to receive in the language classroom. The controlled/ modified language input in the language classroom, such as classroom talk and teacher talk, is suggested to be considerably different from the authentic language input outside the language classroom.

“... The young people here speak very fast. So fast that they just skip the words. You don't understand what they are talking about. I have problems with different accents too. I will ask them to repeat it again or ask them to speak slowly...” (Participant 9, Interview 3)

Teacher talk in the language classroom, as suggested by Krashen (1983), is roughly tuned to meet the level of the acquirers, in this case language learners. Consequently, the context of the language classroom, in which the roles, speakers or listeners, are rigidly arranged, the speed of speech is modified, the contents of the TL input are usually planned or structured, and the use of words including idioms and phrases can usually be previewed or preinformed, varies from the context of authentic TL input, in which the roles are constantly changing, the speed of speech is uncontrolled, and the content and use of words of TL input are informal, casual, and spontaneous.

“... The first year when (I) just arrived, you (I) couldn't understand at all when people spoke very fast to you (me). It sounded like a series of noise connected together and you (I) couldn't understand it at all. Then, in the second year, when the sentences were not very long and there were pauses in between, you (I) would trace what had passed previously during the pauses and each word would be very clear in the head. The reflection is a bit slower than Chinese. I can respond quickly in Chinese but slowly in English...” (Participant 5, Interview 1)

Listening comprehension, and accuracy

As mentioned in previous paragraphs, having been used to classroom talk or teacher talk in the language classroom, the participants are used to the modified TL input. They may therefore face difficulties in listening comprehension and accuracy when they are situated in an authentic TL environment.

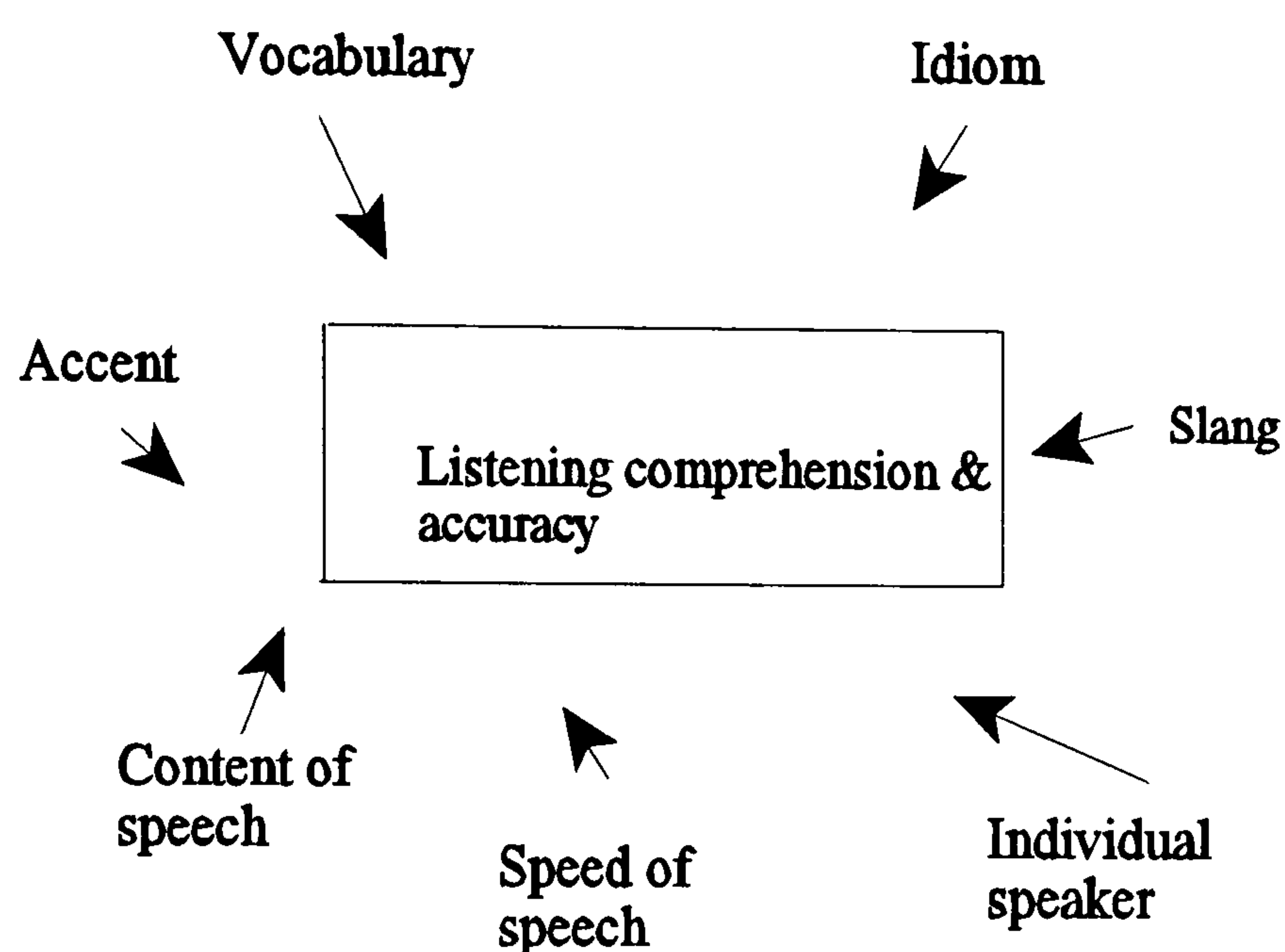
“... At this stage, whatever I don't understand then I just don't care too much, unless it's very important that I have to understand then I'll ask. For example, it is not very important to understand everything while watching soaps, so I don't care too much if I don't understand the consequences while watching soaps. You are able to know roughly what they are talking about by connecting what they say earlier and later anyway. Different accents can be a big problem too. I just can't understand anything at all when they speak with heavy accents...” (Participant 7, Interview 4)

Listening comprehension and accuracy in the aspect of listening activity are regarded, in the present research, as concepts which can be influenced by different issues, including the above-mentioned ones.

“... (I) had more difficulties when I first arrived which may be due to my research work, as I had to work alone in the lab. Sometimes I can't understand others when I am very busy and concentrated on my work even they speak very slowly. There are several factors which can contribute to this incomprehensible input, such as the vocabulary used is what I've never used, or they use their specific language to describe a certain object or events which may taken from TV, content wise...” (Participant 5, Interview 2)

Accuracy in listening comprehension is considered to be one of the ultimate goals of communication. In the present research, there are seven other issues identified by the participants as related to this concept. The existence of these seven issues are considered to be the result of the change in the TL learning environment - from a controlled, structured, and formal learning environment to a casual, informal, and spontaneous learning setting. Because of the change to a totally different learning environment, the participants will have to accustom themselves to the natural TL input to be able to, first of all, communicate with others, and then to achieve their academic goals. The following figure, Figure 4.6., illustrates the overall concept of learning difficulties concluded from the present research in the aspect of listening activities.

Figure 4.6. The concept of TL learning difficulties in the aspect of listening



4.2.4.b. Speaking

Being categorized as one of the active skills, speaking is one of the skills which can be observed and examined to reveal that *what* and *how* a language learner wants to tell others and from which possible language difficulties also can be observed. With relatively few opportunities to actually communicate in the TL in Taiwan, the participants are expected to have different degrees of difficulty in speaking and communicating in the TL with others according to their individual TL communicative competence.

“... Speaking of course is still a problem. I simply can’t get rid of thinking and speaking in Chinese ways because I’ve been always using Chinese ways of thinking and am used to use Chinese to express yourself. When I speak English, I tend to repeat what I’ve been saying because I feel that it is not what I want to say so I’ll try different ways to try to make myself clear. Such Chinese ways of expressing myself is too difficult for me to overcome and it’s too late to do anything about it too...” (Participant 5, Interview 1)

Table 4.6., indicates the TL difficulties of the participants in the present research in relation to the aspect of speaking. According to Table 4.6., there are eight TL learning difficulties indicated by the participants, and among these learning obstacles, vocabulary learning is

still regarded as a main difficulty in the participants' SLL in the research environment.

"... I don't have many opportunities to speak English at this moment. I need to think before I speak. Vocabulary is a problem. I am able to use words to describe the lexical items which I want to say..." (Participant 2, Interview 4)

Additionally, among the eight obstacles, it can be recognized that not only the personal factors relating to the participants themselves, such as personality or L1 influence, but also other issues, such as the lack of opportunities to talk to others, which can be considered as an issue related to the TL learning environment, can raise certain degrees of learning difficulty for the participants. TL learning difficulties related to environmental contextual factors, such the lack of opportunities to talk to others in the TL, will be further discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis, and detailed discussions on issues related to L1 influence on the performance of L2, such as Taiwanese/ Chinese English, can be seen later in current chapter. Issues related to psychological reasons indicated by the participants can be described as being influenced by personality factors and also by the participants' social interactions with TL native speakers, and will be further discussed in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis.

Table 4.6. TL learning difficulties of the participants in relation to speaking

4 language skills	Interview - 1	Interview - 2	Interview - 3	Interview - 4
Speaking	1. Vocabulary (5) 2. Lack of opportunities to talk to others (2) 3. Ways of expression (AE vs. BE) (1) 4. Taiwanese/ Chinese English (1) 5. Pronunciation (1) 6. Grammar (1)	1. Vocabulary (3) 2. Lack of opportunities to talk to others (2) 3. Pronunciation (1) 4. Grammar/ sentence structure (2) 5. Psychological reason (1) 6. Ways of expression (AE vs. BE) (1)	1. Vocabulary (5) 2. Psychological reason (nervousness) (1) 3. Lack of opportunities to talk to others (1)	1. Lack of opportunities to talk to others (4) 2. Vocabulary (3) 3. Taiwanese/ Chinese English (2) 4. Psychological reason (nervousness) (2) 5. Grammar/ sentence structure (2) 6. Use of language (academic aspect) (1) 7. Pronunciation/ intonation (1)

Numbers in brackets following each item of learning difficulties indicate the frequencies of participants.

Vocabulary

As mentioned in the previous section, the limited quantity of acquired vocabulary can be one of the possibilities that hinders the participants from comprehending TL input in all kinds of situations. It is once again indicated by the participants that the limited quantity of acquired lexical items can restrict them from fully expressing what they intend to tell others. Issues related to unknown lexical items are considered to be a fundamental difficulty for the participants in relation to their SLL in the research environment.

“... One difficulty is that I don't know how to enlarge my everyday life vocabulary. I always use certain words. Vocabulary is a big problem in my speaking. Sometimes I don't know the exact words to express myself, especially those adjectives. The only solution to such a problem is to ask my boyfriend to find out the words, but I'll have to describe them and sometimes it's hard. (Asking my boyfriend) doesn't help too much. I don't know a lot of words to describe my feelings and how I feel. I'll have to look them up in the dictionary to find out to use them. I use the words 'interesting' and 'strange' all the time. My boyfriend asks me why I always use these two words. Well, I only know these two words...” (Participant 1, Interview 2)

The unfamiliar or unknown lexical items in relation to speaking can be classified into two different categories in the present research: (1) the L2 vocabulary which the participants simply do not know; and (2) cases where there are no equivalent lexical items available in the participants' L2 to explain or replace the objects or phenomena in their L1, (for example, there is no equivalent vocabulary or proper lexical items to classify the different kinds of rice wine in the participants' L1 culture). Vocabulary learning difficulties in relation to category (2) may be regarded as more relevant to the cultural aspect, and therefore may require appropriate descriptions and explanations from the participants when they happen. The solution to the vocabulary learning difficulties in relation to category (1) lies in the memorizing of L2 vocabulary. The memorizing of necessary L2 lexical items enlarges the participants' vocabulary and it may be considered as the most fundamental method for the participants to eliminate such learning difficulties.

Lack of opportunities to talk to others

Some of the participants mentioned in the interviews that they felt that they lacked opportunities to talk to others in the TL. Issues related to this finding can be described in three respects: (1) the environment; (2) the TL group; and (3) the learners themselves.

Detailed discussions in relation to these three aspects can be seen in Chapters Five and Six. The discussion here in the present section is focussed on the lack of opportunities to speak in the TL of the participants in the research environment.

“... I don't have many chances to practise. I just talk to my supervisor. He knows that you (I) are an overseas student so he always tries to use very clear and easy English while talking to me. He'll modify the speed of speech as well. I can't speak as fluently as English people. I need to train myself purposely...” (Participant 10, Interview 4)

The lack of speaking opportunities is regarded by the participants as reducing their oral TL proficiency. It is suggested by the present research study that as long as the participants involve themselves more in speaking TL in the research environment, their speaking competence will be benefited. However, the creation of more speaking opportunities in TL is closely related not only to the participants' personalities and their motivation in TL learning but also to the characteristic of the environment where the participants live which will be further discussed in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis.

Pronunciation/ intonation, Taiwanese/ Chinese English, ways of expressions (AE vs. BE), psychological reasons

Some of the L1 influence on the performance of L2 can be observed when L2 language learners are performing active language skills such as speaking and writing. The identified TL learning difficulty of Taiwanese/ Chinese English, for example placing the accent on the wrong syllable, of the participants is regarded as an example of L1 influence on the L2 performance. Pronunciation/ intonation is suggested to be part of the influence of both L1 and previous L2 (AE) learning experience.

“... I tend to speak English in a way of one word after another without any intonation. I feel that I speak and complete a sentence with several pauses in English. Sometimes when a word is a bit longer or I don't use it too often then I will place the accent on the wrong syllable...” (Participant 9, Interview 4)

The differences between AE and BE indicated by the participants are regarded as an influence of the previous L2 (AE) learning experience, which will be further discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis. Psychological reasons, feeling nervous while talking to native speakers (NSs), is considered as an issue related to both environmental contextual factors

and individual learner differences, which will be discussed later in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis.

The psychological reason, feeling nervous while speaking in English, is suggested to be a consequence of personality and the lack of experience of speaking in English.

“... When I speak (in English), I’m often influenced by my psychological state and my personality. Whenever I’m nervous I can’t speak well. The more attention I pay to my language performance, the more nervous I am, so the worse my performance will be. This is the biggest difficulty in relation to speaking. Although I tell myself not to be nervous, it is very difficult to do. It’s my personal psychological problem...” (Participant 4, Interview 4)

Some of participants indicated that they felt shy while talking to TL native speakers.

“... I feel ashamed and I am losing face when I make mistakes while talking to others...” (Participant 11, Interview 1)

“... I feel more stressed while talking to NSs but less stressed while speaking to NNSs. I feel that they (NSs) are assessing/ making marks of my English when I talk to them. They perhaps laugh at the mistakes I make when I talk to them...” (Participant 1, Interview 4)

“... I have to think more before I speak when I talk to the English people, because I am afraid of making mistakes in front of them...” (Participant 2, Interview 1)

Some of them pointed out that they were afraid of making mistakes in front of TL native speakers, which can be regarded as part of Chinese cultural norms - making mistakes equals losing face. The losing face aspect in Chinese culture is regarded as an important component in interactions among people in Chinese society. Making mistakes in front of others is considered as losing face in Chinese culture, especially for people who have a high level of education, such as the participants, who tend to expect themselves to have nearly perfect performance in front of others. Such expectation not only originates from the individual participants but also from the society where the participants have been brought up and to which the participants have been accustomed.

Grammar/ sentence structure, use of language (academic aspect)

Although having solid training in the grammatical rules of the TL, the participants may still make grammatical errors while actually speaking in the TL which reflects the influence of L1 on the L2 performance.

“... When I am in a hurry, it’s easy for me to make grammatical errors, such as miss out the ‘s’ at the end of words when it is necessary, forget to use the past tense of verbs when it is necessary. I just simply can’t help it. At a certain time I purposely trained myself to speak slowly but it’s difficult...” (Participant 6, Interview 4)

The participants may also feel confused while listening to informal conversations when grammatical rules are not strictly applied in comparison with TL use in formal conversations.

“... I have a feeling that what we learned at school (in Taiwan) is not practical at all. We learned a lot of academic words and I don’t know at all those very basic and practical lexical items which are very helpful in our life here...” (Participant 8, Interview 1)

In addition, the participants may have difficulties in using the TL in seminars or academic discussions, where the use of language is suggested to be more formal and precise than it is in every day conversations.

4.2.4.c. Reading

Reading is regarded as an essential language activity of the participants’ life on the campus due to their initial purpose in the research environment, which is to study for academic purposes and to reach a high academic standard. Consequently, a considerably large amount of reading is required to benefit the participants’ purposes.

Table 4.7. TL learning difficulties of the participants in reading

4 language skills	Interview - 1	Interview - 2	Interview - 3	Interview - 4
Reading	1. Vocabulary (5) 2. Writing styles of papers read (1) 3. Reading speed (slow) (1)	1. Vocabulary (7) 2. Reading speed (slow) (3) 3. Reading comprehension (2)	1. Vocabulary (3) 2. Reading speed (slow) (2) 3. Reading comprehension (1)	1. Vocabulary (5) 2. Reading comprehension (3) 3. Reading speed (slow) (2) 4. Sentence structure (1)

Numbers in brackets following each item of learning difficulties indicate the frequencies of participants.

Vocabulary and reading speed

The relationship between reading and vocabulary is described by Dubin (1989) as an unseparated pairing. There are mutual benefits from the arrangement of cohabitation of these two components, but they unavoidably clash with each other. Reading, for language learners, can be informative but at the same time can be frustrating. They may feel frustrated while reading an article which contains too many unfamiliar lexical items for them to comprehend the text.

“... A lot of words I don’t know (while reading). Now I circle the words I don’t know when I read and when the marked words appear quite often then I’ll look them up in the dictionary to find out their meanings...” (Participant 3, Interview 2)

The participants in the present research need to have highly developed reading skills to keep up with their academic work in the research environment. Once again, the limited acquired vocabulary is indicated by the participants as one of the TL learning difficulties in relation to the reading aspect.

“... My reading speed is not fast enough. My vocabulary is too small so that my reading comprehension is not too strong...” (Participant 9, Interview 4)

An insufficient amount of acquired lexical items can sometimes disrupt or slow down the participants’ reading activity, which can become a serious problem because the participants, postgraduate students, always have a great amount of reading to do to keep up with their academic work.

Writing style, sentence structure

Different writers from different academic fields may have distinctive writing styles which are due not only to the characteristics of their academic work but also to their individual personal writing styles. For example, the writing style and presentation of biology researchers may differ from that of English literature researchers, and at the same time the writing style and presentation of quantitative researchers may differ from that of qualitative researchers.

“... The main problem is the structure of sentences. Some textbooks contain sentences with very complicated structures and I can't understand them at all even though I spend a lot of time reading them through...” (Participant 4, Interview 4)

The sentence structure, which can be described as part of the writing style, may also differ from one writer or academic field to another. In order to comprehend a new article, readers will have to get used to the use of words, the presentation of the text and the writing style of the author(s). Consequently, reading through the article more than once may be necessary.

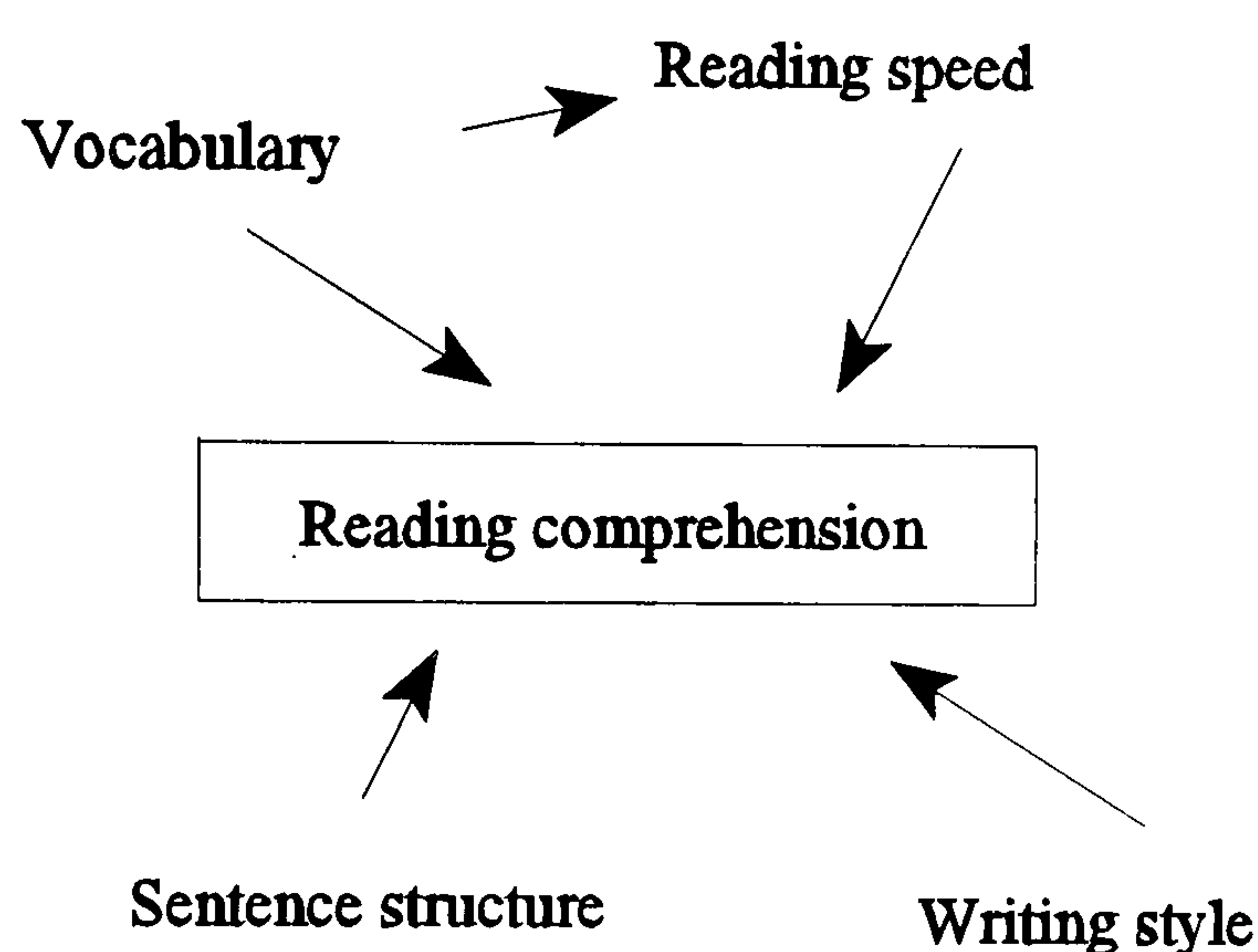
Reading comprehension

Although the participants had opportunities to read texts or articles in English when they were at university in Taiwan, Mandarin Chinese is still the main language used in the academic materials. The TL reading competence of the participants therefore has not been at all well developed. The participants are required to complete a massive amount of reading in the research environment which makes tremendous demands on them. It requires the participants to have not only a big vocabulary but also highly developed reading skills to facilitate them to access the related academic material in a relatively limited period of time.

“... If many unknown lexical items appear in an article it will worry me, such as four or five words in one sentence. You are not able to understand a whole sentence when you don't know the accurate meanings of the unknown lexical items in a sentence. If you don't know the meaning of a sentence then there's no use to reading. The unfamiliar vocabulary is the cause of my slow reading speed...” (Participant 11, Interview 1)

Reading comprehension, in the present research, is recognized as a more general concept which can be influenced by the factors of the amount of acquired vocabulary, reading speed, writing style and sentence structure of the individual authors of the articles. The following figure demonstrates the interaction between the four factors and the reading comprehension in the aspect TL reading.

Figure 4.7. The concept of TL learning difficulties in the aspect of reading



According to Figure 4.7., the factors of vocabulary (acquired lexical items), reading speed, writing style and sentence structure (of the articles) have an influential impact on the concept of reading comprehension, which has been discussed in previous paragraphs. It is identified by the present research study that there is an interaction between the factors of vocabulary and reading speed. The more familiar lexical items in articles are, the faster the reading speed will be.

“... Sometimes you (I) will find some important sentences which have very important ideas but you (I) are not able to understand what exactly they are talking about. Perhaps it’s related to different academic subjects which make me not able to control my reading comprehension. The only thing I can do is to read more. It’s not because of vocabulary. I don’t come across many unknown lexical items when I read. I just simply can’t understand thoroughly. You can’t go to get somebody to help you in the middle of reading so sometimes I simply skip the parts I don’t understand...” (Participant 10, Interview 4)

4.2.4.d. Writing

With different TL experience before arriving in the research environment, the participants encounter different degrees of difficulties in their TL writing. The following table concludes the TL difficulties of the participants in relation to the aspect of writing.

Table 4.8. TL learning difficulties of the participants in relation to writing

4 language skills	Interview - 1	Interview - 2	Interview - 3	Interview - 4
Writing	1. Vocabulary (3) 2. Writing style (2) 3. Sentence structure (2) 4. Grammar (2) 5. Writing skills (1) 6. Spelling (1)	1. Writing style (4) 2. Grammar (4) 3. The lack of opportunities to write papers (3) 4. Accuracy of the use of language (1)	1. Sentence structure (3) 2. Writing style (2) 3. Grammar (2) 4. Logical thinking in relation to presenting ideas (1) 5. The lack of opportunities to write papers (1)	1. Vocabulary (5) 2. Taiwanese/Chinese English (2) 3. Logical thinking in relation to presenting ideas (1) 4. Accuracy of the use of language (1)

Numbers in brackets following each item of learning difficulties indicate the frequencies of participants.

Writing style, writing skills, lack of opportunities to write papers

Three participants, one DPhil student who was in the data collection period, one research MA student, and a diploma student, pointed out that the lack of opportunities to write in the TL was a problem in their TL writing. Because of the different stages of their studies when writing was not emphasized, the lack of writing opportunities was identified by these three participants as a TL difficulty.

“... I don’t have many opportunities to write. I only write at particular periods of time, such as before upgrading...” (Participant 5, Interview 2)

Four participants indicated that their unfamiliarity with the TL academic writing styles was an obstacle in their TL writing. These participants were at the stage of writing up their DPhil theses or essays, and consequently writing styles appeared to be important in their TL writing activities.

“... I think that writing is the most difficult aspect in the four language skills. Everyone has his/her writing style and sometimes I feel that my supervisor’s writing style is different from mine, consequently he sometimes think that it is not necessary for me to write certain things but I think I have to repeat them all the time to emphasize the points I want to make. He doesn’t think that it is necessary to say it so many times but I think that is my writing style. In addition, there is a problem of sentence structure. I find out that I tend to write long sentences and I don’t know how to cut them short, which is very confusing to me now. Nowadays it is not popular to have long sentences, no more than three lines. But if I don’t write long sentences, then I’ll need some linking words. I am not very good at those (linking words)...” (Participant 1, Interview 2)

Participant 6, a DPhil student in Computer Science, claimed that he had difficulties in TL writing skills which was due to being in the stage of writing-up in his DPhil study.

“... There are certain models or formats to write up a report or paper so that it’s not particularly difficult for me. Sometimes I still have to think, ponder before I write. I don’t have big problems in the use of words. Sometimes I worry that I’m not able to write a good report (so that I add up a lot of details) but my supervisors told me that I write too much unnecessary details. I think that such a problem is related to writing skills...” (Participant 6, Interview 1)

In relation to writing style, it is suggested that there is a general difference between the western and the eastern. According to De Bono (1987), the western style of thinking and writing tend to, first of all, give a main point or conclusion and then fill in the background or bring in the facts to support the provided main point or conclusion. In contrast, according to Jin (1992), a preferred Chinese writing style is to build up a main point by giving a long background and reasons which lead to the inevitable main point. The Chinese style of writing aims to show where the argument leads to, and yet the English style of writing aims to show the origin of the argument (Jin, 1992). Alptekin (1988) further suggests that the Chinese formal schemata of non-linear movements and lack of a fixed starting point can be observed in the writing of Mandarin Chinese speakers of ESL. Having been educated in the circular style of writing, the participants therefore need more time and writing opportunities to transform themselves to the western way of linear style of writing.

“... Big problem. I handed in a paper, which was totally rewritten by my supervisor... This time I wrote a report and handed it in to my supervisor but she rewrote everything. Basically I think that her writing style is very different from mine, but I think that she’s right. Her presentation is better

(than mine). She has very strong critical sense in her writing and my writing is more descriptive, for example the first sentence of first paragraph is always a topic sentence and then things will later be developed from the topic sentence. My supervisor does write in this way. She is very aggressive. I can feel her ambition while reading her articles and they are very critical too. Well, just like my supervisor always says that people want to read more and find out more when they read such articles (critical ones). Your (my) descriptive way of writing is very plain and boring. They all look the same, what to write in paragraph one, and what to write in paragraph two. I can't show readers the significance of my paper and it doesn't let readers know what I eagerly want to tell them..." (Participant 5, Interview 1)

Vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar, spelling

Vocabulary was identified by the participants as one of the TL difficulties in interviews one and four. No correlation can be traced for the reason why vocabulary was mentioned by participants only in interviews one and four. However, the lesser significance of vocabulary in relation to writing can be explained by the participants' better control of dictionaries and TL references which can reduce the degree of difficulty of the use of vocabulary in TL writing. In addition, as mentioned earlier at the beginning of this section, vocabulary has been identified by the participants as a general TL learning difficulty in connection with all four language skills. In order to fulfil the high level of academic requirements, the participants are expected to have a big vocabulary to keep up with their academic work in their four language skills.

"... Some vocabulary you (I) look up in the dictionary and know the meaning of the word from the dictionary but sometimes it's not very clear and not the exact meaning of the word. English people know exactly what the word means, especially in sentences. In academic writing, we sometimes don't want to use the same word again and again so we'll try to find some synonyms to replace the word. But sometimes some of the synonyms are not suitable for each other but we don't exactly know and this is a problem..." (Participant 1, Interview 4)

Grammar and sentence structure can be regarded as a basic element of the TL training which the participants receive not only from their previous TL education but also from the massive amount of reading in the research environment. However, the influence of the participants' L1 may be suggested to be a cause of such language difficulties. Although the participants have had solid training in grammatical rules, they may still encounter obstacles in L2 grammar, rules and spelling. The difficulty in spelling can be conquered

with the aid of computer spell checks while writing.

“... After reading my procedural essay, my lecturer told me that I have a lot of grammatical errors in my writing...” (Participant 9, Interview 2)

Logical thinking in relation to presenting ideas, Taiwanese/ Chinese English, accuracy of the use of TL

These three TL learning difficulties can be regarded as closely related to the influence of the participants' L1 language and culture. As indicated earlier in this section, there is a significant difference between the western writing style and the Chinese one, and thus the participants may also have to transform their Chinese thinking style to a western thinking style in order to present their ideas in a more comprehensive way to their native TL readers. “... I wrote an essay last time and my supervisor told me that the structure is fine but she didn't understand some of the sentences. I have to improve my writing but I don't know how. If I keep writing then I will need someone to read them for me. Such resource (proof-readers) is not much available. I can only pay for people to read my assignments but not all of my writing (apart from essays). I know my mistakes are of certain types, such as the tenses are not clear. The parts which my supervisor didn't understand were the ones which read like Chinese. I didn't deliberately translate my Chinese into English but unconsciously they just appear in my writing. I just don't know how to improve and it is no use to ask people to proof read for me either. I don't know what I should do...” (Participant 2, Interview 3)

“... It's a matter of logical thinking. I need to modify my logical thinking which is very different from the one of foreigners. There is a distance between English and Chinese writing styles, and the presentation of different ideas...” (Participant 10, Interview 4)

According to Kim (1988), learning a TL also enables TL learners to *think* in the way the TL native speakers think because language patterns and thought patterns are closely interrelated. To be able to think or present ideas as the TL native speakers do may demand the participants' time and effort to transfer themselves from the L1 system to the L2 system. With a relatively limited amount of time, it is therefore important for the participants to transform themselves as quickly as possible to the L2 system, since at the final stage of their study they are expected to present their work in L2 at a considerably high level to complete their studies.

Summary

This chapter has dealt with the cultural and linguistic distance between the participants' L1 and L2 in general. In relation to cultural distance, issues related to social cultural distance and academic cultural distance were discussed. Issues related to academic cultural distance appeared to be more important than those related to social cultural distance because of the main concern of the participants in the research environment - to achieve academic success. With limited knowledge of the TL academic culture, including teaching and learning styles, and academic expectation, the participants confronted difficulties in relation to their social life and academic work, which may directly and indirectly influence their TL learning in the research environment.

In order to adjust to a new environment and to achieve academic success, acculturation is suggested to be necessary for the participants, through which they are expected to make certain degrees of change to accustom themselves to the new environment and to benefit their everyday life and studies in the TL environment. Through the process of acculturation, the participants are able not only to experience the social aspect of TL culture but also to gain TL competence to benefit their academic work. The TL competence gained by the participants from their life in the research environment includes communicative competence, sociolinguistic competence, and academic TL competence, which are the three important by-products of living and learning the TL in an authentic TL environment.

According to the participants, the present research found three different types of relationship between the understanding of TL culture (UTLC), TL performance (TLP), and academic achievement (AA): circular, linear, and partial relationships. In the circular relationship, there is a close connection between UTLC, TLP, and AA, i.e. these three elements influence each other and are closely connected with each other. In the linear relationship, there are two types of linear connections between UTLC, TLP, and AA. In the first type of partial relationship, there is a connection only between UTLC and TLP, while the second model of partial relationship demonstrates that the three elements are individual factors and do not have any connection with each other. A conclusion can be drawn from these three different types of relationships between UTLC, TLP, and AA,

which is that students from different academic fields may face different demands on their TL, although it is commonly recognized among the participants that there is an influential connection between UTLC and TLP.

The second half of this chapter focussed on the linguistic distance between the participants' L1 and L2, and L2-AE and L2-BE. The main purpose of this section was to identify the language learning difficulties of the participants. Detailed discussions of TL learning difficulties in relation to environmental contextual factors will be further presented in the following chapters, Chapters Five and Six. However, the general linguistic distance indicated by the participants led to the two experiences of language shock and TL learning difficulties. The first experience of language shock is associated with listening and speaking skills, and the second experience of language shock is associated with writing skills. Language shock is suggested by the present research to be the confusion and doubt that language learners face when they have to perform the TL both in verbal and written forms.

In relation to TL learning difficulties, vocabulary learning is indicated by the participants to be the general language difficulty in relation to all four language skills. Although having learned the TL since junior high school, the amount of acquired TL vocabulary is considered to be insufficient by the participants, who have to use the TL both in formal and informal situations in the research environment. Additionally, it is suggested by the present research that the participants confront more language difficulties when they exercise active language skills, speaking and writing, and fewer obstacles when they practise passive language skills, listening and reading. Such conclusion may indicate that the transition from L2 into L1 may be easier than the transition of L1 into L2, which requires the participants to utilize L2 precisely and correctly.

Language learning difficulties related to the transformation between L1 and L2 are regarded as to be more difficult than solely L2 grammatical errors. The transformation between L1 and L2 includes not only the conversion between two different languages but also the conversion of two different cultures. To be able to attain academic success, the participants are expected to transform their L1 thinking and writing styles into the L2

system, which can be regarded as part of the process of acculturation.

Some of the TL difficulties in relation to the four language skills that were indicated by the participants may be considered to be closely related to the TL environment, such as the lack of opportunities to speak in the TL, and some of them may be related to individual learner factors, such as personality and the transformation between L1 and L2. The following two chapters, Chapters Five and Six, will closely examine these specific issues.

Chapter Five

Environmental Contextual Factors in Self-directed Target Language Learning (SDTLL) in an Authentic TL Environment

Introduction

The TL learning environment of the participants in the present research, an authentic ESL learning environment, is regarded as a very different TL learning environment from the participants' previous TL learning environment in Taiwan, the EFL learning environment. The target language learning (TLL) of the participants in the research environment is facilitated and supported by various resources accessible in the authentic TL environment where they live. Consequently, the transformation of the TLL environment, from EFL to ESL, is regarded as an essential factor in relation to the participants' TL development.

According to Kramsch (1991, p.177), language learning environments can be classified into four categories: (1) topographically different settings, such as instructional or natural environments; (2) different discourse genres in each of these settings, such as dialogues or oral or written narratives; (3) different discourse forms within each genre, such as instructional or communicative; and (4) different linguistic contexts of occurrence. It is suggested that the TL learning environment in the present research consists of features included in these four categories. These four categories can be observed and seen to co-exist in the language learning environment of the present research, and they are regarded as interactional. The figure below, Figure 5.1., illustrates the relationship between these four language learning environments in the present research.

Figure 5.1. The relationship of the four categories of language learning environments, different discourse genres (DDGs), different discourse forms (DDFs), different linguistic contexts (DLCs) in the research environment

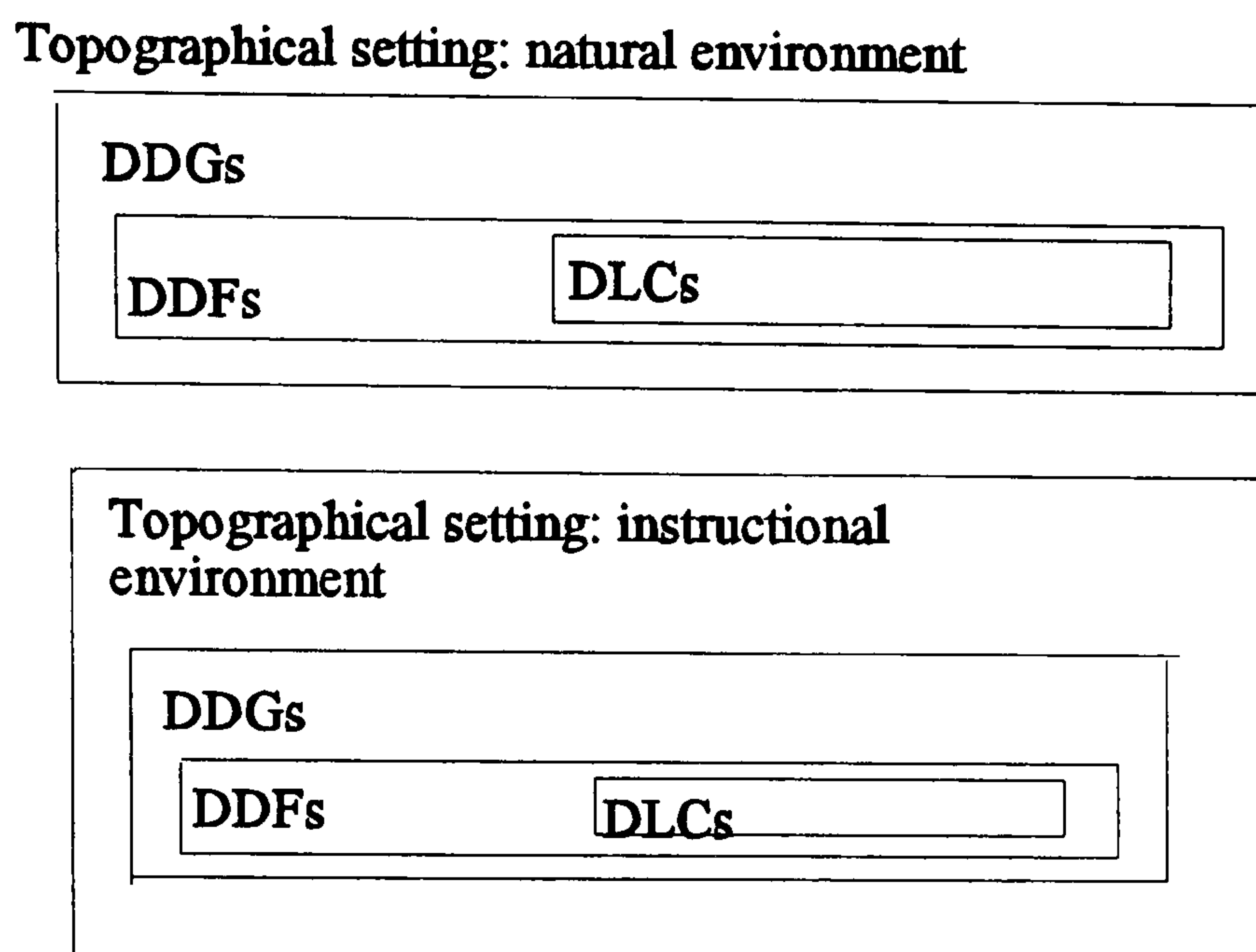


Figure 5.1. illustrates the characteristics of the TL learning environment of the present research study. According to this figure, the natural environment is considered as a broader concept which consists of another topographical setting, the instructional environment. The instructional environment provides a more structured learning framework to language learners. According to Kramsch (1991), who classifies these four categories but does not indicate the relationships between them, there are different discourse genres (DDGs), for example, dialogue, monologue, oral or written narrative in each of the settings. DDGs consist of different discourse forms (DDFs), for example, instructional, or communicative forms. DDFs consist of different linguistic contexts of occurrence (DLCs), for example, people (teachers, tutors) or materials (knowledge in various forms). Because of this co-existence of the four categories of language learning environments, the participants have more general contact with the TL than they had in Taiwan.

“... If you want to improve your language competence then you’ll need to use it more often, and it helps your language development staying in an environment where you have to use the language. I get to know some vocabulary used in everyday life here and you need to use them on some certain occasions. You often hear them and then you know how to use them. It is more effective than just reading them in texts...” (Participant 2, Interview 2)

TL learning in the present research therefore refers to the practice of the four language skills, and the learning/ acquisition of cultural and linguistic elements in the research environment. The various facilities and resources in the research environment facilitate the participants' TL learning in relation to their academic studies and everyday life.

5.1. Environmental contextual factors

The environmental contextual factors in the present research refer to two concepts in the natural language learning environment: (1) the authentic TL input from the environment; and (2) the available resources which the participants utilize to facilitate their SLL. Concept two will be discussed in detail in the second half of this chapter. The present section adopts a sociolinguistic approach in analysing the SLL of the participants in the research environment, which is due to the close link between the TL sociocultural elements in the research environment, including authentic TL input and TL cultural norms which can be observed through TL input, and the SLL of the participants, which is closely influenced by the authentic TL input and authentic TL cultural elements.

5.1.1. Authentic TL environment

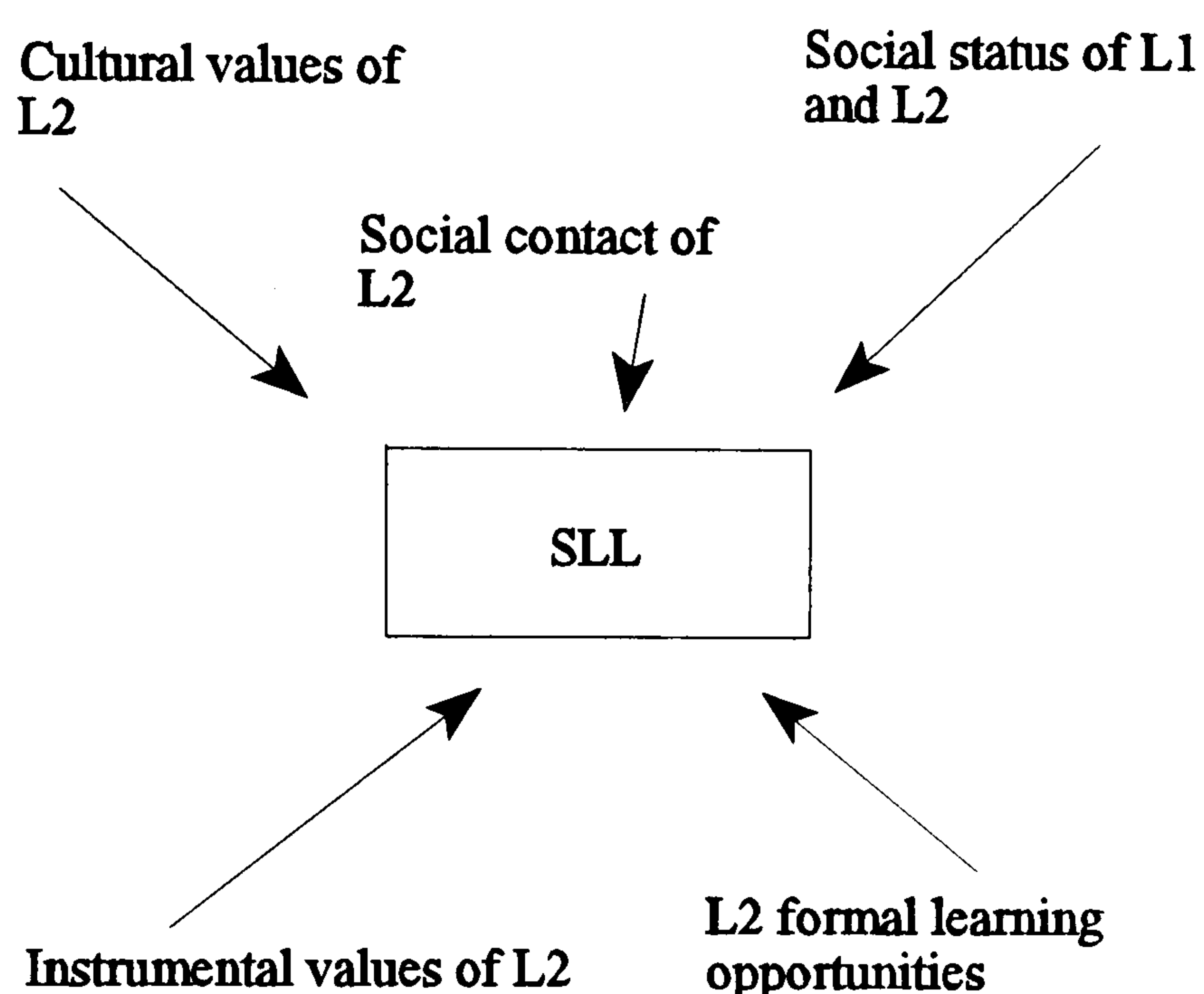
Languages can be regarded as a primary social mechanism and a language learned in an authentic social context is considered to be influenced more by sociocultural or environmental factors than a language learned in the language classroom because of the complexities of a society, and the interactions between the TL society and the language learners (Spolsky, 1989). Spear and Mocker (1984), whose study was based on interviews carried out with 78 self-directed learners, claim that self-directed learners rely heavily on environments to guide their learning. Stern (1983) indicates that a social context where L2 learning activities can take place may be regarded as a set of factors which is likely to have a powerful influence on the process of language learning.

“... I learn some phrases, words - both good and bad, by watching TV. I learned ‘piss off’ watching a film on TV yesterday...” (Participant 8, Interview 4)

The possible influence of sociocultural factors on SLL in the L2 environment is concluded by Stern (1983) as consisting of: (1) the relative social status of the L1 and L2; (2) the instrumental value of the L2; (3) the cultural values of the L2; (4) the political factors; (5)

social opportunities for contact with the L2; and (6) the opportunities for learning the L2 offered in the school. With regard to these six categories of factors in the present research, category (4), political factors, is considered as less relevant because the purposes of TL learning for the participants in the research environment are mainly academic and communicative. Figure 5.2. below indicates the influence of sociocultural or environmental factors on the participants' SLL.

Figure 5.2. Sociocultural/ environmental factors of the participants' SLL in the research environment



Discussions of the cultural values of L2 held by the participants can be seen in Chapter Four. The other four factors: (1) social status of L1 and L2; (2) instrumental values of L2; (3) social contact of L2; and (4) the L2 formal learning opportunities are regarded as essential factors in relation to the environment will be further discussed in the present chapter. Discussions related to the instrumental value factors of the participants can be seen in this chapter and Chapter Six, which focuses on the individual learner factors.

“... I have very limited contact with the English people but I think that the way which the cleaner speaks is very interesting. I usually have to pay more attention to listen to what she says. She knows more about international students, what we know and what we don't know. As long as she thinks that is some thing we don't know, then she will explain it more...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

The social contact of L2 in the TL environment is considered by the participants as an influential factor in relation to their SLL. According to Freed (1990), some L2 learners at some stages of SLL may facilitate their TLL with informal TL learning opportunities while some L2 learners may feel hindered by the informal contact with the TL, such as talking with local people who speak with heavy local accents, in relation to their SLL. The following section will provide a close examination of the influence of L2 social contact on the participants' SLL in the research environment.

5.1.1.a. On the campus

The campus is an important environment where students' academic and social activities take place. As overseas students, the participants are entitled to university accommodation, which is mostly located on the campus, allocated by the accommodation office of the University. The university campus can, therefore, be a focal point of the participants' life. All of the eleven participants in the present research lived in university accommodation. Ten of the participants stayed in general accommodation on the campus, where they were allocated to live together with other students, including local students and students from different regions of the UK and the world, while one of the participants stayed with his family in university accommodation off the campus. According to the present research, the participant who lived together with his family off the campus had a different experience of L2 social contact with local people than the other ten participants.

“... My family is here with me so the people I have contact with are not only the ones in the university but also my children's teachers and others, consequently the contents of our talks are more mixed and wider...” (Participant 6, Interview 1)

However, this difference was due to the additional social role, the parental role, which this specific participant had to carry out in supervision of his children's school work and after-school social activities. The additional opportunities to have contact with different social groups of people in the authentic TL environment enabled this particular participant to experience different uses of TL which helped his general communicative competence and also provided him with another TL resource in his SDTLL.

According to the participants, including the one who lived off the campus with his family, most of their social activities which were closely connected with their TL activities were based on the campus. The forms of the daily and TL activities among these eleven participants are classified into two categories: (1) active activity and, (2) less-active activity. Table 5.1. below explains the definitions of these two categories. The indicator used in this scale is the degree of the TL involvement in the participants' daily activities. As long as the participants' TL is involved in an activity, either in the forms of listening, speaking, reading or writing, such an activity will be classified as an "active" activity. Meanwhile, if the participants' mother tongue languages, Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese, are involved, it is to be classified as "less - active" activity.

Table 5.1. Categories of TL activities undertaken by the participants

Genre	Definition
Active activity	TL is constantly involved throughout the activity in the form of listening, speaking, reading or writing, such as talking to supervisors, listening to lectures, reading research-related material, or writing dissertations, and theses.
Less -active activity	Mother tongue languages, Mandarin Chinese or Taiwanese, are mainly involved throughout the activity but at the same time some code-switching of TL and L1 is also taking place, such as talking to Mandarin speakers from Singapore and Hong Kong.

"... I don't think that I'm living in 100% English speaking environment because there are always Mandarin/ Taiwanese speakers around me. I would say 80% of my time is in Mandarin Chinese environment..." (Participant 3, Interview 4)

Because of the collective characteristic of Chinese culture, native Mandarin Chinese speakers have a tendency to gather together for either social purposes or personal needs. It is therefore not necessary for the participants in the research environment to speak the TL at all times.

"... The most influential factor in relation to my SDTLL here is things related to my research work. All the things I write and read are related to my research topic. I spend a lot of time on it (my research work)..." (Participant 1, Interview 1)

“... I haven't make the most use of the authentic TL environment where I'm situated. I always stay with Taiwanese and use Chinese all the time, thinking in Chinese, taking notes in Chinese...”
(Participant 11, Interview 4)

According to the participants, active activities take place more often in situations which are related to their academic work or to talking to their housemates in their accommodation, and yet they may have opportunities to speak Mandarin Chinese or Taiwanese while gathering together with Taiwanese, Chinese, and ethnic Chinese students for individual social purposes.

5.1.1.b. Off the campus

The term “off the campus” in the present discussion indicates that the participants are physically away from the campus, which may suggest that they have greater opportunities in contact with other local people than when they are on the campus where university staff, lecturers, supervisors, coursemates or housemates may come from different regions of the UK and different parts of the world. Although campus is the focal point of the participants' life in the present research, because of their main concern in the research environment is their academic success, the participants still have opportunities to experience and observe certain aspects of local people's life. Shopping in supermarkets or going out for meals in pubs or restaurants can be regarded as a good opportunity to experience the cultural environment of local people.

“... Attending church gatherings provides important opportunities for speaking and listening. I'm able to understand things are different from my research area, belonging to cultural elements. Basically having contacts with NSs helps my language learning, especially in listening and speaking...” (Participant 2, Interview 1)

Through talking to local people while doing grocery shopping or having drinks or meals in local pubs or restaurants or other social gatherings, the participants of the present research study have involved themselves in active TL activities because they have to use the TL to communicate with local people. On most of the occasions, the TL is the main means of communication off the campus for the participants in the present research. Participant 6, whose family were with him, had additional opportunities to observe other aspects of local life and culture during his social contacts with either the school teachers

of his two children, classmates or parents of classmates of his two children or other events which were closely related to his children or wife.

“... Days ago, the ‘string’ of my daughter’s violin needed to be changed and I didn’t know how to say it in English because it’s not related to my research work and perhaps it’s not commonly used in everyday conversation. So, I went to the violin maker and found out that the ‘string’ is called ‘hair’ in English. Well, you’ll never know how it is called unless you come across the situation and need to find it out...” (Participant 6, Interview 4)

Participant 6 indicated that there were both advantages and disadvantages to have his family living with him. The advantages he had living with his family was that he was provided with opportunities to experience other aspects of local culture, for example the teacher-parental relationship in the primary school his children attended, and yet at the same time having his family living with him also reduced his opportunities to use TL whenever he was with his family. It is therefore suggested that Participant 6 had more opportunities *off the campus* than other participants in the present research to experience active TL activities in his communications with local people, such as his children’s school teachers or classmates, because of the additional social role, the parental role, which he had to carry out in his daily life.

In SLL, it is generally believed that frequent contact with the L2 can benefit most of the L2 learners’ development of SLL. Such a statement has been supported by the participants of the present research. However, the degree to which the participants can benefit from frequent contact with the TL in relation to their SLL is difficult to measure or picture in graphs. According to Freed (1990), whose study of 38 students of French as a foreign language taking part in a six-week summer abroad programme reports on the effects of out-of-class contact on the achievement and proficiency of students in this programme, informal contact with native speakers does not make a difference in oral proficiency or grammatical achievement. The present research reflects a different viewpoint to Freed’s (1990). According to the eleven participants of the present research, all of them positively recognized the effectiveness of direct contact with the TL in the research environment in relation to their overall SDTLL in interviews two and four, which took place during week eight of term one and weeks seven to nine of term two. According to the participants in

the present research, all of the four language skills of the participants benefited from living in the authentic TL environment. It is therefore suggested by the present research that a longitudinal observation of L2 learners may reveal a different perspective on the process of SLL than Freed's (1990) study which is of a short-term.

“... When your listening and speaking have been improved, your writing at the same time will be improved too...” (Participant 4, Interview 3)

A longitudinal observation in the present research study allowed some issues to emerge along with the participants' different stages of TL development. For example, the development of TL listening and speaking competence is regarded as urgent for the participants when they first arrive in the research environment because they need to communicate with others in the TL. Yet at the final stage of their academic studies, the development of TL writing competence is regarded as central to the participants' TLL because of requirements from their academic studies. The strength of a longitudinal study is, therefore, recognized through these findings. Table 5.2. below indicates which of the four language skills the participants thought benefited the most from living in the authentic TL environment, as indicated by the participants in interviews two and four of the present research study.

Table 5.2. The most improved language skill(s) of the participants

Participant	Interview - 2 : most improved language skill(s)	Interview - 4 : most improved language skills
1	Writing	Listening
2	Listening	Listening
3	Listening	Writing
4	Listening	Listening and Speaking
5	Listening and Speaking	Listening and Speaking
6	Listening	Listening
7	Listening	Writing
8	Listening	Listening
9	Listening	Listening
10	Listening	Listening
11	Speaking	Speaking

According to Table 5.2., listening is the language skill which the participants considered to be the most improved while staying in the authentic TL environment. As indicated by some of the participants, such as Participants 5 and 11, they had difficulty in comprehending a series of TL input when they newly arrived in the UK, yet as they stayed longer in the research environment, it became less and less difficult for them to understand TL input from other NSs. The various British accents of NSs in the research environment was regarded by the participants as a fundamental difficulty to overcome in relation to listening comprehension for the participants of the present research.

“... I think language is a lively thing. You’ll have to live in that environment then you’ll naturally have to respond to the language. You’ll have to force yourself to get familiar with the language then your language skills will be improved. Well, for example (I) have learned English grammar for a long time in Taiwan but you (I) just simply can’t speak the language because we don’t have that environment (for you to speak the language). As for myself, my listening skill has been improved the most, especially in the following three months after I arrived here. The listening skill benefits the most from the authentic environment...” (Participant 9, Interview 2)

The participants needed some time to accustom themselves to the different British accents held by different TL NSs in the research environment. Some participants, such as Participant 6 who had been in the research environment for three years, indicated that they still have obstacles in understanding some TL NSs even though they have been in the research environment for quite a long period of time. Consequently, being able to understand others seemed to be an important indicator for the participants in the present research to use as a reference to evaluate which of their language skills has benefited the most from living the authentic TL environment.

“... Doing research means a lot of reading. (Reading more books) then I’ll have more contact with all kinds of vocabulary and then I’ll enlarge my vocabulary. But knowing a certain vocabulary doesn’t always mean I can use it in my daily conversation.... The influence of doing research on my listening can be seen when I have classes (seminars). For example, you (I) will understand what classmates and teachers are talking about (in seminars) because you (I) have done some reading before already. You (I) can catch a specific word and a special use of word (while listening to classmates and lecturers).... As for writing, since I’ve been reading a lot, it somehow helps. I’m able to pick up some vocabulary to use in my writing...” (Participant 9, Interview 2)

Freed (1993), in another research study on the linguistic impact of studying abroad indicates that interactive out-of-class contact, such as time spent with friends, helped grammatical achievement for lower-level students but non-interactive out-of-class contact, such as reading or listening to the radio, helped upper-level students. Relating this point to the present research, although it is not possible to measure the grammatical achievement of the participants, some of the other language skills of the participants, as indicated by the participants, have been improved. According to the present research, both interactive and noninteractive contact can help some of the participants' listening and speaking skills, while some of the participants' reading and writing skills have been improved the most in non-interactive contact with the TL.

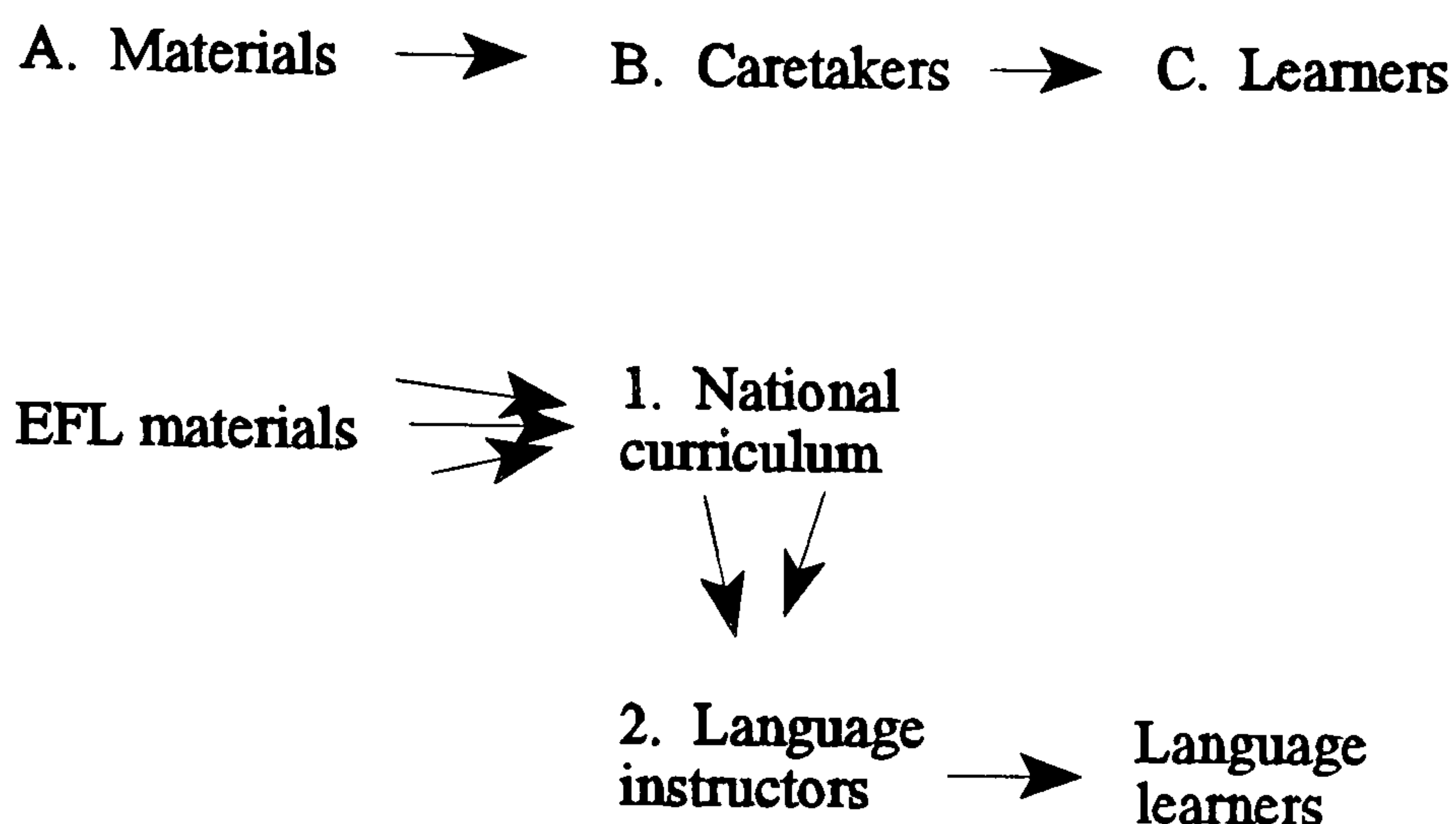
5.1.2. Authentic TL input

The authentic TL input has been considered to be an important characteristic of the present research. The authenticity and complexity of the TL environment provides the participants with opportunities to experience the genuine use of the TL for both communicative and academic purposes in the research environment. The TL input which the participants consistently receive in the research environment is not selected or controlled by any "caretakers" (Krashen, 1983), language instructors in the TL classrooms in Taiwan. Consequently, becoming accustomed to the authentic TL input is considered as an important and challenging task for the participants of the present research study, who have been educated in controlled and selected TL input during all of their previous TL education in Taiwan.

“... I can't understand when people are talking about things relating to our daily life matters. They use very simple words in daily conversations when I talk to English people...” (Participant 8, Interview 2)

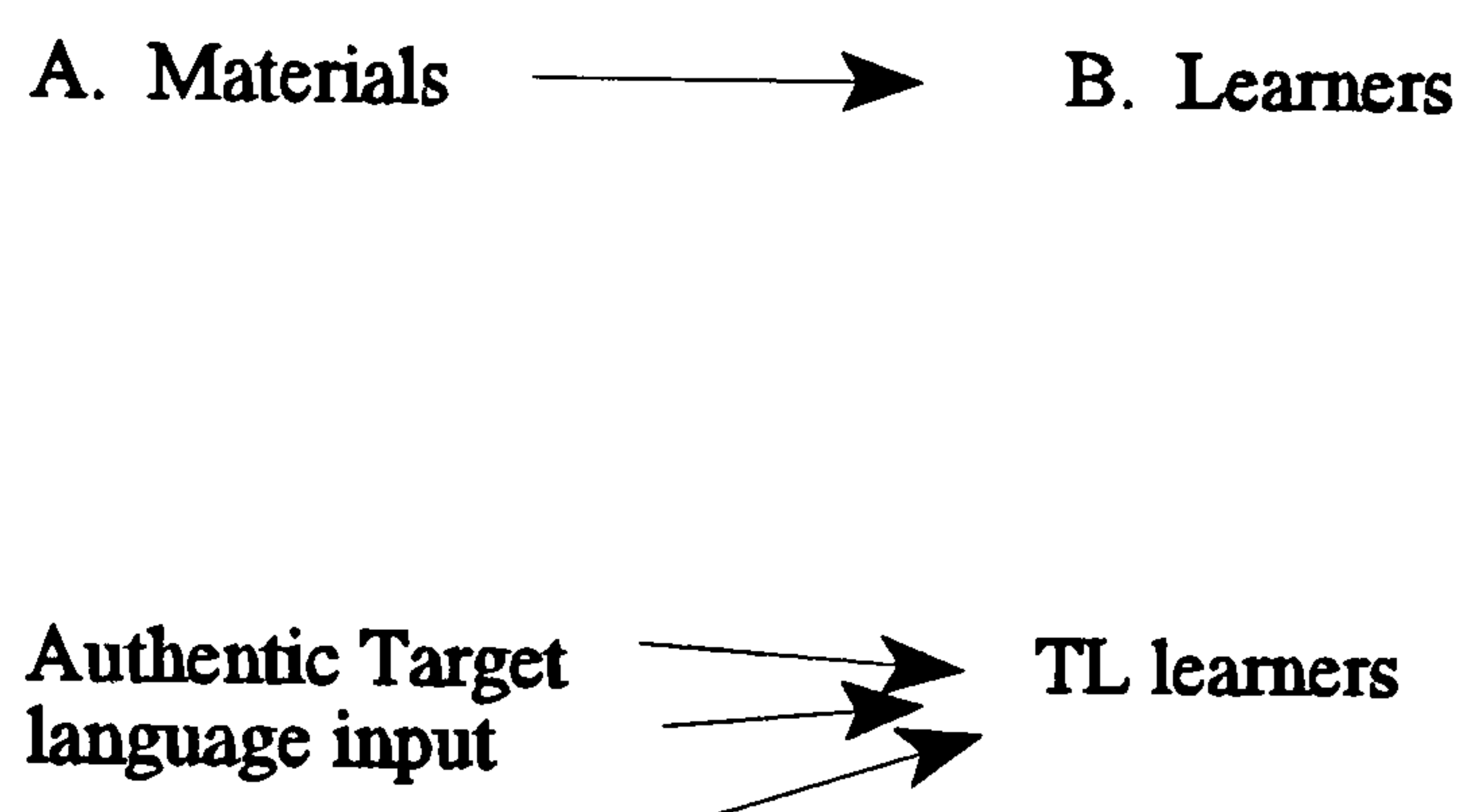
The transformation from English for educational purposes (EEP) to English for communicative and academic purposes (ECP and EAP) is therefore regarded as an important stage for the participants in relation to their target language learning (TLL) experience. The figures 5. 3. and 5.4 illustrate the differences between the participants' English learning in Taiwan and in the research environment.

Figure 5.3. English learning of the participants in Taiwan



According to Figure 5.3., there are three elements in SLL in Taiwan, (1) EFL learning materials; (2) Caretakers; and (3) EFL learners. The EFL materials are considered as selected materials which are designed to suit different levels of learners. There are two caretakers in Taiwan in relation to the procedure of TLL, the national curriculum and language instructors. The national curriculum selects or creates certain EFL materials for students at different levels of schools, and then language instructors select suitable materials to teach different levels of students. Generally, EFL teachers who teach at junior high schools in Taiwan are requested to teach what is listed in the national curriculum because junior high school education, up to age 15, is part of the obligatory education in Taiwan. All students at junior high schools are legally guaranteed with equality in relation to learning contents. Yet EFL teachers who teach at senior high schools in Taiwan have more authority to select suitable materials to meet the educational needs of different levels of students, because senior high school education is considered as optional education. Students at ordinary high schools may learn more English than the ones at vocational high schools. Consequently, the fact is that EFL learners in Taiwan receive finely tuned EFL materials and contents, to meet national standards, during their EFL education in Taiwan, and the purpose of English language learning is aimed at English for educational purposes (EEP).

Figure 5.4. English learning of the participants in the research environment



According to Figure 5.4., there are only two elements in the participants' SLL in the research environment, (1) materials, and (2) learners. Comparing Figure 5.4. with Figure 5.3., the element of the caretaker is removed in Figure 5.4, which means that TL learners in Figure 5.4. are exposed to enormously rich and uncontrolled authentic TL input in the research environment. Without the help of a caretaker in their SLL, the participants, especially those who have recently arrived ones, may therefore find that the authentic target language input they receive in the research environment is less comprehensible than the TL input they used to receive in Taiwan. Consequently, the fundamental differences, in relation to contents of speech, between the two systems of TL input, controlled and selected in Taiwan and rich and complex in the research environment, are regarded as a key issue in the participants' SLL in the research environment.

“... I read a lot but I don't know how to speak in daily conversations. My Japanese friend has a big vocabulary but the words she uses are mostly seen in academic writing. She speaks in a very formal way too. I know some academic words from reading and I know I shouldn't use them in daily conversations, but I simply don't know how to communicate with others. They use very simple words in their daily life but I don't know how to use them...” (Participant 9, Interview 3)

TL input in the research environment is considered as focussing on the message not on the grammatical form, which indicates that the purposes of SLL for the participants in the research environment have also changed. Because of the switch in the TL learning

purposes, from EEP to ECP and EAP, the participants are expected not only to know the TL but also to actually use the TL to communicate with others and furthermore to use the TL as a means to reach their academic achievement. Discussions of issues related to the change in TL learning purposes, such as TL learning facilities and resources for the participants in the research environment, can be seen in section 5.2 of this chapter.

5.1.2.a. Standard TL input and dialects

The authenticity of the research environment provides the participants with a tremendously rich and complex TL input, in relation both to the linguistic aspect and the content of speech. As noted in previous chapters, only standard American English is taught in the language classroom in Taiwan. Nevertheless, apart from standard American English there are other varieties of English, including nonstandard English which is broadly used among NSs in an authentic English language environment. According to Thomas (1996), there are two major varieties of English used among English native speakers in general and they are: (1) standard English (SE); and (2) nonstandard English (NSE, or dialects). Table 5.3. below indicates the major differences between these two varieties of English.

Table 5.3. The definitions of standard and nonstandard English

Standard English (SE)	SE is taught in schools, used in the media and codified in dictionaries and grammars. It is associated with middle-class or educated speakers.
Nonstandard English (NSE)	There are greater regional variations in NSE. Speakers of NSE are not using a totally different system from SE speakers. NSE and SE are interlinking systems which may have more similarities and differences.

(Thomas, 1996, pp. 222-223)

Trudgill (1983) further indicates that standard English is usually used in print, and is normally taught in schools and to non-native speakers learning the language. The participants have been educated in AE in Taiwan, and consequently they may have less difficulty in understanding NSs of AE in the research environment.

“... One thing confuses me very much is the various accents they have here. I really want to hear that kind of Queen’s English by the news broadcasters.... I feel that as long as it’s BBC news programme then I’ll watch. I feel that the reporters of BBC speak standard English. Actually I can understand some local accents but the worst thing is that I will spontaneously to learn to speak with that kind of strange accent when I listen to it, which is not very good for my English. No positive

benefit at all. So, I try my best not to listen to those (strange accents) and as long as it's standard English then I will learn it..." (Participant 3, Interview 2)

The participants may feel more puzzled or even frustrated when they communicate with NSs of NSE in the research environment, especially when they are newly arrived in the research environment.

(1) BE

The TL input in the research environment is regarded as British English (BE), which is different from the TL input, American English (AE), which the participants used to be taught in Taiwan. Consequently, the participants may have to adjust themselves to some of the linguistic differences between the TL they have acquired in Taiwan, AE, and the TL they actually use in the research environment, BE. Such specific linguistic adjustment, however, plays an important part in the participants' SLL in the research environment.

"... I don't know why I can't understand others too well, such as that kind of accent from Manchester. Of course not everyone from Manchester is incomprehensible to me. We have two students from Manchester in our accommodation, one of them speaks very clearly but the other just mumbles..." (Participant 10, Interview 1)

When caretakers are removed from the participants' SLL system in the research environment, an authentic TL environment, the participants have to develop stronger linguistic skills to comprehend various uncontrolled authentic TL input. Without the help of caretakers in the research environment, the participants may require some time to adjust themselves to the new TL system. According to the participants, there are three linguistic components which they recognized as major differences between AE and BE: accents; some lexical items; and dialects and colloquial use of the TL. These linguistic differences can be also considered as important linguistic features in an authentic TL environment, which the participants may have fewer or no opportunities to confront with when they are in the controlled EFL environment, Taiwan.

Accents It is suggested that English has various accents and English accents have different phonetic systems, and accents consist of pronunciation (Wright, 1996). According to Wright (1996), there are various components which make up an English accent and these components include consonants and vowels, patterns of intonation. Accents vary regionally and across different social groups and social variables, such as class, age, sex and ethnicity. No attempt will be made to discuss the creation of different English accents, as this is less related to the present research, but issues related to the influences of various accents on the participants' SLL in the research environment will now be examined.

“... I have more difficulties in speaking to local people. I have difficulties with people whom I've never had any contact with before and when they speak with strong accents. People from other countries have less accents, especially ESL speakers who have been through formal and standard language education. Apart from their (ESL speakers') L1 accents, their accents are not as strong as local people so their English is easier to understand. In addition to their local accents, NSs also use slang which we don't learn from our text books...” (Participant 7, Interview 4)

When the participants newly arrive in the research environment, both those who had and those who had never previously studied in an authentic BE environment, tend to have different degrees of difficulties in comprehending a different kind of accent spoken by English people, the BE accent. However, according to some of the participants, the general difference between the AE and BE accents, and the differences between regional BE accents created not only linguistic obstacles but also psychological difficulties in listening and speaking the TL in the research environment.

“.. It is very embarrassing to come across people with some strange English accents and also Scottish accents because I can't understand what they talk about but they expect you (me) to understand them.... I don't feel comfortable talking to people like them and try not to talk to them. After talking for one or two sentences then I'll know I don't understand what they are talking about. So, I'll try to avoid talking to them...” (Participant 11, Interview 3)

The variety of accents is regarded as a fundamental linguistic characteristic of the uncontrolled authentic TL input in the research environment, which is also recognized as one of the linguistic difficulties which the participants have in relation to their SLL in the research environment.

Dialects and colloquial use of the TL

Dialects consist of grammar, lexical items and their meanings, and pronunciation (Wright, 1996). According to Wardhaugh (1998), there are two forms of dialects: regional dialects, which are geographically based; and social dialects, which are social class-, religion-, and ethnicity-based. The dialects with which the participants are confronted in the research environment are considered as a mixture of these two forms. The colloquial use of the TL is regarded as commonly used by the NSs in an authentic TL environment, where standard and nonstandard uses of language are both accepted on different occasions in the society.

“... I have less difficulties with slang, informal expressions or other daily use of words now. For most of the time (when I come across them), I ask the speaker(s) right away when I hear it...”

(Participant 6, Interview 2)

It is suggested by the present research that: (1) the longer the participants stay in the research environment, the more the participants may be able to understand the use of the nonstandard TL, and then later they may be able to actually communicate with others in the nonstandard forms of the TL in the research environment; (2) due to the fact that various regional accents are spoken throughout the UK, even though some of the participants had previous experience in studying in other regions of the UK, they still require some time to get used to the authenticity of the TL in the research environment.

(2) TL input from other English native speakers

The research environment, a university campus, consists of people from different parts of the world, including NSs of the TL from the USA, Canada, Australia, India and so forth. Consequently, the participants have opportunities to communicate with not only British NSs but also NSs of the TL from other countries.

“... I like Canadians because I’m more familiar with their accent. The more familiar I am with the accent, the more I can understand what they talk about. I like listening to the Americans too - more comprehensible. The English speak with various accents which I can’t understand, and because I can’t understand then I can’t respond to it...” (Participant 11, Interview 4)

Some of the participants indicated that they can understand more and feel more comfortable while talking to people from North America than talking to local people, which may be because the participants are more familiar with AE.

5.1.2.b. ESL input

The research environment, a university campus, can be described as a small scale multicultural community, in which students are come different parts of the world. According to the statistics from the International Office of the University (1996), 881 overseas students from 94 different countries, 254 undergraduate, 429 postgraduate, 183 undergraduate visiting, and 29 postgraduate visiting students, study at the University and most of them, 82 per cent, are ESL students (723 out of 881). Being situated in such a multicultural community, the participants may therefore have opportunities to socialize with other overseas students, for whom English is also their TL in the research environment. Additionally, apart from the campus, the participants may also have chances to communicate with other ESL speakers elsewhere when they either go shopping in town or go travelling to other cities in the UK, which can be regarded as a bigger scale multicultural community.

The opportunity to communicate with other ESL students or speakers can be seen as another characteristic of the authentic TL environment, which the participants may have rather fewer chances to encounter in Taiwan.

“... The people that I have conversations with at the university are mostly non-English. Perhaps it’s (the high proportion of non-English students studying this subject) very common in my department. We often joke that we are just like a united nation. People who often sit together and chat (with us) are Indians, Japanese, Korean, recently we have people from Sri Lanka and Brazil...”
(Participant 6, Interview 1)

The authenticity of the research environment provides the participants with great opportunities to experience totally uncontrolled TL input, which is rich both in speech content and TL linguistic features, SE and NSE. Because of the total change in the TL learning environment, from a controlled to an uncontrolled environment, the participants may need some time to transform themselves to a new dimension of TLL in the research environment, where the TL is no longer a body of knowledge but a means of communication which the participants have to utilize in their daily life in the research environment.

5.1.3. TL social contact

According to the participants, the TL social contact between the participants and other members of the research environment is considered as involving situations with certain degrees of psychological influence in relation to their SLL in the research environment. The different psychological states, being afraid of making language mistakes, which the participants have while talking to NSs and NNSs of TL are regarded by the participants as an important factor influencing both their TL performance and TL learning in the research environment. The participants' feeling of being afraid of making language mistakes is regarded as a unique consequence of the encounter with authentic TL input in the research environment. Sections 5.1.3.a. and 5.1.3.b. will discuss this specific topic in detail.

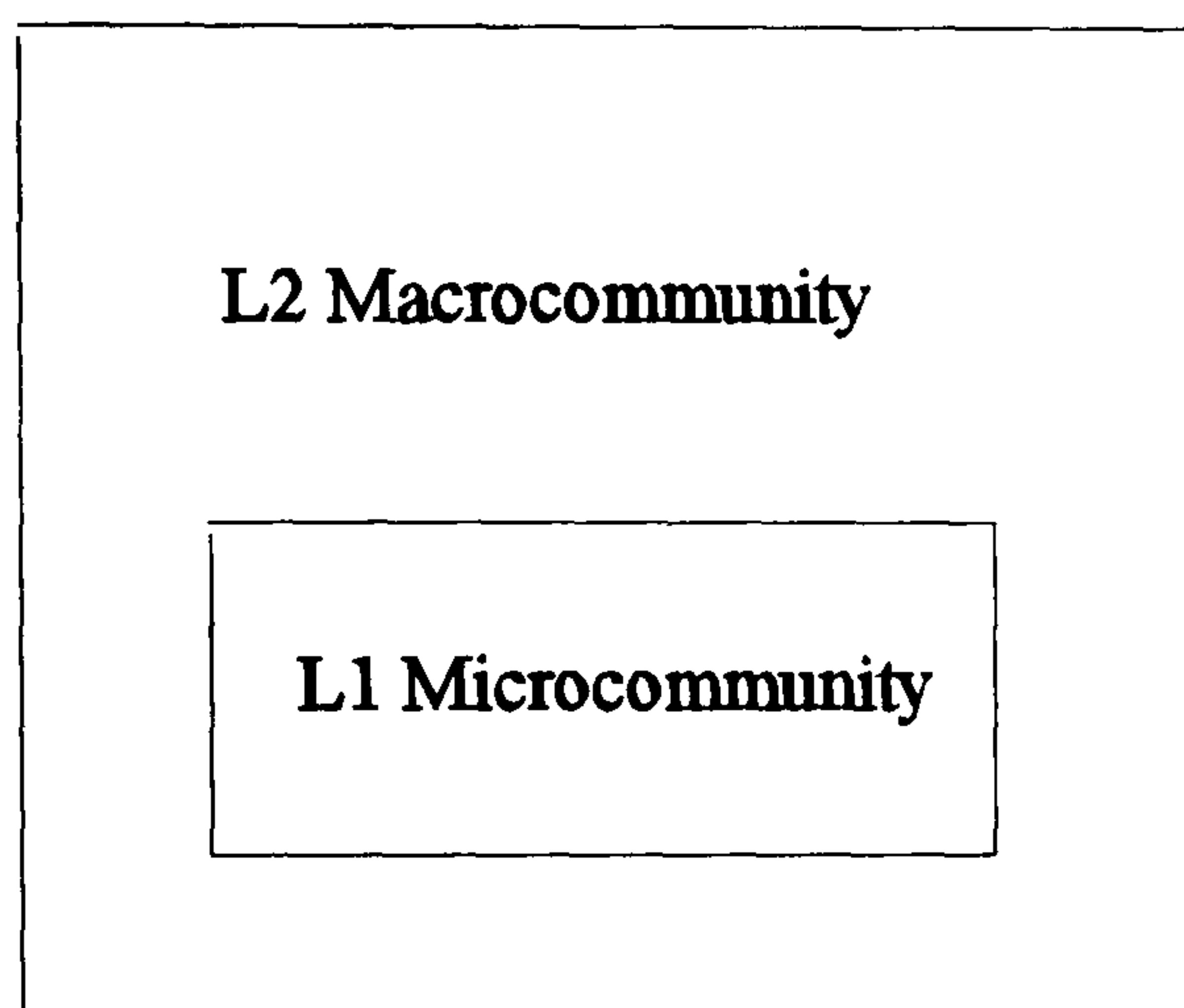
Before continuing to the discussions of the consequences of TL social contact between the participants and NSs and NNSs of the TL, two issues need to be taken into consideration to provide some insight into these discussions. These two factors are: (1) the social status of the L1 and L2; and (2) the instrumental value of the L2. Discussions of these two factors will reveal that the participants are in fact in a dilemma - to improve communicative competence or to improve academic English, and the decision the participants make in relation to their SLL in this respect will directly influence not only the consequences of their social contact with the TL, but also the consequences of their SLL in the research environment.

Social status of L1 and L2 Although the research environment is considered to be a multicultural community, the participants' L1, Mandarin Chinese or Taiwanese, is not a means of communication among most of the other members of the community. There are occasions that the participants may still use their L1 to communicate with other Mandarin Chinese speakers on the campus.

“... I often socialise with Chinese so have very little time in speaking English. The only occasion to speak English is when I talk with my housemates who are overseas students. The contents of conversations are not too difficult though...” (Participant 11, Interview 2)

The social status of the participants' L1 and L2 are distinct: L2 as a main means of communication in the macrocommunity, the L2 community; and L1 as a main means of communication in the microcommunity, the L1 community. Figure 5.5. below indicates the social relationship between the participants' L1 and L2 in the research environment.

Figure 5.5. The social relationship between the participants' L1 and L2 in the research environment: Model 1



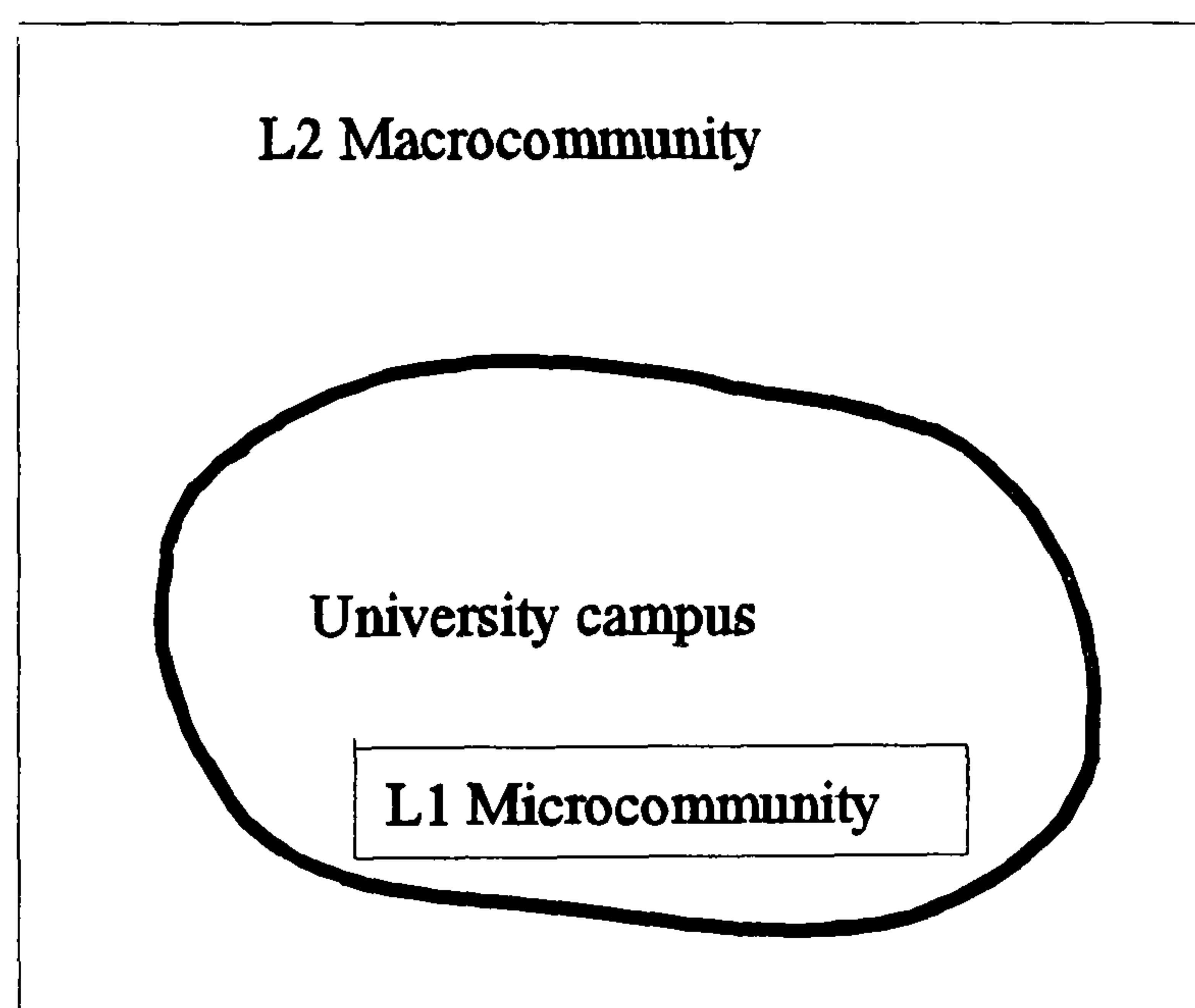
According to Figure 5.5., the L1 microcommunity is part of the L2 macrocommunity, and consequently the importance of the L1 of the participants in the macrocommunity is less than that of the L2. Fluency in the L2 is therefore an important task for the participants to master. In this model, the L2 communicative competence can be regarded as a general linguistic competence which the participants need to acquire in order to communicate with other members in the L2 macrocommunity. Consequently, the participants will have to improve their speaking and listening skills, which are regarded by the participants as the least developed skills among their four language skills, in order to benefit the development of their L2 communicative competence.

Instrumental value of the L2 The instrumental value of the L2 held by the participants can be classified into two categories: (1) academic instrumental value; and (2) integrative instrumental value. The participants who give stronger academic value to the TL may emphasize more the improvement of their academic language skills, while the participants giving less stronger integrative value to the TL may emphasize the improvement of their communicative language skills.

“... My primary concern is my research study, others are not important. I keep writing essays and have no time for other social life at all. My research study is the most influential factor in my TL learning here now...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

Figure 5.6. below explains another model of the social relationship of the participants' L1 and L2 in the research environment.

Figure 5.6. The social relationship of the participants' L1 and L2 in the research environment: Model 2



According to Figure 5.6., the participants' L1 microcommunity is regarded as part of the university campus. Consequently, it is suggested that the participants will have more close interaction with the other members of the university campus than the members in the L2 macrocommunity.

”... I think that I've been in this environment for so long and I should have been able to speak English pretty well, but I haven't sensed that improvement yet. I don't think I study hard enough (in relation to TLL). But, on the other hand, I don't think I just came here to learn the language. Well, very confusing. On one hand, I really want to learn the language well, but on the other hand..

It takes a lot of time to talk to others, especially when it comes to the speaking aspect of the language. Talking to NSs then you (I) can improve your (my) speaking competence. I don't have much time to talk to others to improve my speaking competence. Very frustrating..." (Participant 3, Interview 2)

Apart from the social interaction of the participants in this model, the instrumental value of L2 is to be taken into consideration in the discussion. Because of the strong emphasis on their academic success, the participants will put more efforts into improving their linguistic competence in reading and writing, which are the focal points of EAP. In other words, the participants will spend more time on reading academic related material and writing academic assignments, and less time on communicating with others, which is regarded as part of the integrative instrumental value of the L2. The emphasis on reading and writing, the non-interactive contact of L2, reduces the participants' opportunities for improving their speaking and listening skills, the interactive contact of L2. Consequently, it is suggested that the participants' speaking and listening skills do not fully benefit from the open linguistic opportunities provided by the L2 macrocommunity.

5.1.3.a. TL social contact with NSs and NNSs

The experience of participants' TL social contact with NSs and NNSs of the TL can be classified into two categories: (1) the linguistic and psychological aspect; and (2) the cultural aspect. As indicated previously, the participants regard their association with NSs and NNSs of the TL as a situation with certain degrees of psychological influence in relation to their SLL, so that it is necessary to understand the psychological circumstances of the participants when they socially associate with NSs and NNSs of the TL in the research environment.

"... Because of the cultural background, I like to speaking to Asian people better. Our culture is more similar to each other and I have more patience (while listening to others) too. Germans are simply impossible..." (Participant 11, 4)

"... It's much easier to talk to Asian people because we are all Asian and more familiar with each other. In addition, their language competence is not necessary better than yours but we can communicate with each other. They understand better the language difficulties we Asian people have while speaking in English. I feel it's easier to talk to them..." (Participant 9, Interview 4)

“... I have a different feeling while talking to the English. The more I want to speak well, the worse I will be. I’m not at ease talking to them. On the other hand, the language competence of us - NNSs is more or less the same. Of course, there are people whose English is very good. If they don’t understand then they won’t ask me, and if I don’t understand I won’t ask them. Everyone is so casual that it’s easier to talk to each other. I speak better when it’s a casual occasion, and performance worse when I feel pressured...” (Participant 8, Interview 3)

Table 5.4. below indicates the psychological circumstances which the participants have while talking to NSs and NNSs in the research environment.

Table 5.4. Psychological circumstance of the participants while talking to NSs and NNSs

Participant	Interview - 3 NSs	Interview - 3 NNSs	Interview - 4 NSs	Interview - 4 NNSs
1	o	x	o	x
2	x	x	x	x
3	o	x	o	#
4	#	#	o	x
5	o	x	x	x
6	o	x	o	x
7	o	o	o	#
8	o	x	o	x
9	o	x	o	x
10	x	x	x	x
11	o	x	#	#

“o” indicates that the participants feel nervous while talking

“x” indicates that the participants do not feel nervous while talking

“#” indicates that the participants sometimes feel nervous while talking but sometimes do not feel nervous while talking

According to Table 5.4., in interview three only two participants do not feel nervous while talking to NSs, and one participant indicates that it depends on how close she is to the people that she talks to. If she knows the people well, then she will not feel nervous but if she does not know the people then she will feel nervous while talking to them. On the other hand, there is only one participant who feels nervous while talking to NNSs whose TL competence is incompatible with his.

“... I find it tiring to talk to people whose TL competence is incompatible with mine. I have the feeling that I have to lead a conversation while talking to them. I have to speak in their level which makes me tired. I can't finish what I want to say quickly..” (Participant 7, Interview 4)

“... If you are close to the person you talk to then you don't feel nervous talking to that person and you want to express yourself more, but if you are not close to that person, both NSs and NNSs, the situation will be the same...” (Participant 4, Interview 3)

“... I feel the same talking to NSs and NNSs. As long as I am able to express myself well then it's ok...” (Participant 10, Interview 3)

In summary, two factors: (1) the level of TL competence, and (2) the degree of familiarity with people, are two causes to the participants' anxiety while talking to both NSs and NNSs. Personal confidence in TL reduces the participants' nervousness while talking to both NSs and NNSs.

In interview four, three participants point out that they do not feel stressed while talking to NSs, and one participant indicates that it depends on the people he talks to. Two participants are also the ones who claim that they do not feel stressed while talking to NSs in interview three. These two participants are suggested to have built up their confidence in using TL. In interview four, most of the participants do not feel nervous while talking to NNSs, but there are three participants who say that it depends on the NNSs they talk to. One participant indicates that she feels nervous while talking to NNSs whose English competence is fairly good. In contrast, another participant reported feeling nervous while talking to NNSs whose English competence is poor.

“... I don't feel the difference while talking to NSs and NNSs, almost the same. NNSs speak a bit slower than NSs...” (Participant 5, Interview 4)

“... It's easier to talk to NNSs because their language competence is more or less the same like mine and we have empathy for each other...” (Participant 11, Interview 4)

One factor can be concluded from interviews three and four to explain the reason why the participants do not feel nervous while talking to NSs: confidence in the use of TL. When the participants have confidence in using TL, they do not have anxiety while speaking to NSs. On the other hand, the reasons why the participants feel anxious while speaking TL to both NSs and NNSs are due to: (1) cultural elements (see discussions in Chapter Four and later in the present section); (2) linguistic factors (see discussions in Chapter Four and later in the present section); and (3) individual factors, which vary from one participant to the other, will be further discussed later in the present section and Chapter Six. Table 5.5. below indicates the average time per day which the participants spent talking to NSs and NNSs, this being information provided by the diaries kept by the participants on their TL social contact with NSs and NNSs.

Table 5.5. The average number of hours per day which the participants spent talking to NSs and NNSs

Participant	Term 1		Vacation		Term 2		Average		Condition of accommodation
	NSs	NNSs	NSs	NNSs	NSs	NNSs	NSs	NNSs	
1	2.50	0.11	1.98	0.24	2.41	0.33	2.39	0.22	Living with a NS in a college
2	0.35	0.53	0.33	0.56	0.45	0.18	0.39	0.37	Living with one Taiwanese and one NNSs in a house
3	1.22	1.07	0.13	1.08	0.41	0.49	0.75	0.84	Living with one Taiwanese and one NS from Australia
4	0.58	1.71	0.60	0.95	0.68	1.79	0.63	1.64	Living with two NNSs in a house
5	1.10	0.06	Away in Taiwan		1.69	0	1.25	0.05	Living in a college
6	0.83	0.83	0.79	0.93	0.74	1.01	0.79	0.92	Living with family in a house off campus
7	1.76	1.44	1.40	1.38	2.13	1.29	1.88	1.36	As a senior resident in a house with nine other students
8	0.26	0.16	Away in Taiwan		0.21	0.18	0.25	0.17	Living in a house with nine other students
9	0.96	0.56	0.76	0.45	1.08	0.56	0.98	0.54	Living with NSs from USA and Ireland in a house
10	1.20	1.36	0.36	2.21	1.29	1.95	1.12	1.77	Living in a big house with approximately twenty students
11	0.89	0.76	0.75	0.63	0.83	0.66	0.85	0.70	Living in a house with nine other students

According to Table 5.5., among these eleven participants, five of them have a time difference of more than 0.40 hour a day on average between talking to NSs and NNSs (see Table 5.6. below for details), and the remaining six participants spent an approximately equal amount of time speaking to NSs and NNSs.

Table 5.6. The time spent on between talking to NSs and NNSs among the participants

Category	Participant	The average time difference per day
Spending more time talking to NSs	1	*2.17
	2	0.02
	5	*1.20
	7	*0.52
	8	0.08
	9	*0.44
	11	0.15
Spending more time talking to NNSs	3	0.09
	4	*1.01
	6	0.13
	10	*0.65

* refers to more than 0.40 hour per day difference in talking to NSS and NNSs

According to Tables 5.5. and 5.6., Participant one is the only participant who has more opportunities to speak to NSs than NNSs, which is due to her sharing a room with a NS of the TL. The additional role of senior resident, who has to take charge general matters of the household and also communicate with people who have complaints regarding living in the house, can also be considered as a factor increasing the opportunities for speaking to NSs. In addition, Participant 5, who was concentrating on his practical work in the laboratory, had more opportunities to speak to other NSs in his laboratory.

In general, the participants who live in the larger university accommodation tended to have equal opportunities to talk to both NSs and NNSs, which corresponds to the ratio distribution between NSs and NNSs of postgraduate students living in university accommodation on campus given by the Student Records Office, 1: 1.42.

Linguistic and psychological aspects The participants who feel nervous while talking to NSs indicated that the reason they feel nervous while talking to NSs is because they know that they are talking to native speakers of English, which means that their English is far better than theirs. Consequently, the participants do not have confidence in talking to NSs in English and the participants also always worry about making mistakes in front of them or not being able to make themselves clear while talking to them.

“... My head (mind) is full of English when I talk to Robert and I’m very nervous, which makes me not able to make myself clear. Actually before I go to the tutorial, I’ve already known what to say to him. When he asks me I just simply can’t say it though I know clearly what I want to say to him. Well, I think that’s because I don’t have a lot of opportunities or time to practise my speaking skills and sometimes I have pressure while talking to Robert who is a NS and supervisor. I had stomach ache last time when I had a tutorial...” (Participant 3, Interview 3)

“... I feel more stressed while talking to NSs than talking to NNSs. I always feel that they are marking your (my) English or they are laughing at your (my) language mistakes while I’m talking to them...” (Participant 1, Interview 4)

The participants who feel nervous while talking to NNSs indicate that the reason why they feel nervous while talking to NNSs is because the L2 competence of the NNSs they talk to is either rather poor, as good as NSs, or the NNSs speak with a heavy accent, which means that the participants may have to make more efforts in the conversation, and such circumstances are described by the participants as rather tiring.

“... I feel stressed while talking to NNSs because I usually have to try to make myself clear and make sure they understand what I said. Well, it also depends on their English competence. If their English competence is rather good then I can feel more comfortable talking to them. It’s more tiring if their English competence is poor...” (Participant 7, Interview 4)

“... I feel nervous while talking to some EFL speakers because their English is as good as NSs. I’ll think that they are NSs and usually people who can speak English well make me nervous. I’ll assume that I’m talking to NSs who always make me nervous while talking to them. I feel I’m language handicapped and I keep telling myself that I’m not a NS and then I can’t perform well which will make me more and more nervous...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

“... I feel terrible while talking to those NNSs speaking with strange accents, such as people from Bhutan and Nepal. I can not understand what they are talking about at all but it seems like that they speak very fluently. I simply can't communicate with them which is very terrifying. They understand what you're (I'm) talking about but you (I) simply don't understand what they are talking about...” (Participant 11, Interview 4)

The participants who do not feel nervous while talking to NNSs point out that the similar L2 competence of the NNSs whom the participants talk to makes the participants feel they are in the same situation. The slower speed of speech and the similar use of words in conversation make some of the participants feel comfortable talking to NNSs.

“... Because we are all speaking a foreign language while talking to NNSs so that our language performances are more or less the same, such as the use of words, language habits, and speed of speech which is slower than NSS'...” (Participant 6, Interview 3)

It is worth mentioning that the participants' lack of confidence while talking to NSs can be due to two reasons: (1) the lack of opportunities to talk to NSs; and (2) the attitude of the NSs towards the NNSs. Eleven of the participants indicate that they do not have a lot of opportunities to talk to NSS in the research environment, and consequently they feel nervous talking to NSs. In addition, two participants indicate that the attitude of the NSs they talk to can influence their motivation to have conversations with them. They further point out that the characteristics of unfriendliness and impatience which the English NSs have in the research environment tend to put them off whenever they feel like starting a conversation with them.

“... I don't like English people but I like other foreigners who make me feel that I can communicate with them. The reason why I don't like talking to English people is that they speak too fast and use a lot of slang and idioms which I can't understand at all. They don't like to slow down a bit because you're (I'm) a foreign student. There are some English people who are very friendly in my class then I feel like talking to them...” (Participant 9, Interview 4)

The participants' strong intention of reaching academic success may drive them to put more focus on noninteractive contact with the TL, through reading and writing, which reduces their opportunities to practise their speaking and listening skills. The participants who are in the stage of writing up their thesis or dissertation appear to have stronger intentions to focus their TLL activities on noninteractive contact with the TL, which is due

to their primary concern in life at that moment.

“... My main purpose to come here today is not to learn the language. I need to spend a lot of time on my subject, so that learning the language is only my secondary purpose here...” (Participant 5, Interview 4)

The instrumental value of the TL is regarded by the participants as academic rather than integrative. With such a fundamental concept in mind, the participants may feel that it is more practical and useful for them to engage themselves in reading and writing academic related material rather than chatting with others.

Cultural aspect The participants claim that shared cultural values, such as Confucianism, among the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean make it easier for them to associate with the NNSs from this area. Some Chinese characters used among these far eastern cultures also provide a means for the participants to communicate with students from Japanese and Korea when they have difficulties in communicating in the TL orally.

“... It’s more relaxing to talk to NNSs from Asia because we share a lot of cultural similarities. A lot of things as soon as you mention them, then they (NNSs from Asia) will understand what you’re talking about but for people from Europe or South America, they may not really understand you at all... Culture can help you to communicate and a lot of things can be understood clearly even if you don’t express or describe them very clearly...” (Participant 4, Interview 4)

“... It’s easier to communicate with EFL speakers from Asia. I think it’s related to culture. Countries in Asia share more cultural similarities than with European countries. I feel that I have more to talk about while talking to EFL speakers from Asia, and maybe it’s because we have the same colour of skin too...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

The cultural element, which the participants shared with the NNSs from countries such as Japan and Korea, is regarded as beneficial to the development of the participants’ general social contact with the NNSs from these countries. According to the participants in the present research, the sociological distinction of NNSs as “we” provides the participants with a certain degree of psychological consolation, and furthermore influences the participants’ preferences in choosing certain social groups for their TL social contact. Such social phenomena existing among the participants in the present research, however,

supports the finding of the research study conducted by Miller et al (1971), which revealed that overseas students tend to “stick to their own kind”.

5.2. TL learning resources for self-access in the research environment

Little (1989) claims that successful language learning depends on interaction with a large variety of textual materials, and the development within a learner of a capacity to take decisive initiatives. Consequently, the learners need to be provided with resources that they can draw on as an individual. According to this point of view, language learning becomes initiated with a self-instructional component, and consequently a self-access system is regarded as a necessary resource for language learners. In connecting this point with the present research, a self-access system is regarded as a system where the participants can access the resources they need to support their SDTLL in the research environment.

According to Benson (1994), self-access is a system in which learning resources and environments interact with the process of learning. A self-access system is regarded as an environment where language learners are able to choose and use self-access material on their own and then the material gives the users the means to correct or assess their own language performance. By using such a self-access system, the language learners are able to direct their own language learning activities.

“... The most important thing here for me is to complete my degree. Comparing with getting a degree, language learning is less important so I don't spend too much time and effort on it...”
(Participant 4, Interview 1)

“... I have seminars to attend every week during the term time, consequently I can feel that my language competence is stronger than now (after Christmas vacation). I feel that my English now is not as good as it was in term one. Anyway, term two has started and I will have to do some readings to write essays in the forthcoming two weeks...” (Participant 9, Interview 3)

The focal point of the SLL of the participants in the research environment is regarded as information-focussed rather than concerned with the TL language. In other words, the participants utilize the TL as a means to obtain information they need, and simultaneously they also improve their TL competence through using the TL itself. The objective of the

TL learning of the participants is considered as English for academic purposes (EAP). Because of the fundamental concept of the purpose of TLL, the function and structure of the self-access systems of the participants in the research environment is therefore different from the other rigidly defined language focussed self-access systems. The self-access system in the present research is regarded as an environment where the participants can facilitate their SLL with all kinds of materials, and therefore such a system is considered to be different from a concrete building where learning materials and resources are systemically categorized, known as a self-access centre. The self-access system in the research environment refers to all the accessible facilities and resources on and off the campus.

“... For listening, I use TV, radio, and talking to neighbours and friends. For speaking, I talk to friends and neighbours. For reading, I read research-related materials, novels, newspapers, magazines, email and the Internet. For writing, I write assignments, email, and critical writing...”
(Participant 7, Interview 1)

In relation to the learner aspect of the SDTLL in the present research, the participants are regarded as language learners with a high degree of “individualization” (McDonough and Shaw, 1993). The participants’ TL competence varies from one learner to another, the TL needs and objectives of the participants differ depending on the different requirements and demands of their academic departments, the participants choose their own TL learning materials and resources to aid their TLL, and finally, the participants make their own decisions as to whether to seek help from others, including the TL supporting programme, in relation to their TL development in the research environment. Consequently, according to the criteria of the participants’ TLL, the SDLL of the participants can be classified as “totally self-directed learning” under the concept of individualization of language learning as defined by McDonough and Shaw (1993). The following section will provide insights into the TL resources which the participants utilize to facilitate their SDLL in the research environment.

5.2.1. Human and non-human resources

It is suggested by Benson (1994) that both human and non-human resources play an equally important role in the self-access system. TL resources provide learners with information

they need and human resources provide learners with help. With regard to the present research, non-human resources are those which the participants access to provide them with information they need in relation to both academic aspects and TL aspects, and human resources provide them with opportunities to actually use the TL and to consolidate problems related to the TL.

“... When I talk to my supervisor, we only talk things relating to my research topic. We don’t chat. I learn new things and words mostly from watching TV...” (Participant 8, Interview 1)

“... I have to speak the language here everyday. I’ve lived here long by now so in some occasions I simply have spontaneous reactions in certain conversations...” (Participant 6, Interview 4)

The participants of the present research have in fact transformed themselves from the state of TL learners to TL users in the research environment, and they are considered as learners who are capable of learning the TL language in a realistic context through interaction and learning with/ from peers, and making sensible decisions in relation to TLL in the research environment. The following table, Table 5.7., summarizes the major human and non-human resources, from both interviews and diaries, which the participants utilized to facilitate their SDLL in the research environment. A full description of the individual participants’ language activities in relation to the content of activities, drawn from the diaries which the participants kept for the present research, can be seen in Appendices E, F, and G.

Table 5.7. The major human and non-human resources utilized by the participants to facilitate their SDLL in the research environment

Human resources	Supervisors Friends, housemates Cleaning ladies, people in the church
Non-human resources	Material related to individual research topics TV Radio Magazines, newspapers Movies Leaflets, advertisements Internet

“... I rely on watching TV to improve my English. I feel that my English has been improved by watching TV. I don't socialize with the English people. Though I am more prompt to talk to NNSs, I don't learn from talking to them. TV and radio are important. Listening to the radio is more subconscious type of learning. I listen to the radio and at the same time do some other things too. You will have to concentrate while watching TV...” (Participant 8, Interview 2)

According to the participants, they tend to utilize more non-human resources than human resources in their SDLL in the research environment. This is due to two reasons. First of all, a characteristic of EAP is the emphasis on the development of reading and writing skills rather than speaking and listening skills, which are more relevant to ECP. Secondly, having been educated in a passive learning environment in Taiwan, the participants may have been cultivated with a learning preference for passive learning. The participants indicated that they prefer using TV, rather than friends or housemates, as a resource to improve their listening skills, which is due to the learning culture of the participants.

“... I watch TV a lot and this is relating to personal preferences. I don't like to socialize with others (to learn the language), unless I like the person very much...” (Participant 4, Interview 1)

The educational culture of the participants plays a fundamental part in their preference of TL learning resources. According to Pierson (1996), Chinese learners are described as passive, reticent, and reluctant to openly challenge others, especially those in authority. Such a generally passive attitude, which has been cultivated into the participants' cognitive system since they were born in their native society of Taiwan, may explain why the participants prefer to devote themselves to passive language activities, such as activities related to listening and reading skills, and also why their listening and reading skills are described by the participants as better than their speaking and writing skills, active language skills.

“... I'll turn on the radio when I do those things which I can listen to the radio at the same time too. I like watching TV news too because I think knowing what's happening in the world is very important to me. So I watch TV news. I also watch some good movies on TV during the weekends. I don't watch TV series. I also chat with friends and housemates but very rarely. Ninety percent of my English is learned from doing things related to my research topic. In relation to my listening activities, 10 - 15% is from chatting with friends or housemates, 40% from watching TV, and I just listen to the music or songs when I turn on the radio. I spent a lot of time listening to the radio because while listening to the radio I can also clean up my room. It's kind of

background music to me...” (Participant 3, Interview 2)

“... Watching TV is the most convenient way (of learning a language) because you can change the channels if you don't like the programmes...” (Participant 5, Interview 4)

The fact of being able to control the non-human resources is another reason for the participants' preference in using non-human resources. The participants are able to decide when or where and how they like to utilize non-human resources in their SDTLL activities.

5.2.1.a. Human resources

The human resources utilized by the participants to facilitate their SDLL in the research environment are considered to be people related to their academic work and social groups.

Supervisors Some of the participants considered their supervisors as an important TL resource because of their close academic contact with their supervisors in relation to their academic work and teacher-student relationship. Their supervisors can help the participants with the correct TL terminology regarding their academic work, which is in the context of EAP.

“... The other day I was discussing the word 'object' with my supervisor. He told me the word 'object' is not very good and asked me change to another word. I was there thinking for a while and then later he told me that I should use 'event' this word...” (Participant 1, Interview 1)

One important element of the educational philosophy in the Chinese cultural context, that of regarding the teacher as an important role model in the educational system, may explain why supervisors are regarded as one of the resources by the participants in relation to their SDLL in the research environment.

Housemates, friends Apart from academic work, social activities can be considered as an important part of student life on the campus. Through association with people, the participants are able to improve their TL competence.

“... Now I live with an American and an Irish. They are all NSs. Actually we don't see each other very often but once we see each other we will have some daily conversations. They are quite nice because when sometimes I don't know how to say things properly then I will ask them. While

listening to them, I can pick up some words and know how to use them properly. I think living environment is very important. When I lived in St. Lawrence Court, my neighbours are all English. They only care for themselves and concentrate on their own studies. Here we only have three students and the relationship is much closer. There (St. Lawrence Court) we always have seven to eight students. We only say hi when we see each others, nothing else...” (Participant 9, Interview 2)

Having been allocated university accommodation, the participants may have a closer contact with people in the same accommodation than with other people on the campus. Housemates are regarded by some of the participants as an important resource for their SDLL on the campus. Secondly, the participants’ close social contact with friends can be seen as a form of peer teaching and learning in relation to SLL.

Cleaning ladies, people in the church Although it is suggested that the cleaning ladies tend to speak with rather strong local accents, some of the participants still consider the cleaning ladies as one of their TL learning resources because of the friendly attitude which the cleaning ladies tend to have towards students.

“... Supervisors, housemates, cleaning lady, people from the church and people you meet when you do grocery shopping are all learning resources...” (Participant 2, Interview 4)

Another group of people who may be seen as friendlier than other NSs in the L2 macrocommunity are people from the church. Two participants, Participants 2 and 6, regarded people in the church as their TL learning resource.

5.2.1.b. Non-human resources

Having their academic work at the forefront of their mind, the participants regarded material related to their academic work as an important TL learning resource in the research environment. Apart from the academic concern, the fact of being able to control the use of non-human resources is an important indicator for the participants to utilize the non-human resources for their SDLL in the research environment.

Material related to individual research topics All of the participants consider that the material related to their academic work is a primary resource for their SDLL in the research environment. By reading or through participating in activities related to their academic work, the participants may not only acquire the information they need to benefit their academic work but also pick up the academic use of the TL which they can later utilize in their academic written work.

“... I have to do practical work here and it takes a lot of time so that I don't have time to chat with others. Everything I do is related to my research work and when I talk to others we talk about things related to our research studies. What to do when we come across with problems (in doing research work). I go to the lectures which are related to my research topic. My research work takes up about 80% of my life here...” (Participant 5, Interview 1)

The participants' TL competence in relation to EAP is to be best developed through their involvement in reading the material related to their academic topics.

TV The entertaining and informative function of TV programmes for viewers, and the easy access and privacy which TV can offer are regarded by the participants as the primary reason why they choose the TV as one of their TL learning resources. All of the participants have their own TV sets in their rooms. Additionally, with dynamic audiovisual effects, TV provides the participants with a vivid “in-the-situation” effect which is able to stimulate the participants' motivation to either acquire the information or improve their TL competence. The authenticity of the TL input offered by TV is considered to offer another opportunity to train the participants to adopt the communicative strategies of NSs.

“... Very economical. I don't need to pay extra money for that and it (watching tv) doesn't waste too much of your time either. You can use it any time you want. It's very appealing in relation to the economic aspect. Additionally, it doesn't have a time limit either. You can use it any time you want, and it has various programmes which you can choose from. You can choose any kind of programmes you like to watch. I picked news and weather reports to watch at the very beginning when I just arrived here. By watching TV news and weather reports I can know what is happening (in the world) and I can also practise my listening comprehension. Some of the programmes can tell us about things which happen in our living environment...” (Participant 5, Interview 1)

TV appears to be the main TL learning resource for the participants during the vacation when most of the people on the campus leave for either Christmas, the New Year, Easter, or the summer vacation. Table 5.8. indicates the average number of hours per day which the participants spend using TV as a TL resource.

Table 5.8. The average number of hours per day which the participants spend using TV as a TL resource

Participant	Term 1	Vacation	Term 2	Average hours per day using TV as a TL resource for listening	Average hours per day devoted to TL listening activities
1	1.53	1.48	1.79	1.64	4.94
2	0.71	1.26	1.18	0.98	2.13
3	1.15	1.5	1.86	1.40	3.57
4	1.15	1.90	1.04	1.20	3.70
5	1.26	0	1.45	1.30	2.66
6	0.87	0.83	1.06	0.94	3.32
7	2.38	1.73	2.34	2.27	7.20
8	0.93	0	1.57	1.05	2.46
9	1.72	1.28	0.81	0.87	4.54
10	1.38	2.09	1.93	1.78	6.13
11	1.30	2.25	1.59	1.49	5.48

According to Table 5.8., generally the participants spend one to two hours a day using TV as a TL resource in their TLL, which is approximately one third of the time in relation to their TL listening activities. Such a figure indicates that TV is considered as an important TL learning resource in relation to the participants' SDTLL.

Radio Some of the participants indicate that they tend to turn on the radio when they either work or relax in their own rooms. The purpose of this is, first of all, part of their personal habits and secondly to relax themselves.

“... I turn the radio on but don't listen to it carefully unless it's talking about things which I'm interested in...” (Participant 4, Interview 1)

Turning on the radio provides the participants with background noise in the environment where they are situated, and sometimes the participants are also able to pick up some use of the TL while occasionally “overhearing” talking from the radio programmes.

Consequently, the function of radio is seen as more entertainment than TL learning by the participants.

Magazines, newspapers Magazines, such as Newsweek, Time, and Scientific America, are considered by some of the participants as an essential TL resource in their life on the campus. These magazines provide their readers with concise information, which is regarded by the participants as an important means of acquiring current international information in a relatively economic period of time. Yet, according to the participants who subscribe to these magazines, they tend to read articles or reports which are related to their academic field or personal interests.

“... I subscribe to Scientific America and Newsweek but I don't read articles which are not related to science because I don't understand them or it takes too much time to read, so I don't want to read them (articles are not related to science). It's easier for me to understand and it takes less time for me to read things related to science because it (science) is related to my background knowledge and it's also my personal interest...” (Participant 5, Interview 1)

Apart from magazines, newspapers are considered as a TL learning resources by some of the participants, but because of the massive amount of information in the daily newspapers, they appear to be less attractive to the participants, who regard time as an important element in their life. Consequently, the conciseness of magazines is more appealing to the participants than daily newspapers.

Movies Some of the participants indicate that watching films in the cinema provides them with another means of TL learning in the research environment. Films, however, have similar functions and characteristics to TV programmes for the viewers, in this case the participants. The only difference between films in the cinema and TV programmes may lie in the bigger screen and stronger audiovisual effects which cinema can offer.

Leaflets, advertisement One of the advantages of being situated in an authentic TL environment is that any kind of printed information can be utilized as a TL learning resource. Some of the participants indicate that they sometimes read through leaflets and advertisements which attract their attention either on the campus or shopping in the

supermarkets. The information which leaflets and advertisements carry is regarded as more related to daily life, and consequently they are seen as good resources for the learning of everyday English for the participants.

Internet Originating from the US military establishment, the Internet has reached into the fields of education, research, business and commerce, government and private use among 55 million users world-wide (Sussex and White, 1996). The Internet is regarded as the most dramatic and effective new communication technology of the latter part of the 20th century. The Internet has extended access to knowledge beyond the universities and into a much wider sphere of professional and amateur consumers, and it also provides the users with massive information based on different subject matter in different languages.

“... Surfing in the Internet helps my SDTLL too. First of all, it can enlarge my vocabulary and secondly the information relating to different topics is quite important to me, such as articles in news forum influence me a lot. Some articles are written in spoken form. You (I) read a sentence but it’s written in the way of spoken language. Well, just like when you read E-mail, you (I) will see some of their use of words and some people tend to skip some words while writing. The articles in the Internet cover all kinds of topics and are very different from academic articles...”

(Participant 6, Interview 1)

The Internet provides opportunities for authentic communication and interaction with NSS of different languages and simultaneously also exposes the users, including language learners, to the authentic use of languages. Oliva and Pollastrini (1995), who carried out a research study on the integration of the Internet resources as a primary instructional tool in the teaching of Italian language classes at the University of Utah, revealed a general perception of positive impact on the TL learners through the use of the Internet-mediated TL instruction. Oliva and Pollastrini’s research study also claimed that their participants recognized their improvements in their vocabulary and listening, reading and writing skills through the use of the Internet-facilitated language instruction. According to the participants in the present research study, on one hand, the massive and rich textured information listed in the Internet provides the participants with a valuable access to facilitate their TLL in the research environment.

“... The quantity of computers are very insufficient and the speed of making links to the Net is not strong either. It is so hard to get hold of a net-worked computer but later find out that it is not able to connect to the net...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

“... The amount of computers is too small...” (Participant 2, Interview 4)

The time pressure which the participants are under both in relation to their study and the rather long period of time they need to wait in front of the computers to get access to the Internet, sometimes reduces their desire to use it. Additionally, because of the easy access to the highly developed software programs from Taiwan, the participants nowadays are able to not only read texts and correspond in Mandarin Chinese but also listen to Mandarin Chinese on the Internet. In order to save some time while using the Internet, the participants therefore can choose to read and write in Mandarin Chinese which also reduces the great potential which the Internet offers to the TL learners.

5.2.2. TL learning activities

The TL learning activities of the participants can be observed both from the interviews and the specially designed TLL diaries. The TL learning facilities and resources utilized by the participants have been discussed in detail in the previous section, and consequently the discussions in this section will be devoted to the quantity of time which the participants spend on the TL learning activities during term time and the vacation in the research environment. The main focus of this section is not only on the evaluation of the length of time which the participants devote to their TLL in the research environment, but also the forms of language activities, interactive or non-interactive, and the language skills, passive - listening and reading or active - speaking and writing, which the participants prefer in their SLL. Table 5.9. below indicates the average length of time which the individual participants devoted to the four language skills in the present research study. Full details of the durations of the participants' language activities in relation to the four language skills can be seen in Appendices F, and G.

Table 5.9. The average number of hours per day which the participants devoted to the four language skills in the present research

Participant	Term 1	Vacation	Term 2	Total average
	S, L, R, W	S, L, R, W	S, L, R, W	S, L, R, W
1	2.61, 4.49, 2.85, 1.38	2.21, 4.02, 1.76, 0.76	2.74, 5.67, 2.75, 1.16	2.60, <u>4.94</u> , 2.65, 1.19
2	0.88, 2.16, 0.78, 0.55	0.89, 2.31, 1.25, 0.97	0.63, 2.01, 1.50, 0.81	0.76, <u>2.13</u> , 1.29, 0.72
3	2.32, 4.27, 2.13, 0.76	1.21, 3.11, 1.21, 0.42	0.90, 2.92, 2.88, 1.73	1.60, <u>3.57</u> , 2.30, 1.10
4	2.29, 3.83, 1.79, 1.36	1.55, 3.48, 1.81, 0.55	2.46, 3.66, 1.38, 2.01	2.27, <u>3.70</u> , 1.60, 1.55
5	1.17, 2.50, 1.14, 0.45	Away in Taiwan	1.69, 3.14, 2.12, 0.02	1.30, <u>2.66</u> , 1.39, 0.42
6	1.68, 3.16, 5.50, 1.03	1.71, 3.02, 4.40, 1.10	1.75, 3.57, 4.86, 2.08	1.72, 3.32, <u>5.06</u> , 1.50
7	3.20, 7.29, 4.57, 2.99	2.79, 5.38, 1.36, 0.88	3.41, 7.64, 5.02, 2.79	3.24, <u>7.20</u> , 4.34, 2.61
8	0.43, 2.53, 1.16, 1.49	Away in Taiwan	0.39, 2.14, 1.32, 1.79	0.54, <u>2.46</u> , 1.19, 1.55
9	1.52, 3.08, 3.09, 0.90	1.12, 3.93, 1.43, 0.26	1.64, 4.35, 2.44, 0.81	1.52, <u>4.54</u> , 2.58, 0.75
10	2.58, 6.69, 4.41, 1.59	2.57, 6.62, 2.12, 0.88	3.24, 5.55, 1.98, 0.84	2.90, <u>6.13</u> , 2.90, 1.13
11	1.65, 5.49, 2.58, 0.82	1.38, 5.75, 4.75, 0.38	1.49, 5.46, 3.29, 1.12	1.55, <u>5.48</u> , 3.04, 0.97

S = speaking, L = listening, R = reading, W = writing

The underlined items represent the most used TL activity of the participants

According to Table 5.9., three general conclusions can be drawn in relation to the participants' language activities. First of all, the participants spend more time on the language activities relating to listening skills, then reading, and then speaking and writing. It is suggested that the participants devote themselves more to passive language skills, listening and reading, than to active language skills, speaking and writing. Such a tendency can be explained by the learner culture of the participants - passive learners, which has been mentioned earlier in Section 5.2.1., and will be discussed in detail later in Section 5.2.4. of this chapter.

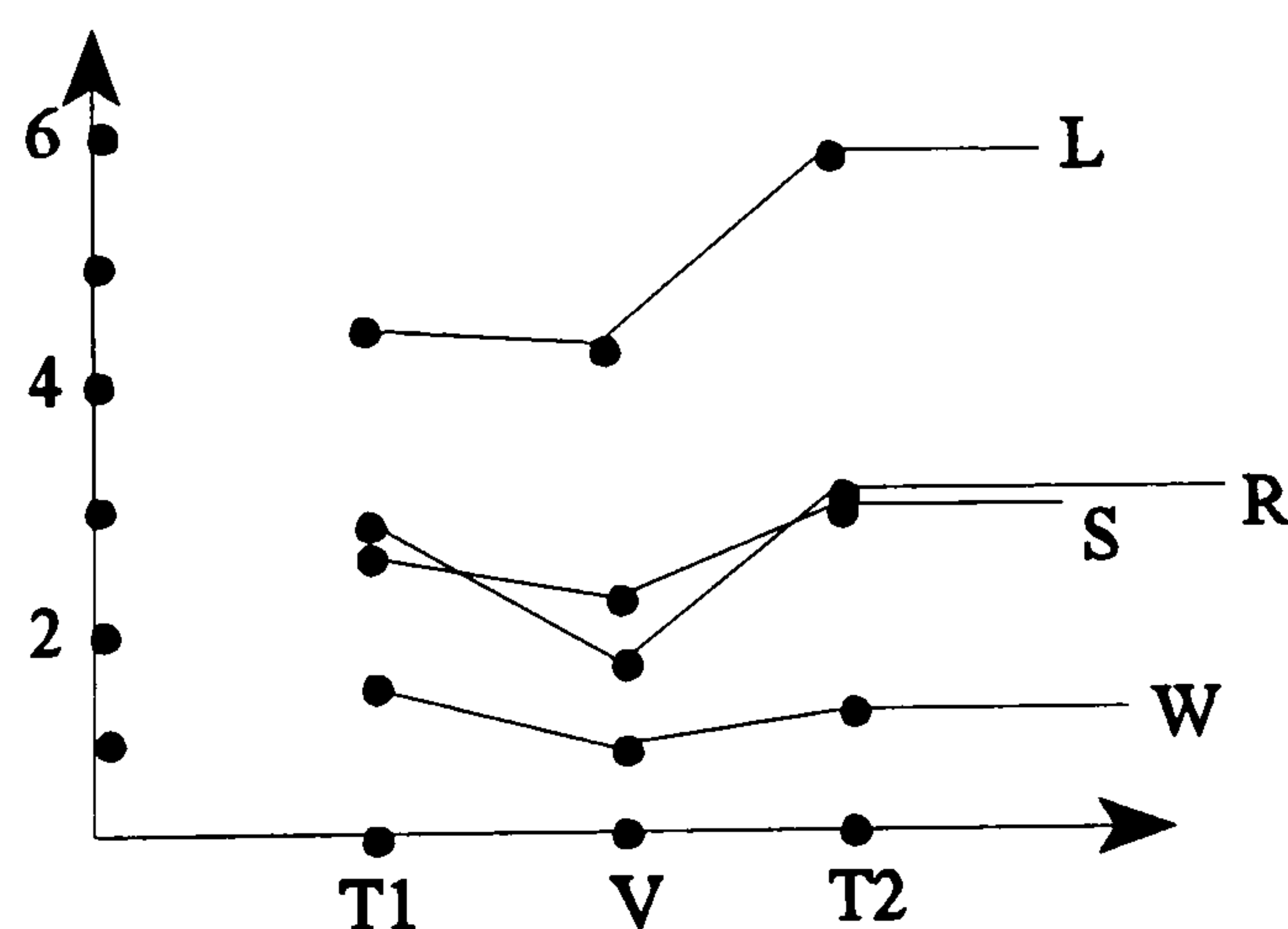
The second general conclusion which can be drawn from Table 5.6. is that the participants, who are registered as D.Phil. students or MA students by taught course spend more time on writing, over an hour a day on average, than their counterparts in the present research. One exception is that of a D.Phil. Biology student who spends less than an hour a day on average on writing, which is due to the fact that he had to concentrate on his experiments

in relation to his research study in the lab during the period when the present research study was conducted.

The third general conclusion is that the participants' language activities fell into a less active period during the vacation, which meant that they spent less time on TL related activities comparing with the lengths of time they spent during terms one and two. The only exception is Participant 6, whose language activities are regarded as quite stable. There is no significant rise or fall in his TL related activities during two term times and vacation, which may be due to his life style - living with his family. There are more family commitments to carry out while living with one's family. Detailed discussions on the TL activities can be seen later in Section 5.2.4. of this chapter.

Figure 5.7. illustrates the daily average length of the TL related activities of Participant 1 during the two term times and the vacation in the present research. Figures for the rest of the participants can be seen in Appendix H.

Figure 5.7. The daily average length of the TL related activities, speaking (S), listening (L), reading (R), and writing (W), of Participant 1 during the two term times, term one (T1) and term two (T2), and the vacation (V) in the research environment



In Figure 5.7., the vertical axis represents the daily average duration, in hours, of the TL related activities and the horizontal axis represents the three different periods of time during the data collection of the present research. T1 represents term one, V represents the vacation, and T2 represents term two. Line L represents the listening skill, Line R represents the reading skill, Line S represents the speaking skill, and Line W represents the writing skill. According to this figure, Participant 1 devotes herself to TL activities related to listening skills the most, and to writing skills the least. It is, however, regarded as the common circumstance among the rest of the participants in the present research (see figures in the Appendix H. at the back of this thesis). In addition, the TL activities of Participant 1 in terms one and two are regarded as more active than during the vacation, which indicates that the TLL of Participant 1 is closely related to her academic study. Most of the TLL patterns of the participants, Participants 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, are similar to the pattern of Participant 1, a “V” shaped learning pattern in which TL activities are more active during the term time than the vacation. However, a “^ ” shaped learning pattern is found in Participants 2, and 11, who regard themselves as rather introverted and prefer learning alone to interacting with others. The vacation time, a period of no lectures or seminars, offers them the opportunity to concentrate on learning by themselves.

“... In term times, you (I) don't feel that your (my) speaking is not fluent because you're (I) still in contact with a lot of people, a lot of people around you. But during the vacation time, there is only one person (me) so I rarely speak. My speaking opportunities are affected during the term times and vacation...” (Participant 4, Interview 3)

5.2.3. TL supporting programmes on the campus

The TL, English, supporting programmes are run by the EFL unit located in the Language Teaching Centre on the campus. According to the website information (University of York, English as a Foreign Language Unit, 1997), there are six different programmes operated by the EFL unit and they are: (1) intensive summer course; (2) term-time courses; (3) short intensive courses; (4) English for young learners; (5) six-month foundation programme; and (6) MA in TEYL (Teaching English to Young Learners). Of these six programmes, programmes (4) and (6) are regarded as less relevant to the participants in the present research, and the other four language programmes are focussed on promoting the students' EAP competence. Apart from providing TL support to the students on the

campus, the Technical Services Unit under the supervision of the EFL unit also offers audio/ visual aids to the students at the university. The audio/ visual aids include cassette players/ recorders, VHS video cameras and editing facilities, slide projection, video playback, recording studio, computing and word-processing.

Although the EFL unit organizes various TL programmes which are related to EAP in order to meet the language needs of ESL students on the campus, it appears to be that only some of the participants in the present research utilize these programmes to facilitate their SDTLL in the research environment. Detailed discussions in relation to this specific aspect can be seen in the following section, which is devoted to the participants' review of the TL environment, including TL learning resources, and TL supporting programmes in relation to their SDLL in the research environment.

5.2.4. Review from the participants in relation to their SDLL in the research environment

Having had different TL learning experiences in two different TL learning environments, the participants in the present research study were questioned about how they benefited from learning the TL in an authentic TL environment, the research environment, and how their SLL benefit from taking the TL supporting programmes in the research environment.

TL environment Having had different experiences of TLL, in a controlled classroom TL environment and in an authentic TL environment, the participants were requested to assess the degree of advantage they have gained from learning the TL in the present research environment. The table below, Table 5.10., concludes the participants' evaluation of the TL environment in relation to their SDTLL.

Table 5.10. A summary of the participants' evaluation of the authentic TL environment in relation to their SDTLL in the research environment

Participant	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4
1	+	+	?
2	+	+	+
3	+	?	?
4	+	+	+
5	+	+	+
6	+	+	+
7	+	+	+
8	+	+	+
9	+	+	+
10	+	?	?
11	+	+	?

+ indicates the total positive impact of the authentic TL environment in relation to SDTLL

- indicates the total negative impact of the authentic TL environment in relation to SDTLL

? indicates the conditional impact of the authentic TL environment in relation to the SDLL

According to Table 5.10., all of the participants recognized the overall positive impact of the authentic TL environment in relation to their SDTLL in interview two. In interview three, two of the participants pointed out that they feel that other factors, such as the personality factor, can also hinder their development of the TL in an authentic TL environment.

“... This is a very good language learning environment but I think the individual learner factor is very important too, whether you have an open mind to integrate and to create your opportunities or whether you are not willing to talk to English people. The individual learner factor is very important. If I have enough time, then this is a very good language learning environment for me but because I have quite a lot of work to do in relation to my research topic I don't have too much time... “ (Participant 10, Interview 4)

In interview four, four of the participants indicated that their personality is one of the factors influencing the outcome of their SDTLL in the research environment. It is, therefore, suggested by the present research that some of the participants may be able to benefit from the authenticity and the mode of SDTLL in an authentic TL environment, and

yet the longer the participants stay in the TL environment, the more the individual variables (IVs) can also contribute to the different degree of success of some of the participants' SDTLL. This is, however, a very important finding drawn from the present research, and will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

TL supporting programmes Although it is suggested that the characteristics of instructed language courses are not part of the SDLL system, they can, as a whole, be considered as contributing to the available TL resources in the self-access system of SDLL. The participants in the present research evaluate their TL objectives and needs, and then decide whether or not they need to take the TL supporting programmes provided in the research environment to facilitate their SDLL. Departments and supervisors may also recommend or stipulate that their students do an EFL course. Having taken the TL supporting programmes, the participants are requested to assess how they benefited from taking these courses. There are six of the participants who took the TL supporting programmes in the research environment. Table 5.11. illustrates the reason why they decided to take the programmes and how they benefited from taking the courses.

Table 5.11. The reasons for the participants taking the TL supporting programmes and how they benefited from taking the courses in the research environment

Participant	Reason to take the course(s)	Evaluation
1	To create opportunities to speak in the TL	+
2	To improve academic TL skills	+ & -
3	To create opportunities to speak in the TL and to improve writing skills	+ & -
6	To create opportunities to speak in the TL and to understand the different accents from the course	+
8	To create opportunities to speak in the TL	+
9	To improve academic TL skills	+

+ indicates the positive evaluation of taking the course(s)

- indicated the negative evaluation of taking the course(s)

According to the table above, four of the participants indicated that they took the course because they recognized that they did not have many opportunities to speak in the TL, so by taking the course they were given opportunities in the class to speak in the TL. These four participants took the TL supporting course during the term time, and the other two participants took the precessional TL supporting course to improve their academic TL skills, which lasted for two months, August and September, prior to the beginning of the academic year, October.

“... The writing course doesn't teach us enough because I think it (academic writing) is related to different academic fields. The teacher (course instructor) there told us that we'll have to discuss with our supervisors about writing styles so I don't think I benefit from taking the course. I think if the department can provide us with a departmental tutor to help us with this specific aspect then I think it'll be more beneficial to us. If the university really wants to help us with that course, then I think they really should evaluate that course. I feel that the university is wasting their money by running that course and it's not very useful at all. We, students who took the course, didn't like it too much. There were six of us at the very beginning of the course but only two of us kept attending the course to the end of the term...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

In general, these participants benefited from taking these supporting course(s), although two of them indicated two negative points about the courses. One of the points, relating to writing skills, represents a rather common TL difficulty which the participants have when they are in the stage of writing up their dissertations and theses.

Summary

The discussions in the present chapter were twofold: (1) environmental contextual factors in relation to the participants' SDTLL in the research environment; and (2) TL resources for self-access in the participants' SDTLL in the research environment. Discussions in the first half of this chapter focussed on the characteristics of an authentic TL environment in relation to the various authentic TL inputs and the possible circumstances for TL social contact among the participants in the research environment. Discussions in the second half of this chapter concentrated on the popular TL learning resources among the participants in the research environment, and reviews from the participants on the TL learning environment and the TL supporting programmes on the campus.

Having been educated in a controlled TL environment in Taiwan, those participants, who had never experienced authentic TL input prior to coming to the research environment, are more used to controlled TL input, standard AE for EEP. The participants who had previous experience in authentic TL, either AE or BE, may have less difficulties in familiarizing themselves in the authentic TL environment. The mixture of enormously rich varieties of authentic TL, BE, input by NSs and NNSs provides the participants with opportunities to experience the use of ECP and EAP in an authentic TL environment. The change in the TL learning environment and TL learning purposes, however, leads the participants to a transformation, which consists of an adjustment to a different form of TL, from AE to BE, a different type of TL learning environment, from a controlled TL learning environment to an authentic TL learning environment, and a different focus of TLL, from EEP to ECP and EAP. Because of such fundamental changes in the TLL environment, the instrumental value of the TL held by the participants varies too.

According to the participants, all of them regard the academic value of the TL as higher than the integrative value of the TL, which may be due to the participants' deep concern with their academic achievement in the research environment, and because of the strong emphasis on the academic value of the TL, the participants' TL development has therefore been influenced. The process of such a transformation may bring the participants not only difficulties in relation to cultural adjustment and TL learning, which were discussed in detail in the previous chapter, but also valuable opportunities to experience the rich textured authentic TL input in various aspects, TL social contact with other groups of people in the research environment, and the total control over their TL related activities and access to TL resources.

The environment where the participants stay, a microcommunity on the campus, is regarded as part of the L2 macrocommunity, and consequently the participants have access to standard and nonstandard BE spoken by local NSs, NSs from other countries and ESL speakers. The multicultural feature of the L2 macro and microcommunity provides the participants with opportunities to build up their social links with other NSs or NNSs of the TL across the two communities. All participants indicated that they feel more comfortable while communicating with people from congruent cultures, such as people from Japan and

Korea. Some of the participants feel stressed while talking to NSs of the TL because they are afraid of making mistakes in front of NSs and also the impatient and unfriendly attitude of some of the NSs, make the participants reluctant to build up their social links with the NSs. The cultural element and the interpretation of the participants in relation to the aspects of linguistics and personal feelings towards the NSs contributes to the consequence of their TL social contact. It is, therefore, suggested by the present research that the participants may have a less stressed social relationship with NNSs from Japan or Korea and a more stressed social relationship with some NSs in the research environment. Consequently, the participants may have been more integrated into some of the NNSs communities than the NSs communities in the research environment. The sociocultural recognition of congruent cultures may play a more influential role than the linguistic aspect of motivation in the participants' SDTLL in the research environment. Such a finding reinforces the importance of the cultural element in the participants' SDLL, which has been discussed in the previous chapter, and leads to the discussions in this thesis on the role of motivation in the participants' SDLL, which can be seen in the following chapter.

The TL learning resources in the present research are classified into two categories: (1) human resources; and (2) non-human resources. According to the interviews conducted with the participants in the present research, the participants tend to choose non-human resources to facilitate their SDTLL, which means that the participants devote themselves more to language activities involving passive language skills such as reading and listening, than language activities involving active language skills such as speaking and writing. It is suggested that the passive type of learner culture, which has been discussed in the previous chapter, may contribute to the consequence of such preferences in choosing TL learning resources among the participants. Apart from the aspect of learner culture, the individual learner variables (ILVs), which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, are suggested to be an important factor in the use of the participants' TL resources.

According to the analysis of the diaries kept by the participants, the participants spent much more time on TL related activities in listening, then reading, and then speaking and writing, which corresponds to the participants' preferences for the use of the TL resources, that is non-human ones, as revealed by the interviews. Another finding from the analysis

of the diaries kept by the participants is that the TL related activities of the participants is less active during the vacation period than in the periods of terms one and two. This illustrates that the participants' TL learning activities are closely related to their academic work, which means the participants' TL activities are EAP-focussed, which corresponds to the TLL purposes, EAP, of the participants in the research environment.

As suggested by some of the research studies, most of the learners are able to benefit from learning a TL in an authentic TL environment. According to the interviews with the participants in the present research, all of the participants had a positive attitude towards the influence of the authentic TL environment on their TL development in interview two, and yet in interviews three and four some of the participants claimed that their personality may play a more influential role in their TL development than the environmental contextual factors in relation to their SDTLL in the research environment. Consequently, the focus of the discussions in the following chapter will be on the influence of the individual learner factors in the participants' SDTLL in the research environment.

Chapter Six

Learners' Perspective in SDTLL in an Authentic Target Language Environment

Introduction

In the concept of self-directed language learning (SDLL), the learners are in a position to make decisions in relation to their personal learning including: (1) setting their learning goals; (2) identifying and use resources; (3) determining the effort and time devoted to learning; and (4) deciding how and what kind of evaluation of the learning will take place (Long, 1989). Because of the fundamental role which the learners play in the processes of SDLL, it is essential to understand “how” the individual learner factors can contribute to the consequences of SDLL.

In the learning context of SDLL, the learners are in the position to take the initiative in controlling their personal learning processes, consequently the learners themselves are regarded as a significant factor in relation to the consequences of their individual learning activities. Some learners with certain characteristics may have a more successful learning experience. These individual learner variables (ILVs) are regarded as influential factors in relation to the process of SDLL in the present research. According to Altman (1980), Skehan (1989), and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), there are at least thirty ILVs which may influence the L2 learners' learning performances. Among these thirty ILVs, four of them, (1) motivation and attitudes, (2) personality factors, (3) the transfer between L1 and L2, and previous experience with L2, and (4) language learning strategies, are regarded as relevant to the present research, and will be therefore closely examined in the present chapter with reference to their influence on the processes of SDLL among the participants of the present research.

A model, Figure 6.1., below illustrates the relationship between the three components, (1) cultural factors, (2) environmental contextual factors, and (3) learner's perspective, and the present research. A more detailed model based on Figure 6.1. can be seen in the following chapter, Chapter Seven, to demonstrate and to conclude the final structure of the three components and their links to the present research study.

Figure 6.1. The relationship between the three components and the present research study: Model 1

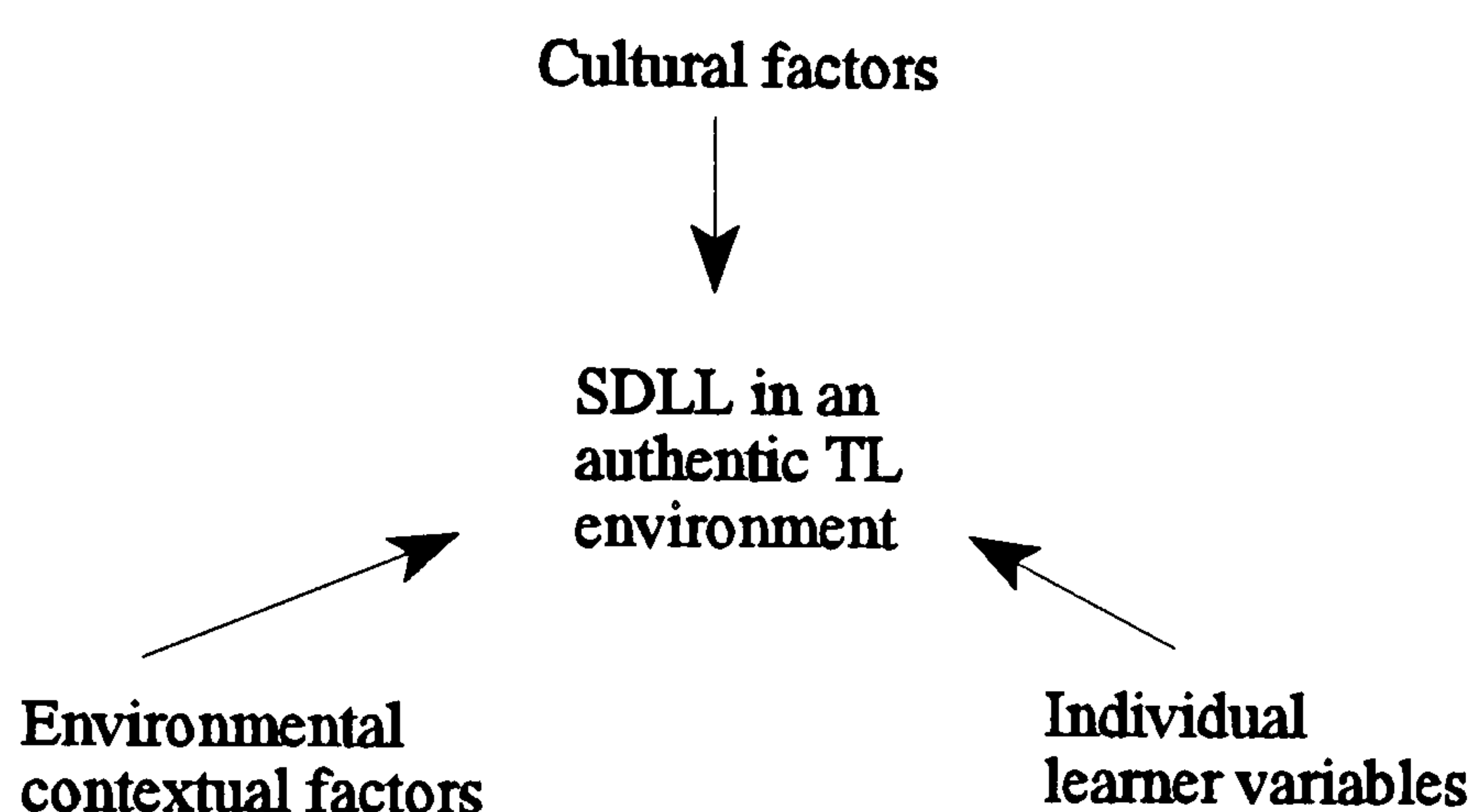


Figure 6.1. illustrates the primary model of the present research study. In this primary model, three components, cultural factors, environmental contextual factors and individual learner variables, have direct connections to the present research study and each of them also plays an influential role in the learning process of SDLL. Chapter Four of this thesis concentrated on issues related to cultural factors in the present research study, and Chapter Five of this thesis focussed on the issues regarding environmental contextual factors in the present research study. The following sections of the present chapter will provide readers with insights into issues related to the ILVs in the present research study.

6.1. Individual learner variables

The study of ILVs has attracted a great deal of attention in the field of SLL in the last twenty years and has been considered as an important factor in relation to SLL (Ellis, 1994). Table 2.1. in Chapter Two of this thesis shows three lists of ILVs classified by three researchers. However, no attempt will be made to examine all of these ILVs;

attention will be drawn only to the ones which are considered as closely related to the present research study. The relevant ILVs, which will be presented and discussed in the following sections, were identified in the data collected from the interviews with the participants.

6.1.1. Motivation

It is not always clear in the field of SLL what the distinction is between motivation and attitude. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), “motivation” refers to the L2 learners’ general goals or orientation, and “attitude” is regarded as the persistence shown by the L2 learners in striving for their goals. There are other researchers, such as Brown (1981), who also distinguish the differences between “motivation” and “attitude”. The present research will utilize the definition made by Gardner and Lambert to explain the data of the present research study. Discussions related to “attitude” in the present research can be seen later in Section 6.3.2. of the present chapter.

According to the findings of the present research study, motivation is regarded as an important element in the participants’ SDLL in the research environment.

“... Although language learning is important while living here, comparing with my academic study it is less important. It is part of your study because you have to use it to do your research work. However, when you do research you use your mother tongue to think. You don’t use your second language to think. Consequently, my research study is the first priority in my life and language learning comes second...” (Participant 4, Interview 4)

Since Gardner and Lambert (1959) found that L2 achievement was related to both language aptitude and motivation, various studies have employed different methods to assess motivational variables in determining the role of motivation in SLL. Clement, Doernyei and Noels (1994), whose study involved 301 Hungarian L2 learners answering a questionnaire assessing their attitude, anxiety, and motivation toward learning English, suggest that motivation is a critical factor for the success of SLL. Dickinson (1994) indicates that motivation and attitude are the two essential elements in successful autonomous learning, in which learners can be either in a self-access learning context, regarded as the learning context of the present research study, or in a teacher-guided

classroom.

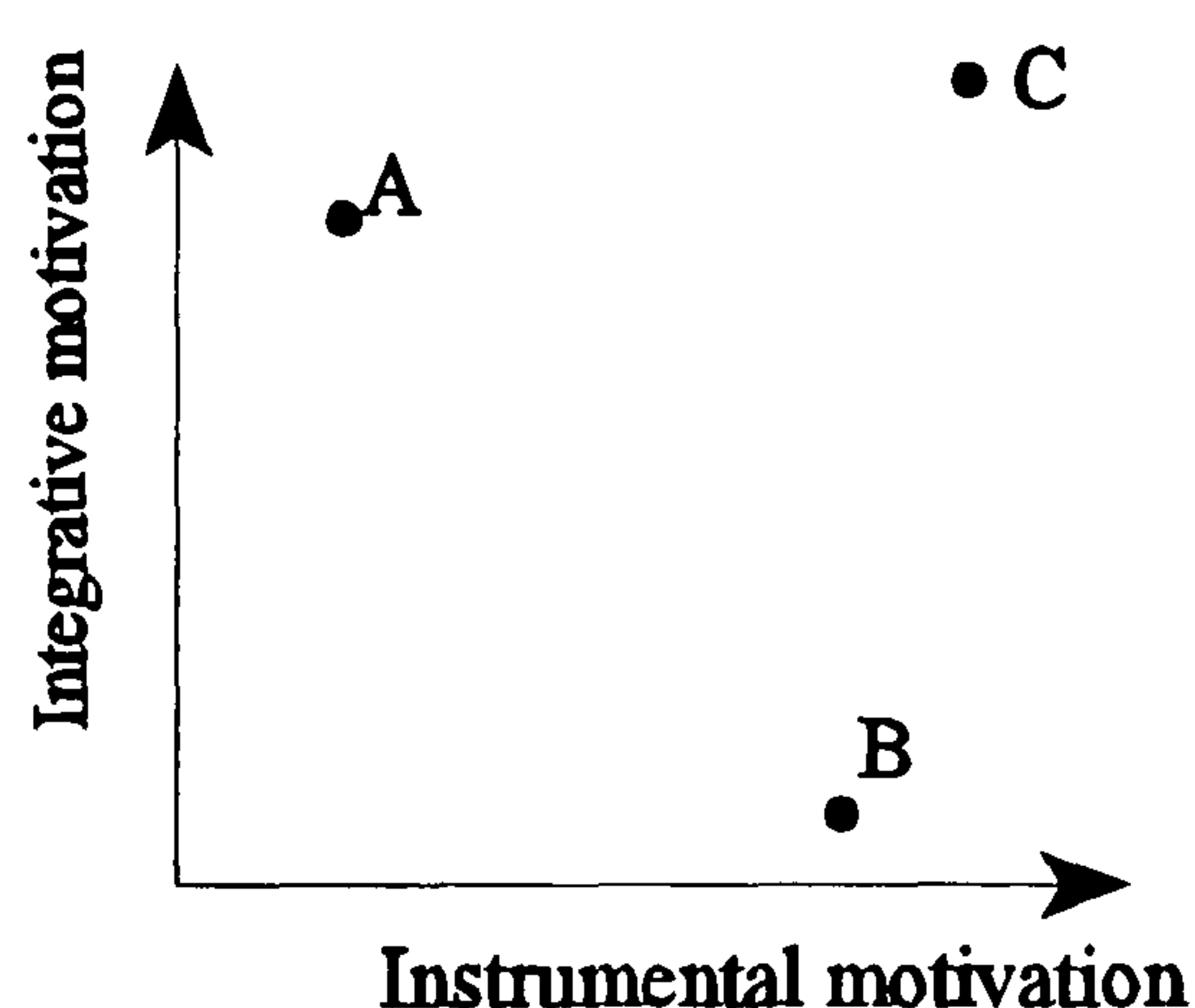
Gardner and Lambert (1972) identified the two types of motivation which are most relevant for SLL: integrative and instrumental motivation. L2 learners who are interested in studying the language in order to identify with speakers of the TL, or are interested in the TL culture, are considered as integratively motivated. L2 learners who have a desire to learn the TL for pragmatic purposes are regarded as instrumentally motivated. Regarding the role of motivation in the present research study, it influences not only the participants' attitude towards their SDTLL, whether learn TL for instrumental purposes - getting a degree or learn TL for integrative purposes - identifying with TL culture, but also their selection of TL content, whether it is English for academic purposes (EAP) oriented or English for communicative purposes (ECP) focussed.

According to the participants in the present research study, most of them regard themselves as more instrumentally motivated to learn the TL as a medium for academic success, than integratively motivated to integrate with TL speakers in the research environment. It is suggested by the present research that although different participants had different degrees of instrumental motivation, they are more concerned with their academic achievement in the research environment than with being integrated with other people in the TL communities. Three of the participants even had such a strong instrumental motivation towards their SDLL in the research environment so that they simply focussed on learning the TL elements which were beneficial to their academic work.

“... I won't seek opportunities to understand their (L2 NSs') culture but if I have the chance (to understand their culture) I won't reject it anyway. I don't have any intention to get involved in their social group. Language is one of the reasons (for me to not to get involved in their social group). I think if my English was better then it would be easier for me (to build up a relationship with other NSs). But it'll take a lot of time to improve my English and I think I will waste other people's time talking to them in my poor English. It's a kind of bad circular effect. Now I always think that I will never live in England or other foreign countries and as soon as I complete my degree then I'll go back to Taiwan to teach or to do research...” (Participant 8, Interview 1)

The participants' motivation has been recognized as instrumental, which they want to be able to attain academic success. Nevertheless, one of the participants in the present research had a major instrumental orientation and a minor integrative motivation in relation to his TL learning which is due to the fact that his research topic is closely related to TL culture. This participant may, therefore, want to know more about NSs around him, and may have an integrative motivation under this circumstance. A figure is proposed to explain how the instrumental and integrative motivations operate in the participants' SLL in the present research study.

Figure 6.2. The interaction of instrumental and integrative motivation



The vertical axis represents the degree of integrative motivation and also the degree of the L1 maintenance. The horizontal axis represents the degree of instrumental motivation and the proficiency of TL. A learner with high instrumental motivation and low integrative motivation, B, may have high proficiency in TL, while a learner with low instrumental motivation and high integrative motivation, A, may have a high maintenance of L1 and a low proficiency in their TL. Some learners may have both high instrumental and integrative motivation, C, may reach both high proficiency in TL and maintenance of L1.

“... I think that the concept of learning is very broad. My learning experience is whenever I can create for myself. You can obtain information relating to cultural aspect by reading. The more you know about local cultural elements, the more your language learning can benefit from because the contents of your conversations with other local people will be richer. The more you know about

local culture is beneficial to your language learning...” (Participant 7, Interview 4)

In relation to the present research, academic success is the first priority of the participants. Consequently, the facilitating anxiety, wanting to attain academic success, will motivate the participants’ SLL. In addition, the language anxiety which the participants of the present research have when they talk to NSs can be regarded as a negative factor affecting their TL performance and development.

Having had strong instrumental motivation in mind, the participants may therefore pay more attention to building up their TL linguistic competence for EAP than to developing their TL language skills for ECP, which may be more integrative-motivation oriented. It is suggested by Svanes (1987) that an integrative motivation was found to favour acquisition. However, Gardner and Lambert (1972) suggest that an instrumental motivation could also be effective when there was an urgent need to learn the language. A study conducted by Oller et al. (1977) reveals that instrumentally-motivated Mexican American students, who were anti-integrative motivated towards the Anglo-American majority to learn English, performed the best on the proficiency tests. The research participants devote themselves to learn TL elements in order to achieve academic success in the research environment, which suggests that the participants’ TLL is heavily related to their academic success, and consequently instrumental motivation is the most appropriate stimulus for the participants’ SDLL. The table below, Table 6.1., illustrates the reason(s) why the participants decided to come to study in the UK but not other countries.

Table 6.1. The reason(s) for the participants' decision to come to study in the UK

Participant	The reason(s) for studying in the UK
1	Being attracted to the academic research method of getting a degree by doing research instead of taking courses.
2	Being attracted to the academic research method of getting a degree by doing research instead of taking courses.
3	The length of study for a Master's degree is shorter than it is in other countries.
4	Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is not required, personal preference of the country, and the first school admission granted was from the UK.
5	Requirements from the scholarship.
6	GRE is not required.
7	Research interest, personal interest in British culture and people.
8	Requirements from the scholarship.
9	GRE is not required.
10	The length of study for a Master's degree is shorter than it is in other countries.
11	Personal dislike of USA, high reputation of academic achievement of some of the UK universities, GRE is not required.

According to Table 6.1., most of the participants were motivated by one or more than one factor to make their decision before coming over to study in the UK. Such a circumstance suggests that there is no single motivational theory suited to an understanding of all the factors involved in motivational behaviour (Tremblay and Gardner, 1995). The present research will only focus on the participants' primary concern with the decision which they made to choose to come to the UK.

“... Understanding more about L2 cultural elements can improve language competence. Students mainly concentrate on their academic studies but understanding more about local culture can enlarge your understanding of the language, not only language relating to your academic subjects but also others. For example you'll know more when you go see films or plays, because you have to know how to reserve or buy tickets when you go to theatre which are not related to our academic subjects. You have to know language terms relating to beers, and horse racing to enjoy these local activities...” (Participant 7, Interview 1)

Regarding Table 6.1., there is only one participant who had integrative motivation for deciding to come to study in the UK. It is, however, suggested that this particular participant's interest in British culture and people is closely related to his academic research area, British English literature. This participant indicated in interview four that

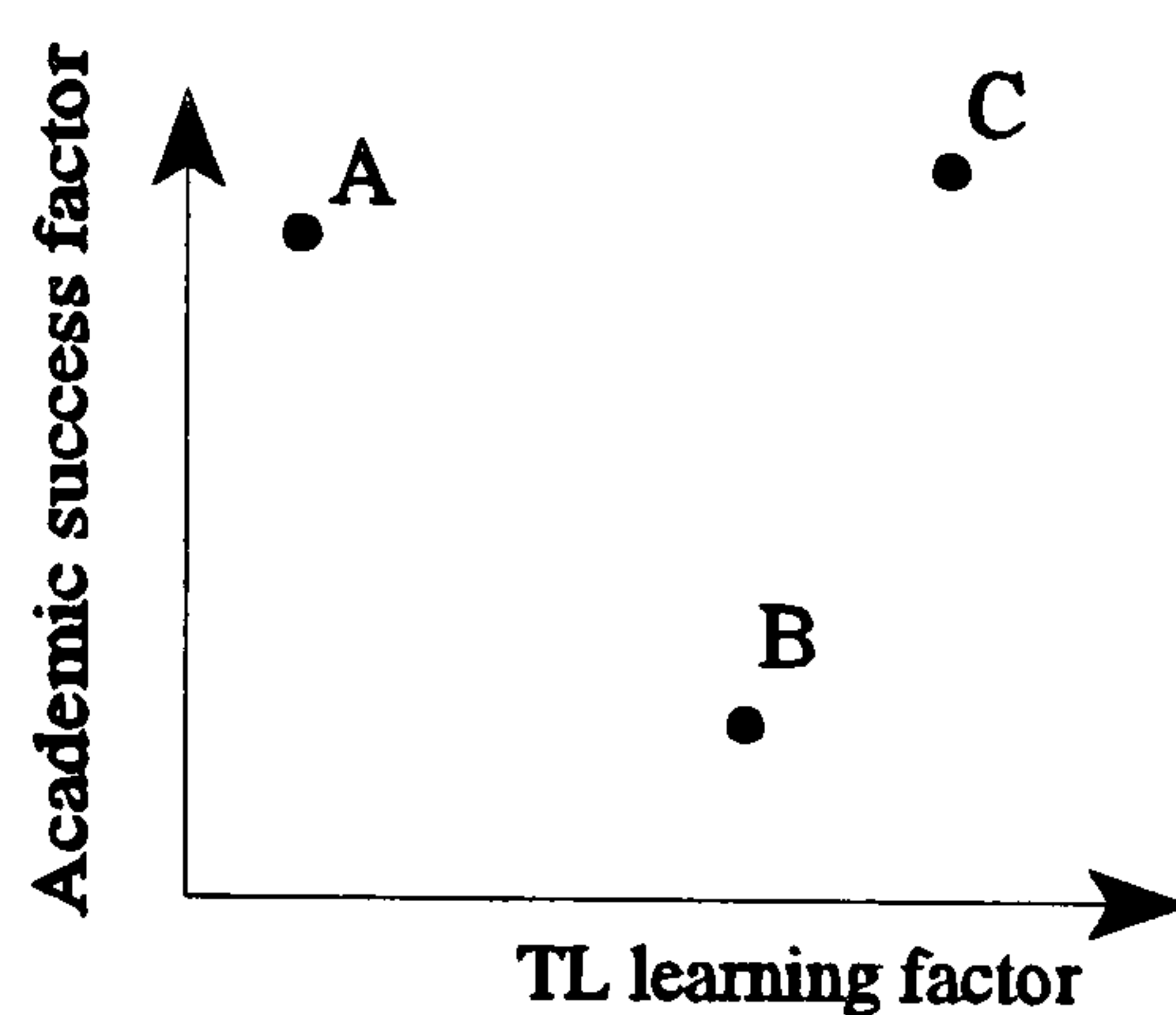
his understanding and acquisition of British culture could benefit his research achievement. Consequently, instrumental motivation is regarded as the main stimulus for Participant 7 to cultivate his integrative motivation. Two participants decided to come and study in the UK because of the requirements of their sponsorship, in which case these two participants can be considered as more instrumentally motivated than integratively motivated since they had no other choice but to come to study in the UK.

Among the rest of the participants, two of them were motivated by the academic research methods utilized in UK universities, which can be considered as instrumental-motivation oriented. Another two participants were motivated by the length of time which a Master's degree course requires in UK universities, which can also be seen as instrumental-motivation focussed. The rest of the four participants indicate that the language requirement from UK universities, the fact that GRE is not necessary, was the attractive factor for them in choosing to come and study in the UK. GRE is a test which applicants need to sit when they apply for postgraduate studies offered by universities in the USA. It is a test which consists of general knowledge, and the use of Academic English in relation to different fields, such as science, humanities, and social science. In order to get a good score and be accepted by universities in the USA, applicants in general need to prepare before taking this test. The preparation of GRE is time consuming and no guarantee is given even if GRE is taken. Consequently, the participants who came to study in the UK because of the none requirement of GRE are considered as instrumentally motivated, to start and complete a degree as soon as possible. The acquisition of academic English (EAP) is, therefore, regarded as a priority task in the participants' SDLL in the research environment.

Within the concept of instrumental motivation, there are two factors in the present research which manifest the participants' learning preferences in their SLL. These factors are the TL learning factor, and the academic success factor. When one of these two factors appears to be stronger than the other to the participants, then the participants' SLL will be directed to the stronger factor. As mentioned earlier, the participants' main concern here in the research environment is their academic success. Consequently, their SLL is directed to meeting the needs and requirements of their academic progress, and the TL learning

factor will appear to be less influential than the academic success factor in the participants' life in the research environment. The following figure, Figure 6.3., explains the interactions of these two factors in the participants' instrumental SLL motivation.

Figure 6.3.: The interaction of TL learning factor and academic factor in instrumental SLL motivation



The vertical axis in this figure represents the degree of academic success factor. The horizontal axis represents the degree of TL learning factor. A learner (A) with a high academic success factor and a low degree of TL learning factor may focus more on reading and writing in their SLL, since reading and writing are two language skills essential to their academic success. On the other hand, a learner (B) with a high TL learning factor and a low academic success factor may focus more on listening and speaking. Such circumstances seem to happen frequently among language learners who register for some short term ESL language programs which may emphasize students' TL competence in terms of oral proficiency. There is a possibility that some language learners (C) may have a high degree of both factors in the present research and may achieve high competence in the four language skills speaking, listening, reading and writing.

“... I pay attention when I listen (to others) and if I hear something new then I will bear it in mind. Although I don't deliberately create any learning opportunities, I don't give up any learning opportunities which appear in front of me in the environment where I live. As long as it is something new to me, I will learn it, remember it and pay attention to it...” (Participant 7, Interview 2)

According to the participants, who are either at the initial stage or writing-up stage of their studies, they tend to put more emphasis on the reading and writing aspects of TL activities than on the speaking and listening aspects of TLL, which can be described as the essential components of ECP.

“... I spend most of my time on writing my thesis. I write letters, email too but not a lot. The main activity is writing up my thesis...” (Participant 4, Interview 4)

The participants who are registered as M.Phil./ D.Phil. students concentrate on the improvement of their academic TL speaking and listening skills when they reach the final stage of their studies, to prepare for the viva. The table below, Table 6.2., indicates the participants' evaluation of their TL skills in relation to the aspects of academic English, EAP-concerned, and daily conversational English, ECP-related. Academic English in Table 6.2. refers to TL speaking and writing skills.

Table 6.2. Academic English vs. daily conversational English

Academic English vs. daily conversational English	Participant
Academic English is more difficult than daily conversational English	1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11
Daily conversational English is more difficult than academic English	6
Both are about the same level of difficulty	2, 10

“... There is a gap between my academic and conversational English. I think it's natural. The first problem is relating to the use of words. In academic aspect, you've done a lot of reading and are familiar with those academic terms so you are more capable in using academic English. Daily conversational English include many local uses of words, phrases and some special terms with special meanings which we do not know and didn't learn before. For example, you have to know the English word for bank draft before you go to a bank to buy draft...” (Participant 6, Interview 4)

In the present research, eight participants regard academic English as more challenging than daily conversational English, while only one participant considers daily conversational English to be more difficult than academic English. Two participants feel that both academic and daily conversational English are difficult for them. The academic style of language and highly accurate use of words which academic English demands of the

participants are suggested to be the most difficult aspects for the participants in relation to their SDLL in the research environment.

“... Apart from language mistakes or errors, there is something deeper than the linguistic problems. Such as, Dr. Kelly doesn't think you should present the idea this way and he's confused by the presentation of your ideas. He thinks it's due to the language problem but I don't think so. I think it's deeper than that. There are no grammatical mistakes so I don't think it's the problem of language competence. But on the other hand, if you like to say it's the problem of language competence, it actually is because you can't present your ideas in English fluently. They (NSs) feel a bit strange and sometimes even worse because they don't think it makes sense. But these's nothing wrong with the sentence - no grammatical mistakes nor errors in language structure. I just can't write fluently (in English)...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

It is necessary to mention that the participants in MA/ MSc studies pay more attention to academic TL competence in relation to writing skills than speaking skills. This is due to the fact that they will only be assessed in a written form. The participants in M.Phil./ D.Phil. studies also indicate the importance of TL writing skills, which is due to the fact that they are at the stage of writing up and none of them is yet at the stage of preparation for the viva.

6.1.2. Personality factors

It is believed that certain personality characteristics are constructive or destructive to successful SLL (Stern, 1983). For example, extrovert language learners may seek opportunities to practise their oral skills while introvert language learners may prefer individual reading activities, in which case different personalities may benefit from different aspects of language learning. However, it is suggested that different cultures may value personality traits differently and such circumstances may affect the ways, which personality traits influence SLL (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991).

“... Speaking is my weakest part and I think it is related to my personality. I am afraid of something I don't know plus I have to use English to talk to others which is very difficult for me. I think it is something relating to my personalty which influences my language learning/ performance...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

Relating the personality factors to the present research, the images of “extroversion” and “talkativeness” are often connected, and are regarded as rather negative in the general Chinese culture and educational culture, which emphasizes the concepts of “harmony” and “obedience” (Jin, 1992). Consequently, students in schools or children at home are not encouraged to speak in front of people or in public unless permission is given by the authority figures, teachers or parents. Having been educated in such a “passive-oriented” learning environment, the participants may therefore have a tendency to choose passive learning activities in their SDLL in the research environment.

“... When I speak Chinese, I can always make sense but I just simply have trouble with English. Once my classmate told me that what I said was right but asked why my voice was getting quieter and quieter. Well, I just can’t get used to it (speaking in front of others). First of all, I’m not used to speaking in front of others and secondly I am not used to speaking in English...” (Participant 9, Interview 4)

“... My personality, I don’t like to ask questions consequently when I have conversations with others I don’t feel like to poke into others’ personal matters so there is nothing too much to talk about...” (Participant 9, Interview 4)

The research study of “good language learners” conducted by Naiman et al. (1978) suggests that good language learners can only achieve a satisfactory level of achievement after many trials and errors and after they have overcome frustrations during the period of their learning of a language. According to the present research, there are three major personality factors regarded by the participants to be influential in relation to their SDLL in the research environment.

6.1.2.a. Anxiety

Anxiety is described by Scovel (1978) as a state of apprehension and a vague, sometimes undefined fear. Three types of anxiety are distinguished, as follows:

Table 6.3. Definitions of three types of anxiety

Genre	Definition
Trait anxiety	A more permanent predisposition to be anxious.
State anxiety	Apprehension that is experienced at a particular moment in time as a response to a definite situation.
Situation-specific anxiety	Anxiety which is aroused by a specific type of situation or event.

(Ellis 1994, pp.479-480)

State anxiety is regarded as a combination of trait and situation-specific anxiety (Ellis, 1994). According to the participants in the present research study, the specific type of anxiety discussed in the previous chapter which the participants have while talking to either NSs or NNSs can be regarded as state anxiety. Some of the participants have anxiety whenever they know that they are going to talk to their supervisors or NSs, while some of the participants only have anxiety when they talk to unfriendly NSs. The state anxiety which the participants have can be further classified into two categories: (1) debilitating anxiety; and (2) facilitating anxiety.

“... I feel nervous while taking to the English people but feel at easy while talking to NNSs. I think the nervousness is due to the self-conscious of my own language problems and it appear when you talk to an English person whose mother tongue is English. I don't think that I have the reason to not to speak English well at all. I never think it this way. On the other hand, I'm afraid that they will not understand me or they will be impatient which cause the pressure...” (Participant 6, Interview 4)

Oxford and Ehrman (1993) point out that debilitating anxiety is regarded as a negative kind of anxiety which destroys L2 learners' language performance, while facilitating anxiety can keep the L2 learners alert and is described as a positive kind of anxiety. Relating this point to the present research, the participants tend to have a combination of facilitating and debilitating anxiety within the concept of state anxiety. The participants may feel nervous or stressed while talking to either NSs or NNSs but simultaneously they are able to pick up TL input from other speakers and also to correct their own TL mistakes or errors. Nevertheless, the participants in the present research are generally believed to have more negative, debilitating anxiety than positive, facilitating anxiety, because they tend to avoid talking to NSs in the research environment.

“... I feel very stressed while talking to NSs, not fluent at all. I have a sentence in mind already but when I speak it out I just don't know why I put an s at the end of a verb when it's not necessary. The more I worry the more mistakes I make, such as when I have to use 'do' for they but I just use 'does' instead. You (I) know the rules and you're (I'm) not supposed to make that kind of mistake but there's pressure in front of NSs...” (Participant 3, Interview 2)

Speaking in front of others is often regarded as the most anxiety-provoking situation (Horwitz and Young, 1991). Nevertheless, apart from speaking and listening activities, reading and writing activities can also generate performance anxiety among some of the language learners. For some of the participants of the present research study, reading can be anxiety-provoking as well, although reading has the advantage of a permanent written context which allows the language learners to read the context repeatedly. The worry of not being able to finish reading the materials required by academic courses is regarded as the most common anxiety which the participants may have with regard to reading activities.

“... Sometimes I'm afraid that I may miss out some ideas. I always feel that I haven't read enough. For example, you've (I've) some ideas but you're (I'm) afraid that those ideas are not enough when you (I) write essays. But you're not able to read several times and also to read a lot...” (Participant 9, Interview 3)

Writing activities can be regarded as another potential source of anxiety for advanced language learners, such as the participants in the present research study, who utilize the TL as a medium to achieve academic success. In order to complete their studies in the research environment, the participants are required to submit a written form of work to be assessed before the awarding of the degree. Consequently, a fluent academic level of TL writing skills is necessary for the participants to be able to successfully complete their studies in the research environment.

“... Writing is the biggest problem for me at this stage. You're (I'm) not very confident about what you write and confident that other people can 100% understand what you write, and don't know who to ask for help. When I read what I write, it always makes sense to me and I can always understand (what I write). The first time you write, you just simply put down the ideas but you might miss out something that you (I) don't know of. The second time you read what you wrote, you don't understand it at all...” (Participant 4, Interview 3)

With relatively limited training in relation to academic writing skills from their previous TL education in Taiwan, the participants tend to have different degrees of anxiety while in the writing-up stage of their study in the research environment.

6.1.2.b. Extroversion/ introversion

It is suggested that language learners with an extroverted personality are more capable of acquiring oral skills than those with an introverted personality (Naiman et al., 1978), while language learners with an introverted personality may have better performances on reading and grammar components in taking standardized language tests (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991).

“... If you are a rather introvert kind of person then you’ll stay home for most of the time so that you’ll miss out the chances to have contact with other people or a social life, which are great opportunities to practise your English. If you are a rather extrovert kind of person then you’ll have a lot of friends, going out for fun and chatting then you’ll have opportunities to use and practise English. People who are introvert have their learning style, such as doing a lot of reading, and people who are rather extrovert tend to have more real life experience, which provides the learners with a lot of opportunities to practise the language and to improve their language competence easily... “ (Participant 7, Interview 4)

According to the present research study, most of the participants regarded their introverted personality, which may have been cultivated ever since the participants’ childhood, as an obstacle which hinders their TL performance in the research environment.

6.1.2.c. Risk-taking

Ely (1986), who conducted a study of the risk-taking behaviour of university students who enrolled in Spanish courses, indicates that language learners with risk-taking characteristics tend to participate in classroom activities voluntarily. Such voluntary participation may increase the learners’ opportunities to practise their TL, which is considered as beneficial to their SLL.

“... I don’t like to speak in the seminars because I feel my English is rather poor. I’ll only speak when people ask me questions. I know I’ll have to be ‘brave’ to be able to improve my English competence. It’s my personality - don’t have the courage (to speak English)...” (Participant 1, Interview 3)

The characteristic of risk-taking can be best described by four behaviours: (1) less hesitancy in using a newly-acquired linguistic element; (2) willingness to use a complex or difficult linguistic element; (3) tolerance of possible incorrectness in using the language; and (4) lower tendency to rehearse a new element silently before attempting to use it aloud (Ely, 1986). According to the present research, some of the participants tend to “rehearse” or “prepare” what they are going to say in advance, which can be described as risk-avoiding behaviour.

In relation to the concept of the “at risk” language learners, the other relevant factor which needs to be taken into consideration is that of “face work”, referring to embarrassing oneself in public occasions, in the participants’ L1 culture. According to Ting-Toomey (1996), “face work” is a concept which exists in all cultures. The “face” is regarded as a projected image of one’s self in a relational situation. The strong concept of face-saving in the participants’ L1 cultural norms, not making mistakes in public and the concept of speaking less so as to make fewer mistakes, is seen as an important factor which drives the participants away from the category of risk-taking language learners. The combination of fear of losing face and wanting to make as few mistakes as possible correlates to the participants’ oral success in TL learning.

One unique finding in the present research is that most of the participants are willing to take risks while talking to NNSs but are more cautious of their TL performance in front of NSs. The participants tend to be more relaxed and confident, and do not mind making linguistic errors or mistakes in front of NNSs but they are more alert when any linguistic errors are made in front of NSs. This is an interesting phenomenon in relation to risk-taking behaviour among the participants of the present research study.

6.1.3. Other affective factors

According to some of the participants, they do not feel in a good mood to talk or socialize with others when their academic work is not progressing well, or when they feel confused over their academic work.

“... I feel that English is very difficult. I’ve been here for so long but still have trouble speaking, although in general my English competence has improved. The improvement in my English hasn’t

reached my expectation. When I'm in a good mood then I'll see it in a more positive way, thinking that my English will be better and better, but when I'm in a bad mood then I'll feel very depressed thinking that I've been here for so long, and how come I still can't speak fluently and even make grammatical mistakes..." (Participant 9, Interview 2)

"... When I have trouble with my research work then it will influence my mood, which will influence my language performance..." (Participant 6, Interview 4)

The participants claim that their low spirits can influence not only their opportunities for practising the TL, but also their TL performance. Apart from academic work, variables such as weather and physical conditions, and frustration in learning the TL are also regarded as primary factors influencing the participants' mood in utilizing the TL in the research environment.

6.2. The transfer between L1 and L2

Language transfer is regarded by Selinker as one of the five stages in the SLL cognitive processes (see Chapter Two for discussions in detail). The participants, who self-direct their TL learning in an authentic TL environment, are expected to have different learning experiences from Selinker's five stages of SLL. The three TLL factors: (1) the easy access to the TL input; (2) the easy access to NSs of the TL; and (3) the change in TL learning purposes, from EEP to mainly EAP-focussed and ECP-related are recognized as components directing participants' previous SLL experience in Taiwan into a new dimension of SLL in the research environment. Because of the three TLL factors the participants have in the research environment, the participants experience the range of interlocking systems that characterizes their development of the TL over time in the research environment.

"... It is not possible to think in English, only in Chinese so I am not very satisfied with my speaking, maybe listening/ hearing more will help..." (Participant 5, Interview 1)

"... The most difficult part is how to express correctly in a sentence, how to write. For example, there is a certain way to describe an event in Chinese. Perhaps NSs will use different ways to present an idea but we will feel strange when we read those sentences. I know what they try to say but the problem is that I don't use those ways in my writing. This is the most difficult part relating to my writing..." (Participant 4, Interview 3)

According to Odlin (1989), language transfer, especially negative transfer, may occur more commonly in natural settings, where language mixing is freely permitted, than in classroom settings, where the correct input or output of L2 is emphasized.

6.2.1. The Influence of L1 on the L2 performance

It is suggested that SLL is strongly influenced by the learner's L1, and the role of L1 is mostly regarded as a negative factor in the process of SLL (Ellis, 1985). Research conducted in relation to the influence of L1 on the L2 performance includes: (1) the behaviourist learning theory; and (2) contrastive analysis. The behaviourist learning theory consists of learning theory within a psychological context, and contrastive analysis consists of language learning theory from both linguistic and psychological aspects. Initially, these two theories emphasize different aspects of language learning, therefore, issues related to the L1 influence on the L2 performance as indicated by the participants are regarded as best explained by a combination of behaviourist learning theory and contrastive analysis.

It is essential to mention that in addition to the influence of the participants' L1 culture elements on their social preference with L1 speakers, the considerable linguistic differences between the participants' L1 and L2 are regarded by the participants as having a negative influence on their L2 development and performance. This negative influence is evaluated by the participants on the basis of their frequency of errors, which is considered to be a result of the negative transfer of mother tongue patterns into the learners' L2.

“... My supervisor asked how was my family and I told him that my mum had high blood pressure. After talking to him I found that I used ‘he’ to refer to my mum...” (Participant 8, Interview 4)

In addition to errors due to negative transfer, the avoidance of talking to NSs is regarded as one manifestation of language transfer which is relevant to the present research. Having had a rather solid knowledge of TL grammatical rules from their previous TL education in Taiwan, the participants are therefore expected to be able to avoid making mistakes or errors on the marked rules. Nevertheless, some of the participants indicated that in certain circumstances, such as when feeling nervous or in a rush, they still cannot avoid making mistakes or errors. It is therefore suggested by the present research that in certain circumstances, there is a possibility for language learners who have solid training on TL

grammatical rules to make language mistakes.

6.2.1.a. Speaking

The detection of foreign accents is known to resulting from the influence of language transfer in relation to pronunciation.

“... I have pronunciation problems. I don't expect myself to have a British accent but I hope not to have a Taiwanese accent. I think it's very difficult though. Several weeks ago I read an article. I don't know if you've read it or not. The author got her DPhil degree here in England and is teaching in London now. She, from China, has been married to an English husband and lived in England for 18 years but still has a very strong Chinese accent. I think it's very difficult to control the accent. It takes time...” (Participant 1, Interview 2)

The differences in phonetic and phonological systems between the participants' L1 and L2 are considered to be the main factors which produce a foreign accent - a Taiwanese/Chinese accent in this case.

6.2.1.b. Reading

According to the some of the participants, their slow reading speed is seen as a serious TL learning obstacle in relation to reading.

“... My reading speed is still rather slow. It's not a matter of vocabulary. I simply am not able to get used to reading in English. My reading speed has always been rather slow when reading in Chinese, so it's even worse reading in English...” (Participant 11, Interview 2)

The causes of such problems as indicated by the participants include: (1) unfamiliarity with the use of the TL in specific contexts; (2) unfamiliarity with the subject matter in specific contexts; and (3) reading habits from the L1.

6.2.1.c. Writing

It is a general belief that academic writing has a very different structure from casual and informal writing. Additionally, different academic fields may also have different styles of presenting ideas and arguments.

“... I found that in Taiwan we have a different way of writing introductions which is different from what they do here. You have to find out a question and write down or list the arguments here when you write introduction but in Taiwan we explain the background of a question, which is more like a description. Here they don't care about descriptions in the introductions. Descriptions are presented later in the body of an article. You have to write down the arguments in the introduction. I remember when I went to a writing class and the teacher told us to list the questions first. One of the students said what if there is no question at all and the teacher said 'If you don't have any question then what is the purpose of writing the article?' At that time I thought 'Why we have to have questions then, to write articles?' I remember when I was at school in Taiwan, you (I) don't have to have questions to write articles because sometimes you (I) just describe some things in my articles. Later I found that their education is different from ours in Taiwan. Here they want you to think differently then try to criticize everything, whereas in Taiwan we are not asked or taught to do so. In Taiwan all you have to do is to describe things and then try to find as much information as possible to prove the existence of the things you describe. You have to ask 'why' first here. The teacher in the writing class told us already but at that time I didn't think that was important. But the longer I stay here the more important I think it is. When I have discussions with my supervisor and he tells me what I need to add up in my writing. Later I recalled that the teacher in the writing class has told us already...” (Participant 1, Interview 3)

The participants, who had relatively little training in academic writing from their previous TL education, have had to develop their academic writing skills not only in a language respect but also in an academic cultural respect. First of all, the participants have had to learn to write in their L2 in a formal and academic manner. Secondly, the participants will have to abandon their L1 writing styles, which is recognized as the most difficult task for the participants.

6.2.2. The influence of previous L2 learning experience on present L2 performance

The English which the participants learned in Taiwan, AE, is to a certain degree different from the BE spoken in the research environment. The participants may sense the differences in some use of lexical items and pronunciation between the AE and BE when they first arrive in the research environment.

“... In relation to listening and speaking, the system we previously learnt is different from how it's used here. The north American vocabulary I learned influences my language performance here. I think it maybe due to the fact that I don't use BE a lot here, don't have a lot of opportunities to speak to English people. If I had a lot of chances to speak to English people then I would be able to get used to their use of words. I might be able to pick up their language. I might not hesitate

about to use which word to describe things...” (Participant 3, Interview 1)

Generally, most of the participants are able to transfer themselves into a different type of TL and get accustomed to the use of the different TL after being in the research environment for a term. Nevertheless, one of the participants, who studied in Canada for two years before coming over to study in the research environment, appeared to struggle within the two systems.

6.3. Language learning strategies in SDTLL

The TL learning strategies of the participants are regarded as processes which consist of both mental and behavioural activities in the participants’ SDTLL in the research environment. The behavioural activities of the participants’ TL learning strategies are regarded as “self-access” and the mental activities of the participants’ TL learning strategies are considered to be “attitude” in the present research study.

Research studies on learning strategies in SLL emerged from a concern with identifying the characteristics of effective learners and the concept of language learning strategy has been frequently discussed by various researchers in the field of SLL, such as Naiman et al. (1978), Rubin (1975), O’Malley and Chamot (1990), and Oxford (1990). Language learning strategies, broadly speaking, refer to individual learners’ characteristics in developing target language skills in either a formal or an informal setting (Oxford, 1990a). According to Oxford (1993), learning strategies are regarded as specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques which learners employ to improve their language learning progress in internalizing, storing, retrieving, and using the L2. Weinstein and Mayer (1986) claim that learning strategies are the behaviours and thoughts that learners engage in during learning, which are intended to influence the learners’ encoding process. Oxford appears to see learning strategies as behavioural, while Weinstein and Mayer regard learning strategies as both behavioural and mental.

6.3.1. The participants' behavioural activities, self-access, of SDTLL

According to Long (1989), self-directed learning can be seen as a concept with three dimensions: (1) the sociological dimension; (2) the pedagogical dimension; and (3) the psychological dimension. The sociological dimension of self-access is defined by the social isolation of learners, and the psychological dimension of self-access refers to the mental activities of learners. The pedagogical dimension of self-directed learning refers to the actions of diagnosing learning needs, setting learning objectives, identifying resources, and evaluating learning (Knowles, 1975). In relation to the present research at this point, the concept of self-access is regarded as a concept including the above three dimensions. It is suggested that the participants in the present research have consciously accepted the responsibility to make decisions, to be their own learning change agents, rather than abrogating the responsibility to external sources or authorities (Kasworm 1988, p. 69), and pedagogically the participants evaluate their learning needs, set their learning objectives, identify their learning resources and self-assess their learning results.

According to Elbaum, Berg, and Dodd (1993), the importance of self-access in the concept of SDLL lies in learners' selection and use of learning strategies to reach their TL learning goals. Learning strategies are therefore seen as a focal issue in the concept of SDLL in the present research. O'Malley and Chamot (1987) distinguish three major types of learning strategies: (1) metacognitive; (2) cognitive; and (3) contextualization (see discussions in Chapter Two and Appendix C. for details). The participants in the research environment employ metacognitive strategies to make the use of cognitive processes and constitute an attempt to regulate their TL learning by means of planning, monitoring, and evaluating. These metacognitive strategies enable the participants to organize, focus, and evaluate learning, and to seek the necessary opportunities to put their new knowledge of the TL into practice. The life experience in the research environment, relating to both academic and everyday life, provides the participants with valuable opportunities to put their TL knowledge into practice.

“... You have no other choice but to learn the language in this environment because you have to communicate with others. In addition, you are immersed in the English speaking environment, gradually your language competence will be improved naturally...” (Participant 9, Interview 4)

The metacognitive learning strategies which the participants employ in their SDTLL in the research environment are regarded as content-focussed learning strategies. Because the participants in the present research study are motivated towards academic success, their TL learning strategies are closely related to their academic work.

“... Every week we have 2 papers to read and recently I have to do some observations so I went to the library to borrow books on that particular aspect and to discuss with my supervisor. I will discuss things with coursemates and listen to teachers in class and we also have group work. My life here is closely related to my research study...” (Participant 2, Interview 2)

The participants firstly measure their TL needs on the basis of their academic work. Secondly, the participants set their TL learning objectives in order to fulfil their academic requirements. Thirdly, the participants look for TL learning resources which are closely related to their individual academic research areas. Fourthly, the participants constantly monitor and assess their TL progress on the outcome of their academic assignments. Academic achievement is regarded as the primary concern of the participants and it is also closely related to the participants' TL activities in the research environment.

According to the interviews and the diaries, the participants modify their learning strategies from time to time according to the different TL needs across different periods of the study in the research environment. As indicated in the previous chapter, the participants tend to spend more time on TL activities which are related to their academic work. It is therefore essential to understand how influential the participants' academic work is in relation to their SDTLL in the research environment. The self-access system approach to learning strategies has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter, and consequently the focus of this section is therefore on the content aspect of the participants' TL learning strategies.

Table 6.4. illustrates the time which the participants spend on reading academic and non-academic materials. The calculation of the time which the participants spent on four language skills is based on the diaries they kept from October 1996 to March 1997 for the present research study. The final total amount of time which the participants spent on TL activities related to the four language skills can be seen in Appendix F. Appendix G

indicates the contents of the participants' TL activities related to the four language skills. Appendices F, and G are used simultaneously in the calculation of the total percentage of the time, Table 6.4., which the participants spent on reading academic related materials during the data collection period of the present research study, Term 1, the vacation, and Term 2 of the 1996/97 academic year. With reference to Appendix F, as long as the participants indicate that they spent time on reading materials related to their research topics in the language activities, the hours the participants spent on that particular language activity were seen as hours spent on reading academic related materials.

Table 6.4. The time which the participants spent on reading academic and non-academic materials

Time\Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
*Academic related materials	228.5	73.5	288	85	115.5	495.5	446.5	69.5	255	346	256.5
**Non-academic related materials	152.5	121	29	160.5	1	228.5	212.5	19.5	75.5	75	132
#Total hours	381	194.5	317	245.5	116.5	724	659	89	330.5	421	388.5
## Percentage of reading academic related materials	59.57	37.79	90.85	34.62	99.14	68.44	67.75	78.09	77.16	82.19	66.02

* Figures including hours spent on reading academic related materials in Term 1, the vacation, and Term 2

** Figures including hours spent on reading non-academic related materials in Term 1, the vacation, and Term 2

Figures including hours spent on reading academic and non-academic related materials in Term 1, the vacation, and Term 2

Figures indicate the total percentage of hours spent on reading academic materials in Term 1, the vacation, and Term 2

According to Table 6.4., two participants spent the least time in reading TL academic-related materials among the participants. Five participants spent more than seventy-five per cent of their reading time on reading academic related materials. Four participants spent about sixty per cent of their reading time on reading TL academic-related materials.

“... I seldom read academic materials because I focus on writing. I read some novels for 1 to 2 hours before I go to sleep. I subscribe to the Times and when it comes on Tuesday I usually look through first and then read articles which interest me on that day. If there is nothing interests me,

I'll just leave it there. I'll only have another look again when I'm bored..." (Participant 4, Interview 1)

However, no correlation has been identified linking the time which the participants spent on reading TL academic-related materials to the stage or type of the course of the participants. The overall average hours (percentage) which the participants spent on reading academic related materials during Term 1, the vacation and Term 2 was 69.24. Table 6.5. indicates the time which the participants spent on academic related activities in relation to the writing aspect of the TL in the research environment.

Table 6.5. The time which the participants spent on academic and non-academic related activities in relation to writing

Time\Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
*Academic related materials	136.5	33.5	84	205.5	5	156.5	285.5	102	62	70	99.5
**Non-academic related materials	35.5	75	67.5	31	30	57.5	111	14.5	34.5	93.5	25
#Total hours	172	108.5	151.5	236.5	35	214	396.5	116.5	96.5	163.5	124.5
## Percentage of writing academic related materials	79.36	30.88	55.45	86.89	16.67	73.13	72.00	87.55	64.25	42.81	79.92

* Numbers including hours spent on academic related activities in relation to the writing aspect in Term 1, the vacation, and Term 2

** Numbers including hours spent on non-academic related activities in relation to the writing aspect in Term 1, the vacation, and Term 2

Numbers including hours spent on academic and non-academic related activities in relation to the writing aspect in Term 1, the vacation, and Term 2

Numbers indicate the total percentage of hours spent on academic related activities in relation to the writing aspect in Term 1, the vacation, and Term 2

Appendices F, and G are used again in formulating Table 6.5. above. Although some of the participants indicate that they write paragraphs relating to their academic work in the context of the language activities of writing letters and E-mail, these are not included as part of academic related activities in relation to the writing aspect. The concept of academic writing here refers to formal academic writing. The focus of this table is to find

the amount of time which the participants spent on formal writing, academic related writing activities.

“... I spend most of the writing time on writing academic related assignments, email my supervisor once in a while...” (Participant 6, Interview 4)

“... I spend most of my writing time on writing assignments...” (Participant 11, Interview 2)

However, note-taking on academic related materials is seen as related to formal writing activities in Table 6.5. Five participants spent more than seventy percent of their writing time on formal academic writing, which is due to their academic status - D.Phil. students at that time. Participant 5, who is also a DPhil student, spent relatively little time on academic writing which was due to his devotion to his practical work in the laboratory. Participant 11, a diploma student, spent a large amount of time on writing assignments for the courses he took during the period when the data was collected. The overall average time (percentage) which the participants spent on academic related writing during Term 1, the vacation, and Term 2 was 62.63.

Due to the main emphasis of the EAP and the easy-to-measure quality of language activities related to the reading and writing aspects, comparisons are made only between the TL activities related to reading and writing aspects in the present research study. The results drawn from Tables 6.4., and 6.5. indicate that the TL learning strategies of the participants in the research environment can be regarded as highly academic, content-oriented types of learning strategies.

6.3.2. The participants' psychological activities and attitudes to SDTLL

As indicated earlier in Section 6.1.1., “motivation” is the term utilized to distinguish the general goal of TLL among the participants of the present research study, and “attitude” is the term used in examining the persistence shown by the participants in striving for the goals of their TLL in the research environment. Stern (1983, pp. 376-377) further classifies “attitude” into three categories: (1) attitudes towards the community and people who speak the TL; (2) attitudes towards learning the language concerned; and (3) attitudes towards languages and language learning in general. The “attitude” here in the present

section relates to category 2 - attitudes towards learning the language concerned.

“... Language learning is not the main aim for you to be here. It is only a necessary skill which you need to have to study here. You don't care too much because it is not your main focus...”
(Participant 4, Interview 2)

“... If you force yourself to do it (language learning), you may receive some negative results because some of my friends told me that they didn't like to speak English and I've had a similar experience too. I just wanted to read something in Chinese, not something in English and didn't feel like using English. This is a psychological reason I think. Language learning takes time and practice if you force yourself to do it, then you may not use it in a natural way to allow yourself to familiarize with the language naturally, which is not very good...” (Participant 6, Interview 1)

Mantle-Bromley (1995) suggests that attitudes influence the efforts that learners expend to learn a language, and learners' positive attitudes towards TLL tend to lead learners to a successful TL learning experience. According to the four interviews conducted with individual participants during the data collection period of the present research, three types of attitudes were identified by the participants: (1) the active type of TL learning attitude - seeking opportunities to practise the TL; (2) the naturalistic type of TL learning attitude - learning whatever comes naturally; and (3) the highly academic type of TL learning attitude - having no desire to learn anything other than academic-related materials. The first type of TL learning attitude is regarded as the most active type of learning attitude among the three categories. The second type of learning attitude can be regarded as a situational-focussed type of learning attitude. The third type of learning attitude is considered as the most instrumental type of learning attitude, which is closely related to learners' motivation for TLL. Table 6.6. indicates the participants' attitudes towards TLL in the research environment during the data collection period of the present research study.

Table 6.6. TL learning attitudes of the participants in the research environment

Interview	Attitudes towards TLL in the research environment	Participant
1	1. Active type of TL learning attitude 2. Naturalistic type of TL learning attitude 3. Highly academic type of TL learning attitude	2 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 3
2	1. Active type of TL learning attitude 2. Naturalistic type of TL learning attitude 3. Highly academic type of TL learning attitude	1, 2, 6 4, 5, 7, 10, 11 3, 8, 9
3	1. Active type of TL learning attitude 2. Naturalistic type of TL learning attitude 3. Highly academic type of TL learning attitude	6, 11 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10 9
4	1. Active type of TL learning attitude 2. Naturalistic type of TL learning attitude 3. Highly academic type of TL learning attitude	1, 6 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11 3, 8, 9

“... I want my English to be better so I will find opportunities to talk to others...” (Participant 1, Interview 2)

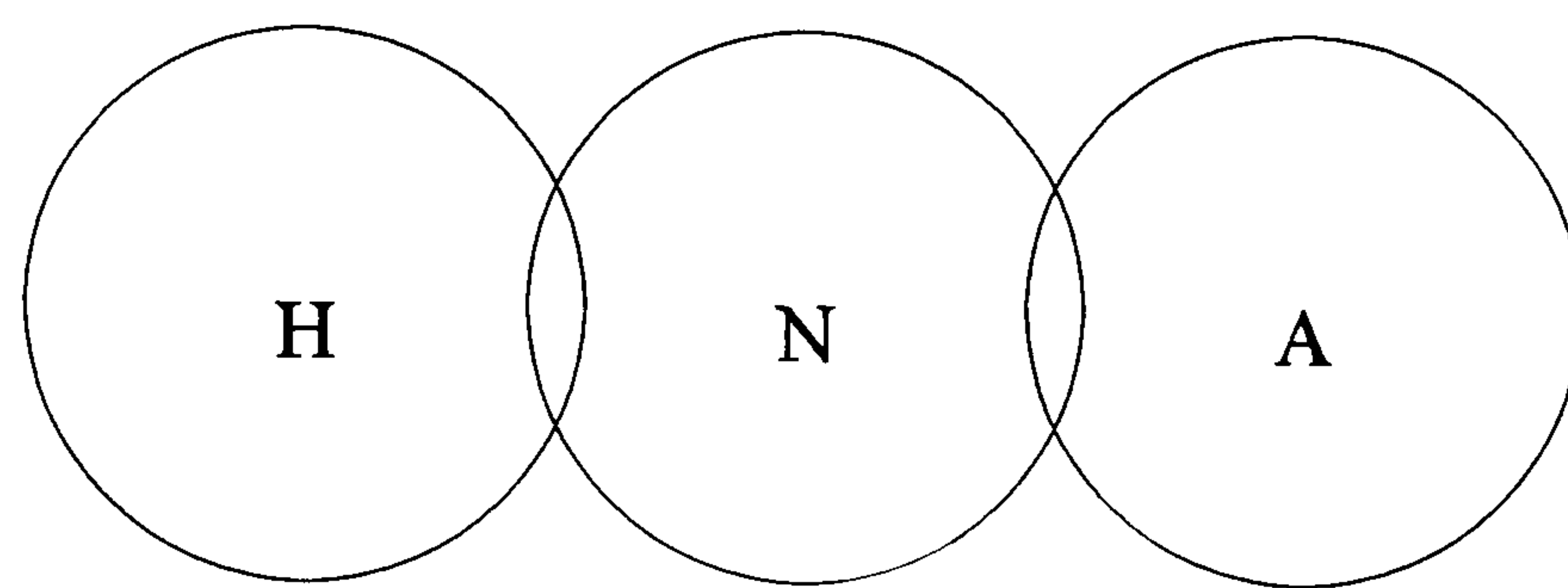
“... I don't have time to create any language learning opportunities because of the focus of my research study at the moment. Let it be...” (Participant 10, Interview 4)

“... As long as it is related to my research topic then I'll be very active to learn. I'll be more passive when it is not concerning my academic study. I'll learn when I have time...” (Participant 3, Interview 2)

According to Table 6.6, Participants 3, 8, and 9 are regarded as conforming to the highly academic type of TL learner in the research environment. They constantly emphasized their primary academic concern in the research environment during the interviews conducted with them. Participant 8 was away in Taiwan when the third interview was conducted in the research environment. Participants 1, 2, 6, and 11 are considered as belonging to the active type of TL learners. They would look for opportunities to practise their TL skills in the research environment.

In general, there is no dramatic attitude shift, over time, among the participants in the research environment. The active type of learners may have a tendency to alternate their attitude with the naturalistic type of learning, and the highly academic type of learners may modify their attitude towards the naturalistic type of learning. However, none of the highly academic type of learners became active type of learners. Figure 6.4. below illustrates the range of the three attitudes of the participants.

Figure 6.4. The three TL learning attitudes of the participants in the research environment



H: highly academic type of learning attitude

N: naturalistic type of learning attitude

A: active type of learning attitude

Figure 6.2. indicates that each of the three TL learning attitudes has its own range and there are two overlapping areas, one lying between the highly academic type of learning attitude and the naturalistic type of learning attitude, and the other lying between the naturalistic type of learning attitude and the active type of learning attitude. These overlapping zones allow either of the attitude shifts over to the other type of attitude, and yet no overlapping zone is available between the highly academic type of learning attitude and the active type of learning attitude. Consequently, the active type of TL learners will not shift over to become highly academic type of TL learners. These are the findings relating to TL learning attitudes from the present research study. More research may need to be conducted on testing the further possibilities of this model in the future.

6.3.3. The modes of self-assessment of the participants

Research conducted on self-assessment emerged from a more general interest in the area of autonomous learning or learner independence. Dickinson (1987) indicates three justifications for the importance of self-assessment in SDLL and Oskarsson (1989) claims six functions of self-assessment in the process of learning (for detailed discussions see Chapter Two of this thesis). It is suggested that language learning is enhanced when learners take the initiative in the process of language learning and assessment, and the most successful language learners are those who regularly engage in self-assessment as part of their learning strategies (Peirce, Swain, and Hart, 1993). Self-assessment is considered as being helpful for language learners to determine their priorities in learning a TL, which is also regarded as an important step in the process of assuming responsibility for learning in SDLL. Blue (1994) further suggests that EAP learners are able to gain considerable benefits from the development of their self-assessment skills while working in a self-access context or in a teacher-led language learning context, or a combination of these two learning contexts.

“... I do it (self evaluate my language performance) all the time because I want to be better...”
(Participant 7, Interview 4)

Self-assessment is regarded as important in the participants' SDTLL in the research environment, because it provides the participants with an indicator to refine their TL learning objectives, and to help them to think about the efficiency of their TL learning strategies. Due to the various levels of TL needs of the different participants in the research environment, the frame of self-assessment of the participants is seen as an impressionistic type of self-assessment and the results of this self-assessment rely on the participants' impressionistic judgments of their own TL proficiency. The questions which the participants ask themselves constantly in their self-assessment are “difficulty with production” type of questions, such as “how many grammatical errors or mistakes have I made today?” in relation to the speaking aspect of TL activities. The participants are able to have an impressionistic idea of roughly the amount of mistakes they have made, which serves as an indicator of the participants' self-assessment in the research environment.

“... In listening and speaking, I'll do self assessment when I come across difficulties. You will find your limit in reading when you come across difficulties, otherwise you don't find it difficult to read

and comprehend. You only self evaluate whenever you encounter difficulties, and it is the same with writing...” (Participant 4, Interview 4)

It is suggested by Bachman and Palmer (1989) that the “difficulty with production” type of question is considered as the most effective type of question in the process of self-assessment. One major weakness of impressionistic judgment suggested by Thomas (1994) is that impressionistic assessment is a subjective type of evaluation and therefore cannot be utilized for comparison across groups. However, all of the participants in the present research are regarded as independent individual TL learners with individual TL learning objectives and needs, and consequently no cross-group comparison is attempted among the participants in the research environment.

According to the participants, the role of the assessor is not always necessarily carried out by the participants themselves in the process of their self-assessment in the research environment. In general, the participants are able to assess their own TL production in relation to the four language skills but sometimes external assessors are employed, especially when the participants are carrying out TL writing-related activities.

“... I’ve been writing recently. I think it’s ok but actually I am not very sure because I need to have it proof read. I will find problems after I have it proof read...” (Participant 8, Interview 4)

“... In writing, I’ll check until I can’t find any mistakes, and until I reach the limit where I can’t do anything more then I’ll give it to my supervisor to have a read...” (Participant 7, Interview 4)

“... I feel that I need an external assessor, especially NSs to assess my writing. I need a NS to read my writing for me...” (Participant 3, Interview 3)

“... I may not make the same mistakes again if someone reads the writing for me when I finish writing it. I can do some simple corrections, such as easy things relating to grammatically rules. I really need someone to read for me to see if it can be understood...” (Participant 2, Interview 4)

Table 6.7. below illustrates the modes of self-assessment of the participants in the research environment. The presentation of the modes of self-assessment in four language skills in Table 6.7. is based on the frequency mentioned by the participants.

Table 6.7. The modes of the self-assessment of the participants in the research environment

4 language skills	Modes of self-assessment
Listening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-impressionistic judgement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Language/ listening comprehension b. Encounter with unknown lexical items 2. Double checking with the speaker or others
Speaking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-impressionistic judgement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fluency in speaking the TL b. The length of time of being able to speak in TL in a conversation 2. Response/ reflection from the listeners or others
Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-impressionistic judgement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Language/ reading comprehension b. Encounter with unknown lexical items c. Reading speed
Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback from others 2. Self-impressionistic judgement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Frequency of grammatical mistakes/ errors b. Fluency of writing in the TL c. Writing speed

According to Table 6.7., the only TL skill for which the participants are able to have independent self-assessment is in reading activities. In relation to writing activities, the feedback from external assessors, such as supervisors, course lecturers, and proof-readers, is regarded as an important indicator in the TL assessment among some of the participants in the research environment.

The lack of training in academic writing is regarded as a fundamental factor which contributes to the requirement for external assessors of writing activities among the participants in the research environment. In addition, self-impressionistic judgement was the main mode which the participants utilized to self assess their TL performance in listening, speaking and reading skills. Receiving feedback from others on their TL written work was the major mode for the participants to assess their TL writing performance. Table 6.8. indicates the frequency and the modes of self-assessment of the participants in the present research study.

Table 6.8. The frequencies and modes of self-assessment of the participants

4 language skills	Modes of self-assessment	Frequency of the participants			
		Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4
Listening	1. Self-impressionistic judgement	11	11	9	11
	2. Feedback from others	1	0	0	2
Speaking	1. Self-impressionistic judgement	9	11	8	9
	2. Feedback from others	6	3	4	4
Reading	Self-impressionistic judgement	11	11	9	11
Writing	1. Self-impressionistic judgement	6	8	6	7
	2. Feedback from others	5	4	5	7

According to Table 6.8., self-impressionistic judgement is the main method utilized by the participants in their TL self-evaluation. It can be seen that the participants rely more on feedback from others regarding the assessment on their TL writing skills than the other three language skills. Following paragraphs will examine closely the modes of self-assessment of the participants in relation to the four language skills.

Listening

Language/ listening comprehension and encounters with unknown lexical items are the two modes which the participants utilize to assess their listening skills. Listening comprehension is regarded as a global concept which enables the participants to understand the development of their listening skills in the research environment.

“... For example, I’ve chatted with this specific person several times and then gradually I’ll find myself more used to this person’s accent. I gradually understand what that person talks about and then I feel that my listening skills have improved...” (Participant 10, Interview 3)

“... My self impression. I suddenly find out that I am able to understand more than before while watching TV or listening to the radio. In addition, I used to feel that people speak too fast so that I wasn’t able to fully understand what they talked about. Now, I gradually am able to know exactly

which lexical items they use, how they use them, and as a whole what they talk about in a conversation...” (Participant 9, Interview 1)

“... Regarding listening, it all depends on whether I’ve understood more than before, whether I have the strong feeling that I am able to comprehend more. When I understand then it’s ok but when I don’t understand then I would ask. I always ask my supervisor when I having a conversation with him. It depends on different situations. If I feel it’s necessary to ask then I would ask, but sometimes it doesn’t really matter to ask or not...” (Participant 3, Interview 2)

Being able to comprehend various accents from different speakers is seen as an indicator by some of the participants for judging their improvement in listening competence.

Speaking

The factor of fluency in speaking the TL is commonly employed by the participants to evaluate their TL speaking competence in the research environment.

“... I’ll tell myself that I need to practise these sentences more when I don’t speak fluently. Basically it (my self assessment in relation to speaking) is based on my self awareness...” (Participant 7, Interview 4)

“... Check how long you’ve talked to others. For example, check out how long you are able to speak in TL in a thirty minutes’ chat with others which can be used as an indicator. I also use the feedback from others to evaluate my speaking skills...” (Participant 6, Interview 3)

Having had relatively few opportunities to speak the TL in Taiwan, most of the participants are able to observe the improvement of their TL speaking competence in the research environment.

Reading

Language/ reading comprehension, the encounter with unknown lexical items, and reading speed are employed by the participants in evaluating their TL reading competence in the research environment.

“... Basically I find some kinds of articles, mostly in the newspapers, which I don’t read a lot to self evaluate my reading skills - to see how much I can understand...” (Participant 6, Interview 4)

“... Reading speed and vocabulary. Check if I’ve known more vocabulary than before. I find that my reading skills have been improved while reading Newsweek...” (Participant 11, Interview 4)

The encounter with unknown lexical items is experienced by most of the participants, especially the ones who have just started their studies in the research environment. The participants, who are just in their first term of their study in the research environment tend to experience anxiety when encountering a great number of unknown lexical items when they read materials relating to their academic subject. Being able to spend less time on reading articles, or achieving a faster reading speed, is considered as another important indicator by the participants in judging their improvement in TL reading skills.

Writing

The participants indicate that it is rather difficult for them to improve their TL writing skills in the research environment.

“... Check how fluently I can write in TL and the length of sentences I write. I used to write short sentences but now I can write longer sentences. Also feedback from the proof reader(s) (can be used as an indicator). My understanding in grammatical rules, and sentence structures is not very good so I need a person to read it for me...” (Participant 9, Interview 4)

“... It’s very difficult to evaluate academic writing. Sometimes I can only have rough assessments, such as how many words I write a day or how many pages I write a day...” (Participant 6, Interview 4)

“... I keep revising constantly. I check what I write till I can’t find out any mistakes - no mistakes and also no way to make any improvement, then I hand it to my supervisor...” (Participant 7, Interview 4)

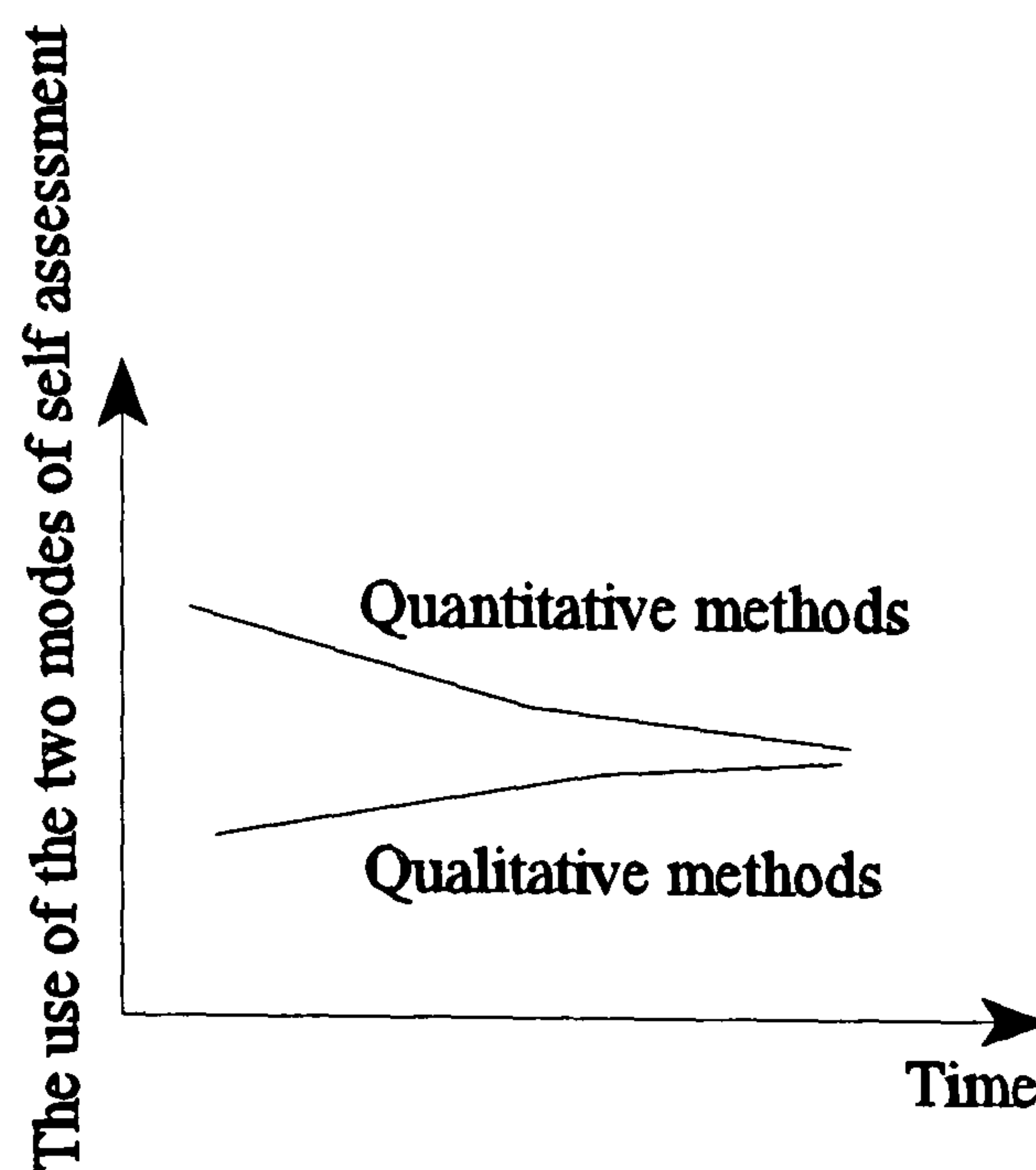
Feedback on the participants’ written assignments is seen as a major indicator for the participants to assess and improve their TL writing skills. However, three modes of self assessment are mentioned by the participants in relation to their evaluation of their TL writing skills. The frequency of grammatical mistakes/ errors is the primary method which the participants employ to judge their improvement in TL writing skills. A faster writing speed is another sign for the participants that their TL writing competence is enhanced.

By examining the different modes which the participants utilize in the self assessment of their TL skills, two types of self-evaluation modes have been identified: (1) the qualitative type of self-evaluation; and (2) the quantitative type of self-evaluation. The degree of language comprehension in listening and reading skills, and the fluencies of speaking and writing in the TL are considered as qualitative types of self-assessment. The emphasis in these evaluation modes is on the quality aspect of the TL, whereas the quantitative type of self-evaluation focusses on the quantity aspect of the TL. The participants are concerned about the amount of unknown lexical items which they encounter, and the amount of time they require to finish reading an article and finish writing up an assignment.

The cross-application of these two types of evaluation modes provides the participants with situational evaluation methods to benefit their TL learning objectives and achievement over time in the research environment. The effectiveness of the use of these two types of self-assessments is recognized as closely related to the length of time which the participants stay in the research environment. In order to survive in an authentic TL environment, quantitative methods are heavily applied among the participants who newly arrived in the research environment to improve their TL communicative competence in a wide and general concept. As their academic studies start later in the research environment, quantitative methods are utilized to improve the accuracy of their understanding and use of TL to benefit their academic achievement.

The figure below illustrates the participants' emphasis on the application of these two types of self-assessment in the research environment. Due to the time span of the present research study, it was not able to identify whether the two lines in Figure 6.5. meet at some point. The main purpose of this figure is to indicate the increase and decrease on the use of these two evaluation methods among the participants.

Figure 6.5. The participants' use of qualitative and quantitative self-assessments in the research environment



According to the present research, the longer the participants stay in the research environment, the more qualitative self-assessment modes are emphasized by the participants' TL self evaluation, whereas the participants who have just started their study in the research environment tend to emphasize more quantitative self-evaluation methods in their TL self assessment than qualitative ones. It is suggested by the present research that the newly-arrived participants, who have very basic levels of TL competence, need to build up their communicative TL competence urgently to survive in the research environment, and consequently they tend to utilize quantitative methods to evaluate the improvement of their TL competence. The longer the participants stay in the research environment, the more they need to build up a viable TL competence to manage their academic work, and consequently they gradually put more emphasis on the use of qualitative methods, to cultivate a competitive level of TL competence to meet their TL needs at the time.

The different degree of emphasis on the use of qualitative and quantitative modes in self-assessments has been identified by the present research study as closely related to the length of time which the participants stay in the research environment. However, no links have been recognized by the present research study between the different degrees of emphasis on qualitative and quantitative self-assessments and different academic

disciplines and degree courses. It is suggested that more specific and in-depth research studies on self-assessments may need to be conducted to reveal the correlations between these factors.

Summary

Discussions in this chapter have been mainly focussed on the influence of the learner's perspective in the context of SDLL in the present research study. Factors related to individual learner variables (ILVs), language transfer and TL learning strategies are discussed in detail to provide the reader with some comprehensible explanations of the issues raised from the present research study. Data concluded from interviews and diaries are employed to highlight the consequences of the influence of the learner's perspective. It is, however, necessary to mention that certain influences of the participants' L1 cultural elements, such as personality factors, and language transfer between L1 and L2, can also be observed in some of the issues related to the learner's perspective in SDLL.

The participants in the present research are regarded as belonging to the academic instrumentally motivated type of TL learners, and consequently the content of their TL learning strategies is seen as academic oriented. The participants spend a considerable amount of time on TL activities relating to their academic work. Most of the participants spend more than fifty per cent of the time on reading and writing academic related materials. The participants who are registered as D.Phil. students tend to spend more time on reading and writing academic related materials than their academic course counterparts, which is due to the different academic demands of the different levels of academic studies. In addition, the participants tend to have lower spirits when they are experiencing difficulty with their academic work, and such low spirits directly influence the participants' desire to use the TL and also their TL performance in the research environment.

The participants' attitudes towards TLL in the research environment can be classified into three categories: (1) active; (2) naturalistic; and (3) highly academic types of TL learning attitudes. Because of the shift of TL learning objectives over time in the research environment, the participants tend to modify their self assessment methods through a cross-application of quantitative methods and qualitative methods, to meet their TL needs at the

time. Being able to adjust their TL learning activities, both behavioural and mental, and their modes of self-assessment has been regarded as one of the fundamental characteristics of SDLL: the learners take the initiative and to make their own decisions on their learning, and self-assess their learning results.

Some of the L1 cultural influences can be observed in issues related to personality factors and language transfer between the participants' L1 and L2. According to the participants, their introverted characteristics, to a certain extent, hinder their development of TL oral skills, which require face-to-face communication with others. The introversion of the participants may be partially influenced by the Chinese culture, which emphasizes a great deal the concepts of obedience and harmony in the educational system and society. Outspokenness is not a notion to be encouraged by the Chinese family and society. The risk-avoiding characteristic can also be seen as closely linked to the participants' L1 cultural elements. Being afraid of losing face in front of others is considered as a phenomenon in Chinese culture and society. The participants tend to rehearse or prepare what they are going to say in advance, to minimise the possibilities of losing face in front of others.

The anxiety which the participants have while talking to either NSs or NNSs in the research environment may be both constructive and destructive. Debilitating anxiety is considered as a destructive type of anxiety, which damages language learners' language performance, whereas facilitating anxiety is described as a constructive type of anxiety, which keeps language learners alert in the learning process. Some of the TL activities in relation to speaking, listening, reading and writing are regarded as rather anxiety-provoking, and speaking in front of others has been identified as the most anxiety-provoking situation for some of the L2 learners. The best example drawn from the present research is that the participants of the present research study tend to have greater anxiety while speaking to NSs in the research environment. Such anxiety is described as consisting of more debilitating anxiety than facilitating anxiety, because the participants tend to avoid talking to NSs. The notion of avoidance is regarded as the consequence of debilitating anxiety.

The influence of the participants' L1 can be clearly observed in the language transfer between the participants' L1 and L2, including the language activities of speaking, reading and writing. The great linguistic differences between the participants' L1 and L2 tend to exert a negative influence of language transfer on the participants' TL performance and such linguistic differences also increase the difficulty for the participants of improving their TL competence. The detection of a foreign accent is the best known influence of the L1 in the process of language transfer. Different grammatical rules between the participants' L1 and L2 create some reading obstacles for the participants in relation to language comprehension. Writing skills, which are both academic- and culture-oriented, are regarded as the most difficult aspect for the participants to improve under the time constrained circumstances of the research environment.

The relatively few resources which the participants can employ to facilitate the improvement of their writing skills is seen as an additional obstacle which the participants have to face in the research environment. Another factor which can have a negative influence on the participants' TL performance in the research environment is their previous L2 learning experience. Some of the participants, who have never experienced in BE before they arrived in the research environment, may find it difficult to adjust themselves into a BE system, whereas some of the participants, who had experienced in BE before they arrived in the research environment, may find it less difficult to adjust themselves into a BE system.

The present chapter, Chapter Six, and the previous two chapters, Chapters Four, and Five, have been independently focussed on three concepts: cultural elements, environmental contextual factors, and individual learner factors, which are considered as influential in the context of SDLL in the research environment. Related issues drawn from three different perspectives in relation to the context of SDLL have been discussed in detail to bring insights into the present research study. The aim of the next chapter is therefore to draw together all of the related issues raised by the present research study and to form a global concept for the model of SDLL in the present research study.

Chapter Seven

Transformation

Introduction

The present chapter, consisting of conclusive discussions of the previous three chapters, is divided into four sections to provide the reader with further insights into: (1) the concept of SDTLL in the present research study; (2) the role of learner in the context of SDTLL; (3) the concept of transformation in the SDTLL; and (4) the time factor in the context of SDTLL. The relationships between the three focal components and the concept of SDTLL will be concluded in this chapter. Discussions relating to the role of learner will focus on the significance of learner, learning, and learner's L1 culture in SDTLL. The concept of transformation has been identified by the present research study and will be presented in the present chapter to explain the participants' TL development in the concept of SDTLL. Another focal point of the discussions in the present chapter is concentrated on the influence of the time factor on the process of the transformation in the participants' SDTLL. Being able to observe the changes and modifications in the participants' TL development over time is regarded as a significant strength of the present longitudinal research study.

7.1. The concept of SDTLL in the present research study

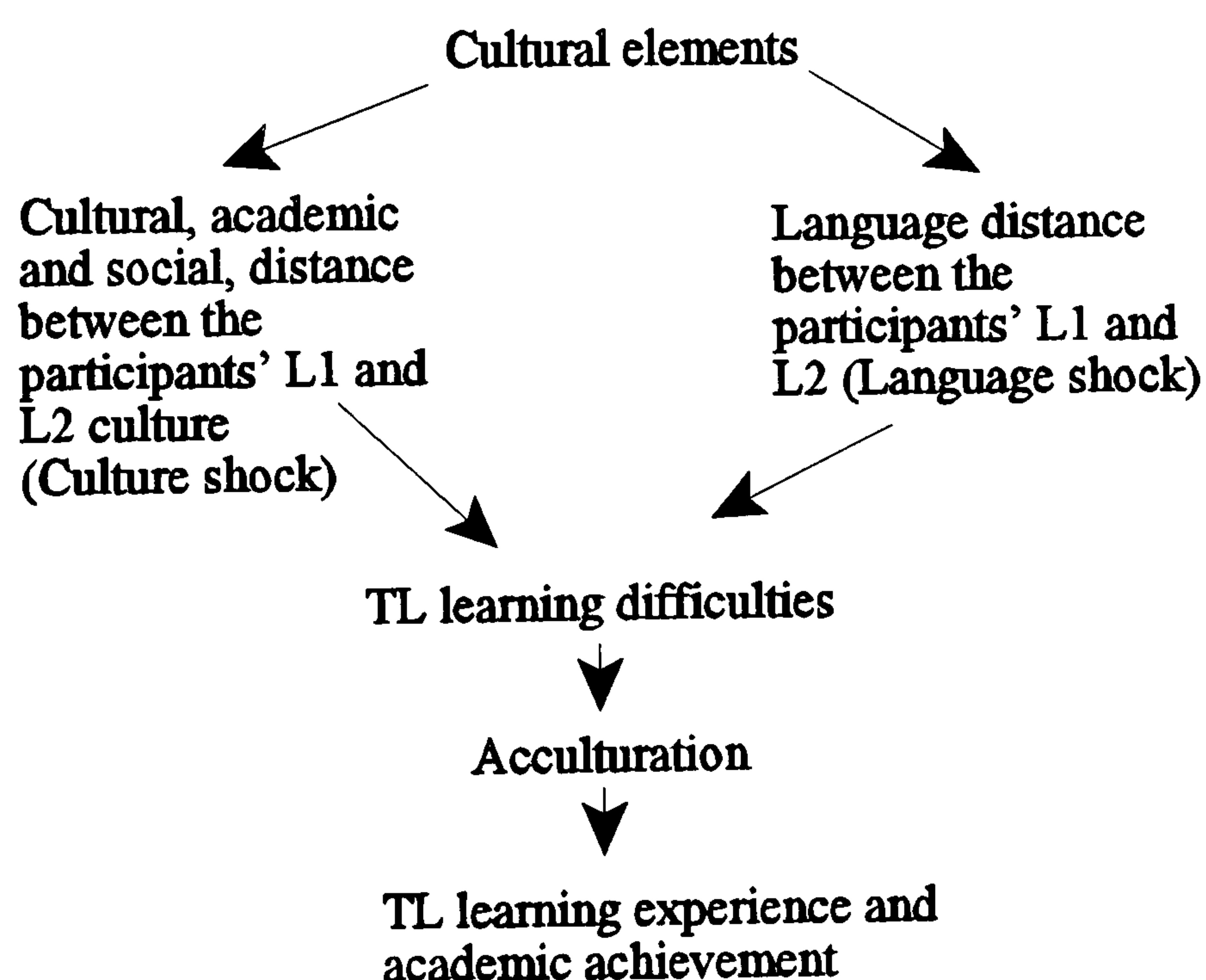
The concept of SDTLL in the present research is defined as having the following key features: (1) the participants take the initiative in setting their TL learning objectives, which are based on the individual participants' TL needs at the time; (2) the participants select their own TL learning resources to facilitate their self-access TL learning, including attending the TL supporting programmes provided in the research environment; and (3) the participants are responsible for monitoring and evaluating their own TL learning progress in the research environment. The nature of the learning method, self-directed learning, and the learning environment, the authentic TL environment, of the present research, suggest

that three components, (1) cultural elements, (2) TL environmental contextual factors, and (3) individual learner factors, are closely related to the participants' TL performance in the research environment.

7.1.1. Cultural elements

Issues related to the influence of cultural elements on the participants' SDTLL in the research environment include: (1) the cultural distance, both social and academic; and (2) the language distance between the participants' L1 and L2, and the language distance between the participants' previous L2, AE, and the L2, BE. The distance between the participants' L1 culture and L2 culture plays a significant role in the participants' adjustment to the new TL environment and to the new ways of learning the TL, from a controlled EFL classroom setting to an uncontrolled ESL natural setting. The concept of TL learning in Figures 7.1., 7.2., and 7.3. is identified by the participants with reference to their academic achievement. The highly academic motivated participants utilized academic achievement as an indicator to evaluate their TL learning. Figure 7.1. below indicates the influences of cultural elements on the participants' SDTLL in the research environment.

Figure 7.1. The influences of cultural elements on the participants' SDTLL in the research environment



The occurrence of culture shock and language shock among the participants is suggested to be closely linked to the considerable distance between the participants' L1 and L2 cultures and languages. The consequences of the culture shock and language shock of the participants led the participants to some of their TL learning difficulties in the research environment.

“... Some of their use of language is closely related to their culture. My first impression is that it is related to their culture when they describe things or situations. When I was in Lancaster, I watched TV every day no matter news programmes or soaps. I watched all of them and I came to realize that their soaps are created on the basis of their culture and life. (By watching those programmes) you will know how they start conversations with others and how they socialize with other people. Then you will start to imitate them, to think how you will reply when an English person asks you certain questions. For example, we don't have pub culture in Taiwan. Although I've been to pubs in Taiwan, they are simply not the same as they are here. Now I know what to do when I go to a pub here. I know what I have to do first and how to behave in there and I feel more relaxed and not so nervous. You can learn these from watching TV. When I attended the language course in Lancaster, they took us to pubs and taught us what we should do and how they usually do things in pubs, such as they don't usually sell beer by bottles but by pints. It is very useful for daily conversation if you know more about their culture...” (Participant 9, Interview 1)

“... Culture and language are closely related and can not be separated. A language represents a culture of a country. The more you know about a culture, the more you know about its language...” (Participant 11, Interview 4)

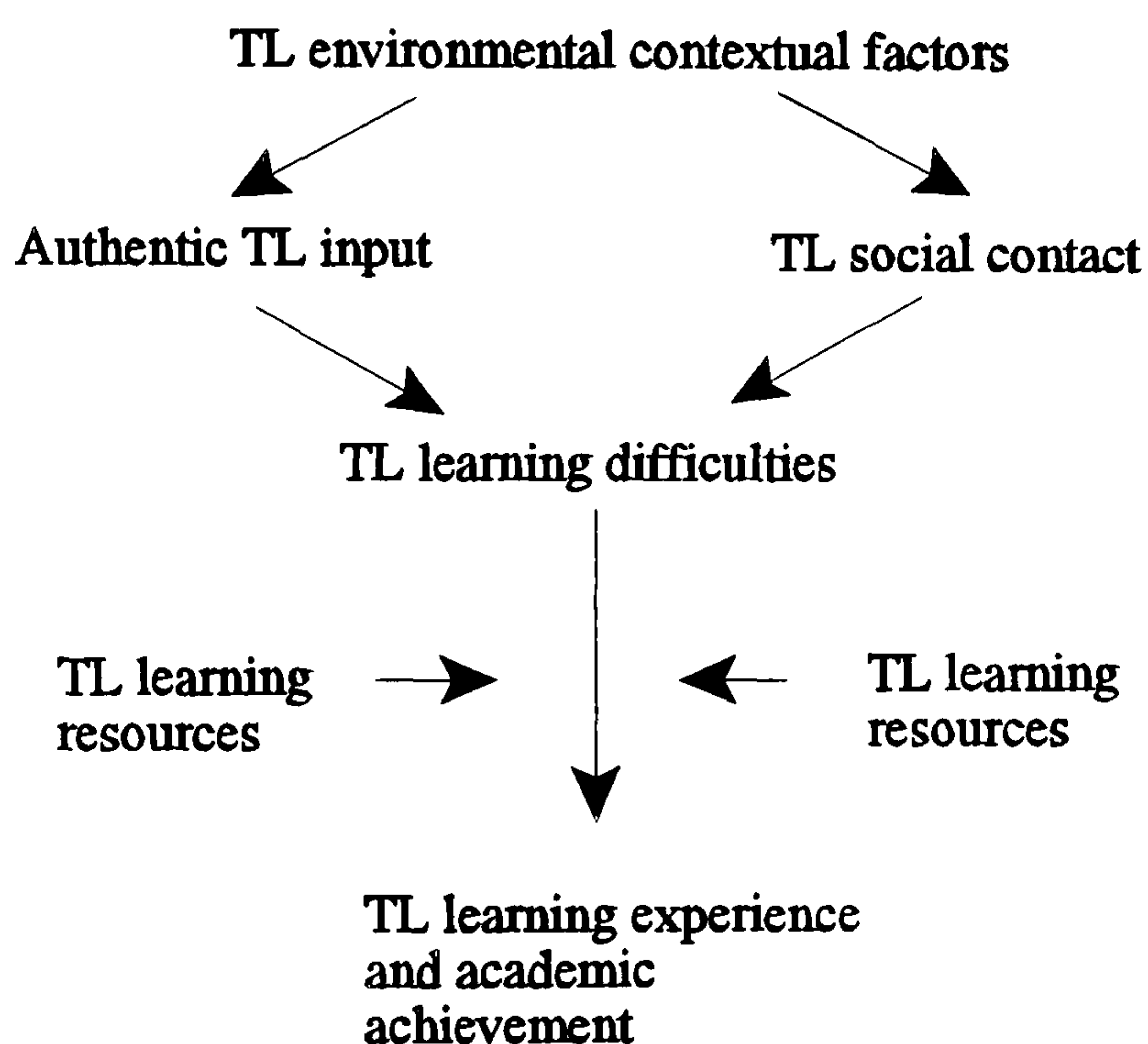
In order to achieve academic success and to benefit their academic progress in the research environment, the participants were in a position to solve their own TL learning difficulties resulting from the cultural and language distance between their L1 and L2. Acculturation is, consequently, regarded as a process which the participants have to go through to develop their abilities to solve these particular difficulties resulting from the cultural and language distance between the participants' L1 and L2. Acculturation is a factor which influences to the participants' TL learning experience and their academic achievement.

7.1.2. TL environmental contextual factors

Issues linked to the influence of environmental contextual factors on the participants' SDTLL in the research environment include the consequences of the authentic TL input,

the participants' TL social contact, and the TL learning resources for self-access in the research environment. Having been educated in a controlled TL environment in Taiwan, the authenticity of the research environment provided the participants with not only valuable opportunities to experience the various TL input provided by both NSs, from local and other English-as-first-language speaking countries, and NNSs of the TL, but also chances to utilize the TL in the participants' social activities in the research environment. Figure 7.2. below illustrates the influences of TL environmental contextual factors on the participants' SDTLL in the research environment.

Figure 7.2. The influence of TL environmental contextual factors on the participants' SDTLL in the research environment



The participants' encounter with uncontrolled and unselected authentic TL input and the opportunities for TL contact with other people in the research environment are considered as factors which create some of the TL learning difficulties for the participants.

"... The purpose of studying abroad is simply to get the degree. I don't want to understand their cultural norms. I don't have that kind of curiosity. The questions you will face are always the same when you travel around here. For example, they will ask you questions like how many nights you want to stay, do you want to have breakfast or not, and how much it is. As long as you come across that kind of questions once, then you'll know how to deal with them later. You face these certain kind of questions when you go shopping, and you will know how to deal with them when you come across these kind of questions many times. Unless in some special circumstances, such as opening an account at a bank, and transferring money between accounts. You ask them once and you'll

know how already. I was thinking of getting to know some people but it's very tiring to have close friendships with others. So, I think, well, never mind. I just want to get my degree and as long as everything is going well then I'm happy with my life here..." (Participant 8, Interview 2)

"... I feel that everyone here speaks with different accents and I don't have a model to follow at all. You learn person A's accent when you talk to him, and learn person B's accent when you talk to her. At the end, I'm totally confused, don't know which one to say..." (Participant 3, Interview 1)

The participants' use of TL learning resources in the research environment is recognized as EAP oriented, which is due to the participants' primary concern in the research environment, to achieve academic success. Additionally, the participants tend to spend more time on passive language activities, reading and listening, than on active language activities, writing and speaking, which is regarded as closely related to the demand for reading in academic work and the participants' preference on passive learning in general.

7.1.3. Individual learner factors

Issues related to the influence of individual learner factors on the participants' SDTLL in the research environment are, (1) individual learner variables, (2) language transfer between the participants' L1 and L2, and (3) the participants' TL learning strategies in the research environment.

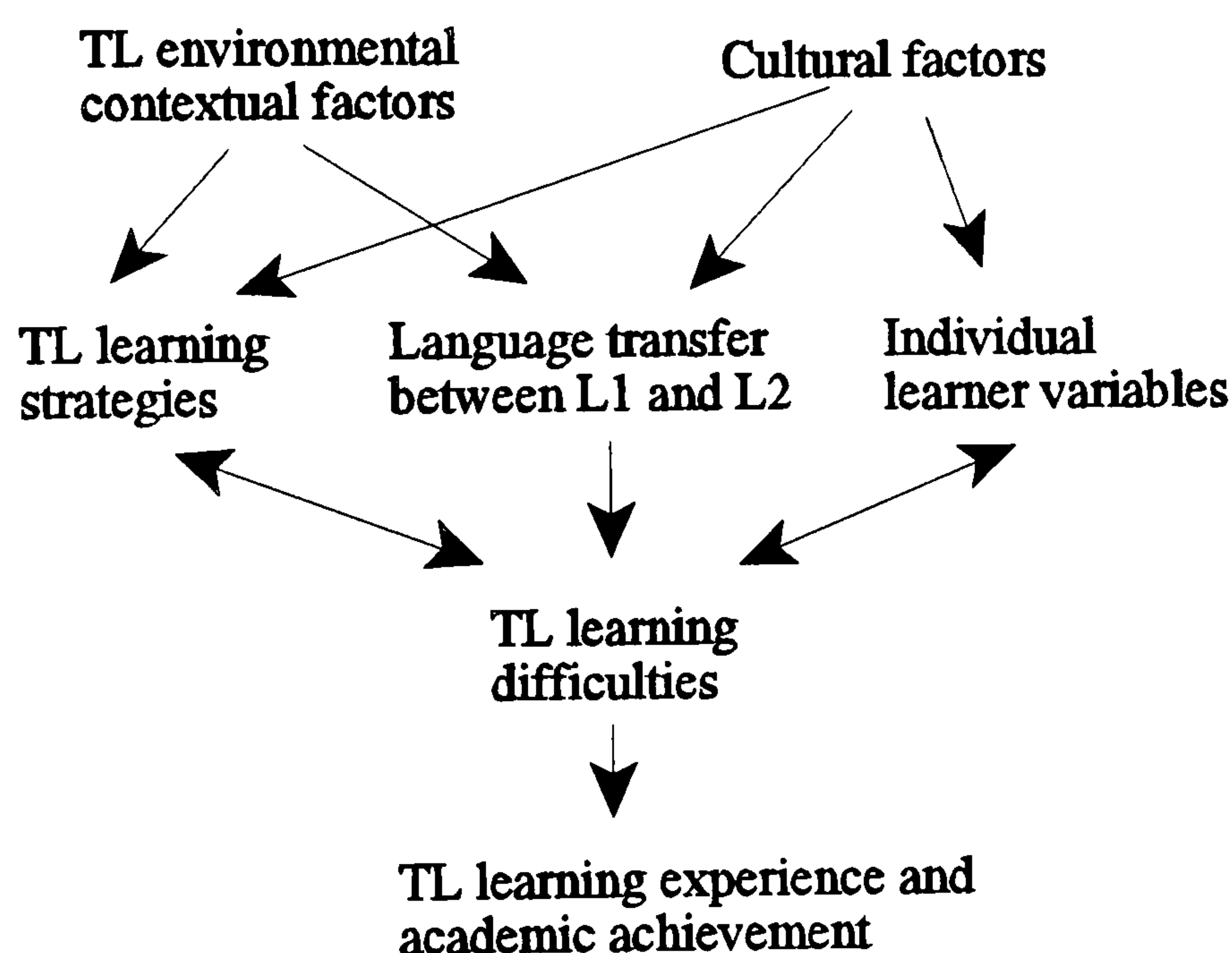
"... I always have to rehearse before I speak. Once I feel nervous then the sentences will be incomplete but the other people can still understand me. I have to make sure what I want to say in advance and to make sure everything is clear. I have to arrange what I want to say in advance to know what I want to ask and what I want to get..." (Participant 2, Interview 3)

"... I don't like talking to others. I would try to talk more to NSs if I'm more familiar with the them. I like watching TV, listening to the radio better. I'm not active in using 'human beings' as a learning resource. I just like using TV and radio, and it's my personality. Regarding the ones I speak to, apart from going to the class, I just talk to my housemates and I talk to them for less 10 minutes a day. This is why my speaking competence is rather weak..." (Participant 9, Interview 1)

According to the above statement made by Participant 2, communication is taking place in relation to the communicative purpose of the TL, which focusses more on the delivery

of the message than on the grammatical correctness of the language. Participant 2 has acknowledged this and so appears to be modifying her expectations based on the grammar-oriented purpose of the TL. Figure 7.3. illustrates the influence of individual learner factors on the participants' SDTLL in the research environment. It can be seen from Figure 7.3. that cultural elements and TL environmental contextual factors have been related to the three main issues: (1) TL learning strategies, (2) language transfer between L1 and L2; and (3) individual learner variables. A more detailed model, which represents the structure of the present research, will be presented later in this section to conclude the relationship between the three main components, (1) cultural factors, (2) TL environmental contextual factors, and (3) individual learner variables, and the concept of the SDTLL of the present research study.

Figure 7.3. The influence of the individual learner factors on the participants' SDTLL in the research environment

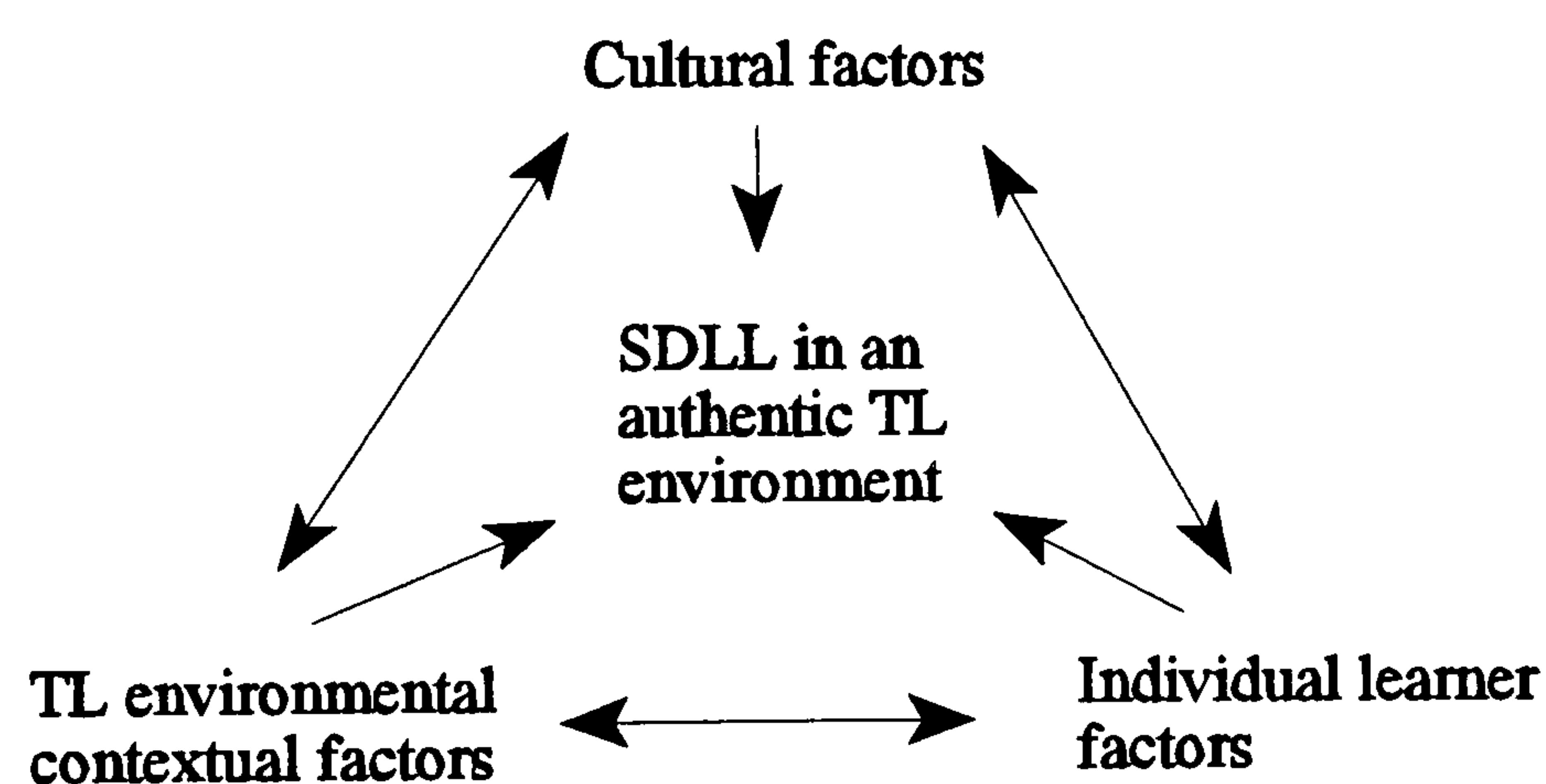


It is suggested by the present research that the content aspect of the participants' TL learning strategies is closely related to the highly academic instrumental motivation of the participants in the research environment. Since the participants' primary concern in the research environment is their academic achievement, their TL learning is therefore EAP oriented. The participants' personality factors, partially influenced by their L1 culture, are considered as important in relation to the participants' attitudes towards their TL learning in the research environment. According to Figure 7.3., TL learning strategies, language

transfer between the participants' L1 and L2, and individual learner variables are influenced by cultural elements, and the former two elements are also influenced by the TL environmental contextual factors.

In addition, according to the participants, issues related to language transfer between the participants' L1 and L2 are regarded as exerting a negative influence on the participants' TL learning. The passive TL learning strategies, debilitating anxiety, introversion and risk-avoiding characteristics are recognized by the participants as negative factors in their TL development in the research environment. However, having had rather strong academic instrumental motivation, the participants concentrate on the development of EAP to facilitate both their TL learning and academic achievement in the research environment. Figure 7.4. represents the final conclusions of the present research study regarding the relationship between the three primary components and the concept of SDTLL.

Figure 7.4. The relationship between the three components and the concept of SDTLL in the present research study - Model 2, a further development from Figure 6.1.



According to Figure 7.4., cultural factors, TL environmental contextual factors and individual learner factors are influential on the participants' SDTLL in the research environment, and at the same time, there are links between these three components. For example, the participants' L1 cultural element is seen as influential on the participants' TL

learning strategies in the research environment. The relationship between the three components is therefore inter-connected, and these three components are also essential to the concept of SDTLL in the research environment. The focal point of the present research study is the role of learner which will be examined in a in-depth manner in the next section.

7.2. The role of the TL learner in the context of SDTLL

TL learners, the participants in the present research study, are regarded as the focal point in the context of SDTLL because they take the initiative in their TL learning, which consists of identification of TL needs and TL objectives, selection and recognition of TL learning resources, and evaluation of TL learning consequences, which are based on their academic studies. The participants are fully responsible for their TL learning in the context of SDTLL in the research environment, and certain characteristics of the participants can influence the process of their SDTLL.

Three notions, (1) that of the learner, (2) that of learning, and (3) that of the learner's L1 culture, are recognised by the present research study as being closely related to the role of the TL learner in the context of SDTLL. Discussions of these three notions are a conclusive summary drawn from the discussions presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six. Issues discussed in the present section will simply focus on the learner's perspective of the participants in the present research study, whereas detailed discussions of the participants' interactions with the L2 environment and implications drawn from the present research relating to theoretical aspects will be presented in the following section of this chapter.

7.2.1. The notion of the learner in SDTLL

Two issues related to the notion of the learner in SDTLL are: (1) the identification of the purpose of TL learning; and (2) the influence of individual learner variables (ILVs) on TL learning. Studying for academic purposes in the research environment is recognized by the participants as their goal in the research environment, and consequently their TL learning is seen as a means to facilitate their academic achievement. The participants' TL learning is, therefore, closely related to their academic research work and their TL learning is recognized as mainly English for academic purposes (EAP), although TL communicative competence is also required for their life in the L2 environment.

“... The primary concern is things related to my research topic. I feel I’m capable of dealing with things related to daily life here so I think it (my language competence) is enough. Additionally, I don’t have so much time and energy to spend on other details, such as some slang which Catherine uses when she speaks. My housemate has an interest in finding out things which she doesn’t understand, but I won’t bother to ask. Of course I’m more familiar with slang and things related to daily life here so I don’t care too much and don’t want to learn more either. The problem is that I have a lot to learn relating to my research topic, and my research topic is the main factor attracting me to learn new things. I’ll feel more like looking up things in the dictionary. I just want to learn things which are related to my research work, and I don’t want to learn others. As long as it is related to my research topic then I’ll have an interest in it. I don’t think it’s necessary to learn other things now. My language competence is good enough for me to cope with demands from the life here so I don’t think I should learn more. Besides, the load from my research work is rather heavy so I don’t feel like learning other things. I don’t think of other things at the present stage. My research work is 95% of my life and the rest is only 5%. I know my English is not very good but it’s good enough for me to cope with my life here. Unless I have new stimulus (to urge me to improve my English), such as people can only understand two sentences out of ten sentences I say to them. Then I’ll know I have serious language problems in communication and I should learn more...” (Participant 3, Interview 2)

“... I think it’s a good way to learn a language (by using mass media). I am afraid of talking to NSs and have less contact with them so can’t learn too much. Quite passive so I use TV (as a learning resource). I’m in control over the machine when I feel like to watch and when I don’t. It’s my personality...” (Participant 8, Interview 4)

Issues related to ILVs have been discussed in detail in Chapter Six of this thesis. The importance of ILVs in relation to SDTLL is their influence on the participants’ TL learning motivation and methods. The highly academic instrumental motivation of the participants leads them towards the EAP-oriented type of SDTLL in the research environment. Debilitating anxiety, introversion, and risk-avoiding personality characteristics of the participants are considered by the participants as negative influences on the development of their SDTLL in the research environment.

7.2.2. The notion of learning in SDTLL

Two issues concerning the notion of learning in SDTLL are: (1) the mode of TL learning; and (2) TL learning strategies. The mode of TL learning of the present research study is

identified as self-directed TL learning. The participants are fully engaged in their own TL learning process in the research environment, from the identification of TL needs to the evaluation of TL performance. It is important to mention that in the concept of SDTLL in the present research study, the participants are able to take TL supporting programmes which they think that they need in order to facilitate their TL learning and performance in the research environment. The availability of TL supporting programmes is considered as one of the TL learning resources in the research environment. However, the learning process that takes place within the TL supporting programmes is not considered as part of the SDTLL of the present research study.

“... I attended two courses, academic writing and seminars and discussion. I decided to take the courses myself and later my department also suggested to me that I take some language courses. Writing is very important to me so I took an academic writing course. At the end of the course the teacher told me that I could continue to attend the advanced writing course. I registered and went once but cancelled later. I felt that the number of students taking that course is quite big and the teacher taught the same thing that I learned in the academic writing course, showing you how to write introductions...” (Participant 1, Interview 3)

“... I took academic listening course. I wanted to go myself. At that time, that course still had some places and the time slot was suitable for me. Secondly, I read the descriptions of the course and found out that what they offered was what I needed. In my case, I didn't have trouble in everyday conversation but had some difficulties in lectures, seminars and presentations so I took that course...” (Participant 6, Interview 3)

In relation to the TL self-assessment of the participants in the research environment, self-impressionistic judgement has been employed as the main means of their TL self-evaluation. In their impressionistic judgement, the use of quantitative and qualitative methods are recognized. The participants tend to use more *quantitative* methods in their self evaluation of their TL performance, such as checking how much new vocabulary they have learnt and how many pages they can read and write within a period of time, at the beginning of their study in the research environment. The use of qualitative methods, such as how much they understand when they read an article and how accurately they are able to present their essays, gradually emerged the longer the participants stayed in the research environment.

The heavy reliance on quantitative methods is due to the participants' urgent need to improve their general TL competence at the beginning of their study in the research environment. The application of qualitative methods allows the participants to improve their TL skills and to improve their TL competence in order to facilitate their academic achievement. It is suggested by the present research that the participants develop more sophisticated and meaningful ways of assessing their TLL when they are in the stage of writing up their studies. The participants who were writing up their D.Phil. theses when the present research study was conducted especially emphasized their use of qualitative methods in assessing their TLL.

“... In order to improve my language competence I assess my language skills and most of them are related to speaking and writing. For listening, as long as I understand what others say then it's ok. For speaking, I know if I perform well or not. I know it myself. For reading, I look them up in the dictionary if I come across new vocabulary. I assess how many new lexical items I come across. It is difficult to assess writing. It is difficult to assess things I write. For email, as long as I can write fluently it's good enough, but you have to think about many things when you do academic writing. You have to reach the academic standard when you do academic work. It's not so important when it's kind of everyday conversation type of writing...” (Participant 7, Interview 1)

TL learning strategies are divided into two sub-categories in the present research study: (1) learning behaviour in their self-access strategies; and (2) learning attitudes towards TL learning. According to the interviews with the participants and diaries kept by the participants, they tend to spend more time on TL activities in relation to passive skills, reading and listening, than on active skills, speaking and writing. Such a tendency can be explained in two respects, (1) TL learning purposes (EAP oriented); and (2) learner culture (preference for passive learning). The passive learner culture cultivated by the participants' education in Taiwan makes the participants prefer passive learning, reading and listening. In addition, in relation to the use of TL resources in the research environment, the participants tend to have more confidence in utilizing non-human resources, such as TV and books, than human resources, such as NSs and NNSs, in the research environment. Such a tendency can also be explained by the participants' passive learner culture.

“... I'm quite passive in relation to learning English. I listen to the radio, BBC4, and it also depends on what I am doing at the time. If I am just doing some typing then I'll only turn the radio on and not necessarily listen to the content of the programmes. I just want to get used to the language itself. I sometimes listen to the content of the programmes but sometimes I don't. Additionally,

I watch TV. I'm more active while watching TV. I don't like to have contact with people because I'm afraid of wasting other people's time, which is one of my psychological considerations. I have rather few opportunities to speak English. I'm not active in speaking even to EFL students. For reading, I'm quite active in reading things related to my study. I only read the Internet in Chinese not in English. I buy Radio Times only to see what programmes they have on TV. For writing, I only write reports requested from the department..." (Participant 8, Interview 1)

Regarding the attitudes towards TL learning, three different kinds of attitudes have been identified among the participants in the research environment: (1) active; (2) naturalistic; and (3) highly academic. Active learners tend to look for opportunities to have TL interactions with others, and naturalistic learners tend to learn TL elements in a natural way. Highly academic learners focus on learning TL elements which are related to their academic work. As indicated in Figure 6.2., it is suggested that highly academic learners, who are very much concerned with their EAP competence, do not alter their attitude to become active learners, who look for all possible opportunities to improve their TL skills in general aspects, and vice versa. Meanwhile, these two specific types of learners, active and highly academic, may modify their TL attitude to become naturalistic learners in response to their TL needs and objectives at the time.

7.2.3. The notion of the learner's L1 culture in SDTLL

Two issues related to the notion of the learner's L1 culture are: (1) the aspect of L1; and (2) the aspect of L1 culture. The participants' L1, Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese, has different linguistic elements to the participants' L2, English. Consequently, such an enormous language distance makes the participants feel uncertain and lack confidence in their use of L2 in the research environment, which is described as language shock. Language shock, as suggested by Schumann (1978), is regarded as language learners' fear of making mistakes and having doubts about their language accuracy when they speak in the L2.

The participants have encountered language shock not only when they speak in the L2 but also when they write in the L2 in the research environment. The second experience of language shock is suggested by the participants as more difficult to cope with than their

first experience of language shock in the research environment. This is, however, due to the language demands of academic writing. With relatively little TL academic writing in their previous TL education in Taiwan, the participants require TL human resources to facilitate their development of TL writing skills.

“... It’s very difficult to assess writing myself. Sometimes it takes me a long time to think how to present a sentence so the speed of my writing becomes rather slow. I don’t have any sense of how fast or slow to finish an article so it’s difficult to assess my own writing, and I need a monitor to help me with my writing too. I need native speakers to help me with my writing...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

“... When you write you simply follow the training you had previously to write but it’s not 100% correct. You don’t know how accurate is the language you use and this is the difficult part. The only solution to solve the problem is to find someone to check for you...” (Participant 4, Interview 2)

The participants’ previous L2, AE learning experience in Taiwan and elsewhere and BE learning experience in the UK are recognized as one of the factors which influences the participants’ TL performance in the research environment. The participants who have been educated in AE in their previous TL education in Taiwan and have never had experience in authentic BE environment for EAP before coming to the research environment require some time to adjust themselves to the use of BE in the research environment. The participant, Participant 3, who had the experience in AE for EAP in Canada for two years pointed out that a strong degree of language shock had been encountered in the research environment.

“... I’m confused by Canadian and British English. Perhaps is my personality, very careless. I’ve been here for quite long and still can’t not distinguish (the use of Canadian and British English). Anyway, spontaneously I’ll respond to others in which I’ve learned from Canada...” (Participant 3, Interview 3)

Different participants require different lengths of time to adjust themselves to the new system. According to the participants, they may have doubts in using the TL especially when they first arrive in the research environment. Such uncertainty in the use of TL, however, is implied to decrease the longer the participants stay in the research environment

(for further details see discussions in Chapters Four, Five and Six).

“... Sometimes I can't express myself well enough. It's the problem of the use of vocabulary. We use American English in Taiwan and people here they use a lot of different words. One same word but English people use a different word to present the idea. Once I was talking about students on strike with English students. I said that there are a lot of people who are very enthusiastic about such a matter. When I said enthusiastic, but he/she didn't understand what I meant by this word. He/she knew what I intended to say though...” (Participant 10, Interview 2)

The participants' L1 cultural elements are classified into two categories in the present research study: (1) academic culture; and (2) social culture. The general characteristic of the participants' L1 culture is recognized as collectiveness (Triandis, 1990). Such a quality has enormous influence on the participants' L1 academic and social culture. The influence of collectiveness on the participants' L1 academic culture can be observed in several circumstances, such as the most familiar teaching/ learning methods: whole-class learning, passive learning at schools, obedience to authority including teachers and parents, a strong emphasis on harmony at all times and the concept of face-saving in public.

The general learning style of the participants is, therefore, passive learning oriented and their attitude towards their teachers is considered as part of a vertical social hierarchy, which means that the participants have been educated to show respect and obedience to their teachers at all times. The most idealized way for students to show their respect and obedience to their teachers in the participants' L1 society is to “listen to their teachers and do whatever they have been asked to do”. Such a tendency for showing respect and obedience among the participants is later regarded in contrast to a rather different circumstance when they arrive in the research environment, where individual learning activities receive greater emphasis.

The influence of collectiveness on the participants' L1 social culture can be observed in the tendency towards group social activities. The concept of the group, including families or relatives, always takes priority, and the concept of self is regarded as less important. People in the participants' L1 community tend to gather together for either social purposes or individual needs. The characteristic of collectiveness has influenced the participants' social habits, and can be observed in their social preferences in the TL environment, socializing

with or seeking support from Taiwanese students or other Chinese ethnic groups in the research environment. Such social preference of the participants is also regarded as influential on the participants' TL development in the research environment (for other details see discussions in Chapter Five).

“... It is very useful to have an organization like the Taiwanese Students Association York (TSAY). I feel a sense of belonging to such a group. As long as I have time, I don't refuse to attend activities organized by TSAY. Before I came here, my supervisor told me not to make contact with Taiwanese students. He/ she meant that my language competence won't improve if I have close contact with Taiwanese students, but it's impossible not to have contact with Taiwanese students. Taiwanese students here can help me with my research work and I can discuss things related to life in general and research with them, which is very beneficial... “ (Participant 1, Interview 4)

7.3. The concept of transformation

In order to achieve their primary goal in the research environment, some changes in relation to the TL learning in general have to be made during the participants' time in the research environment, a process described as the notion of transformation in the present research study. The table below, Table 7.1., indicates the aspects in which the participants have to transform themselves from the previous system to a new dimension in relation to their TL learning in the research environment.

Table 7.1. The transformations of the participants in relation to their TL learning in the research environment

Aspects	Transform from	Transform to
TL learning purpose	EFL for EEP	ESL for EAP
TL learning environment	Controlled EFL classroom setting	Natural ESL setting
TL learning mode	Teacher-guided learning	Self-directed learning

The discussions of the concept of transformations in the participants in the following subsections will be focussed on issues related to these three aspects, TL learning purpose, TL learning environment, and TL learning mode.

7.3.1. The transformation in TL learning purposes

Issues related to the participants' transformation in TL learning purposes in the research environment can be classified into three categories: (1) the characteristic of TL learning; (2) TL learning needs; and (3) TL learning objectives. The fundamental TL learning characteristic of the participants in the research environment is regarded as ESL for EAP which is rather different from the purpose that the participants had in Taiwan, EFL for EEP. The participants had relatively few opportunities to actually speak English in Taiwan because TL communicative competence is least emphasized whereas the knowledge of TL grammatical rules is very much valued. TL learning difficulties among the participants result from this transformation including the urgent need to improve TL communicative competence at an early stage in the research environment, and the need to develop academic TL writing skills at the writing-up stage in the research environment.

“... The meanings of the vocabulary we learned in Taiwan were explained in a very ambiguous way. When you looked them up in the dictionary, the explanations were always very similar to each other and you couldn't distinguish them at all. In fact, there are usually big differences in between. In real life, the English people will use certain words for certain situations. We'll misuse words if we don't know the differences...” (Participant 6, Interview 3)

The TL learning objective of the participants in the research environment is to facilitate their academic achievement, whereas in Taiwan, English is one of the school subjects which students have to learn from junior high school onwards. The TL learning difficulties are caused by the transformation in TL learning needs and objectives, including the acquisition of specific academic related vocabulary in the research environment. The TL lexical items used in the individual research topics of the participants in the research environment are regarded as more specific than the English which the participants used to study in Taiwan, and consequently the participants encounter TL vocabulary which they may not know well from their study in Taiwan, where most of the text books used at the university, excluding those for students studying English and other languages, are mainly printed in Mandarin Chinese. However, it takes the participants some time to make themselves familiar with the new academic terminologies in the research environment.

In addition, one issue related to the transformation of the TL learning purpose of the participants in the research environment is the concept of TL learning motivation. The participants are regarded as a group of highly academic instrumentally motivated ESL learners. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), learners who are instrumentally motivated can learn a language as effectively as learners who have integrative motivation. The highly academically motivated participants in the research environment according to their needs involve themselves in TL related activities to facilitate their academic achievement in the research environment. The differences in TL learning between academic instrumentally motivated learners and integrative motivated learners affect the acquisition of different forms of TL, more formal and specific academic use of TL for academic instrumentally motivated learners, but a culturally textured TL for integrative motivated TL learners.

“... It’s difficult to learn cultural elements in our text books but they are necessary for our daily life here. It takes time to understand (cultural elements)...” (Participant 6, Interview 4)

With regard to the concept of the transformation in the TL learning purposes of the participants, Gardner’s Socio-Educational model (1985) is utilized to provide a theoretical framework with which to explain some of the findings in the present research. Gardner suggests that four individual learner factors, intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety, and general features of society contribute to the TL learners’ success in TLL in the TL environment (see Figure 2.1. for a simplified version of Gardner’s Socio-Educational Model).

Of the four individual learner factors, motivation and situational anxiety are regarded as directly influenced by socio-psychological elements, and will be utilized to explain some of the findings of the present research study. According to the Socio-Educational Model, motivation comprises two elements: attitude toward the learning situation and integrativeness. The participants’ attitude toward the TL learning situation is regarded as heavily EAP oriented and the participants regard their academic achievement as more important than their integration in the L2 environment. Consequently, the motivation for the participants’ TLL is defined as functional and instrumental, that of achieving academic success in the L2 environment.

In relation to the concept of situational anxiety, feeling nervous while talking to NSs, is regarded as an important factor in reducing the participants' use of human resources to facilitate their TLL in the authentic TL environment. Such a tendency is considered as having a negative impact on the participants' TL development in relation to the communicative purpose of the TL. The causes of such anxiety are originated not only in the participants' lack of TL confidence but also the NSs general attitudes towards the participants (see discussions in Chapters Four, Five and Six for detail).

7.3.2. The transformation in TL learning environments

Three issues are considered as relevant to the participants' transformation in TL learning environments: (1) the TL itself in the TL learning environment; (2) cultural factors in the TL learning environment; and (3) TL learning resources in the TL learning environment. The TL learning difficulties caused by the transformation of learning environments can be observed in the participants' TL learning difficulties in listening comprehension and the choice of use of lexical items. Such learning difficulties, however, are suggested by the present research study to be short-term compared with the TL writing skills, which are closely related to not only the participants previous TL writing experience but also the general writing style in their L1 culture.

Issues related to cultural factors, including academic cultural factors and sociocultural factors, in relation to the TL learning environment are regarded as more complex by the participants of the present research study. The conflict is suggested to originate from the difference in fundamental cultural characteristics between the participants' L1 and L2 cultures - collectiveness and individualism. The TL learning difficulties of the participants caused by such a transformation can be observed in relation to the aspect of academic culture in the participants' anxiety in dealing with the teacher-student relationship and in formulating their academic research work. The debilitating anxiety which the participants have in dealing with their teacher-student relationship has a negative impact on the participants' TL performance and development in the research environment. The strong peer group network, on one hand provides the participants with comfort in the research environment while on the other hand reduces the participants' possible opportunities to improve their TL skills while talking to NSs or NNSs in the research environment.

In relation to TL learning resources, the authenticity of the TL setting of the research environment provides the participants with richly textured and diverse resources with which to facilitate their TL learning, which is regarded as the advantage that the participants can benefit from the most in relation to their TL learning in an authentic TL environment. The use of the TL is regarded as part of the participants' life in the research environment, although the circumstances of the use of the TL can vary from one participant to another depending on their individual TL learning activities. In comparison, in Taiwan the participants have relatively limited TL learning resources available because the TL is seen as a foreign language and is not commonly used among members of society.

“... This is an English speaking environment where learning resources is available everywhere. By contrast, we don't have such environment at all in Taiwan. We have to create learning opportunities deliberately...” (Participant 7, Interview 4)

The TL learning difficulty caused by the transformation in TL learning resources between the participants' previous TL learning environment and the research environment stems from the unfamiliarity with the variety of authentic TL input in the research environment. However, as the participants stay longer in the research environment, they are able to accustom themselves to some of the natural and uncontrolled TL input (for details see the discussion in Chapter Four). Additionally, in relation to the participants' use of TL resources in the research environment, materials or resources related to the participants' academic work are regarded by the participants as the primary TL resources which they utilize to facilitate their SDTLL. Such a preference in the use of academic related materials is due to the primary concern of the participants in the research environment, to achieve academic success.

Due to the great difference between the participants' previous L2 learning environment and the present one, Schumann's Acculturation Model (1978) is utilized to explain some of the issues raised by the concept of transformation in the participants' TL learning environments. According to Schumann, the relationship between the social group of the TL learners and the social group of the TL speakers is seen as influential for the TL learners' SLL. The participants, who tend to socialize with people from a similar cultural background, are regarded as losing their opportunities to receive authentic TL input and

improve their TL competence by talking to the NSs in the research environment. One issue, however, which needs to be addressed at this point in relation to the participants' social preference is the participants' personal understanding of the attitudes which NSs of the TL have towards them in the research environment.

“... The reason why I don't like talking to English people are the facts that they speak too fast and use a lot of slang. I can't understand at all. They won't speak slowly because you're a overseas student. It also depends on their attitudes. There are some very friendly English in my class so I'll like to talk to them...” (Participant 9, Interview 4)

According to the participants' experience and observation, some of the English people are considered as more inconsiderate and distant than people from other areas or countries, such as Scotland, Ireland, the USA and other English-speaking countries (for details see the discussion in Chapter Five). Because of such a personal interpretation, the participants may therefore lose their possible TL contacts with English students and other people in the research environment, which can be described as a constructive human resource for their TL development. These above issues are recognized as related to the social factors in the Acculturation Model.

In relation to the psychological factors in the Acculturation Model, language shock and culture shock are described as fundamental to the process of acculturation. Because of the great differences between languages and cultures of the participants' L1 and L2, these differences cause the participants different degrees of psychological anxiety.

“... Taiwanese students here help me on my research study. I can discuss things with them. They are very helpful in life in general and also on my academic research study...” (Participant 1, Interview 4)

According to the participants, culture shock is considered as easier to overcome than language shock. The participants can overcome culture shock with the help of their Taiwanese peer group or students from a shared culture background, such as Chinese from China, Hong Kong or Singapore, whereas they are left alone with language shock which is due to the lack of training in speaking and writing in the TL in their previous TL education in Taiwan.

7.3.3. The transformation in TL learning modes

Issues related to the transformation in TL learning modes include three aspects: (1) TL learning methods; (2) individual learner factors; and (3) TL learning strategies. The participants' TL learning method in Taiwan is described as teacher-guided classroom learning, whereas in the research environment the participants are situated in a self-directed TL learning setting, in which they have the initiative to manage their TL learning activities. Because of the change of TL learning method in the research environment, the participants have total control in selecting the most suitable TL learning resources for facilitating their TL learning.

According to the present research, individual learner factors play an influential part in the selection of TL learning resources among the participants. The highly academically motivated of the participants tend to choose TL learning materials or resources which are closely related to their academic research topic to benefit their academic achievement. In addition, the characteristics of debilitating anxiety, introversion, and risk-avoiding tend to reduce the participants' desire to choose human resources to facilitate their SDTLL. It is therefore suggested by the present research study that individual learner factors play a more significant role in the participants' SDTLL, in which the learners are the centre of the TL learning, than it does in the context of teacher-guided TL learning, in which the learners have less control over their TL learning methods and materials. In addition, the participants' learning strategies in the research environment are suggested to be deeply influenced by the participants' individual learner factors.

“... You have no choice but to use English here unless you're with Taiwanese. I'm a passive type of person who will not learn English in an active way. An active learner will learn English in a very active way no mattering he is in an English speaking or a Chinese speaking environment. A passive learner will be forced by the environment to learn English because you have no other choice at all...

“ (Participant 8, Interview 3)

Issues related to the concept of TL learning strategies include: (1) TL learning behaviour; (2) TL learning attitude; and (3) self-assessment. The TL learning behaviour of the participants is defined as the metacognitive strategies which the participants employ to constitute an attempt to regulate their TL learning by means of planning, monitoring, and

evaluating. The participants utilize these metacognitive strategies to organize their TL learning activities, to look for TL learning resources, and to facilitate their TL learning in the research environment. According to the analysis of the diaries kept by the participants, most of the participants, nine out of eleven, spent more than fifty per cent of their reading time on reading academic-related materials, and eight participants spent more than fifty per cent of their writing time on writing academic-related assignments. The TL learning activities of the participants are closely related to their academic instrumental motivation.

“... I spend a lot of time on reading and writing. I’m still very slow in doing academic writing but is much better than previous days. I scan when I read these days, and will underline wherever I don’t understand...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

The participants’ attitudes towards their TL learning can be classified into three categories: (1) the active type of TL learning attitude; (2) the naturalistic type of TL learning attitude; and (3) the highly academic type of TL learning attitude (see Figure 6.2). In general, there is no dramatic attitude shift over time among the participants. However, the two overlapping areas allow the participants with the two extremes of TL learning attitudes, active and highly academic TL learning attitudes, to modify their TL learning towards the naturalistic learning attitude.

Long (1991) indicates that self-directed learners tend to have a rather global goal at the initial stage of their self-direction and this global goal is gradually refined by the learners through their search and learning process. Self-assessment is therefore regarded as the means for the participants to modify and determine their TL learning in the research environment. Impressionistic judgment is the main measurement employed by the participants in their TL self-assessment. Quantitative self assessment is heavily used among the participants who are newly arrived in the research environment. The longer the participants stay, the more the use of qualitative self-assessment is increased. Such a tendency is suggested to be related to the change of TL learning objectives of the participants over time.

Table 7.2. Issues related to the concept of transformation in the participants' TL learning

Transformation	Transformation in related areas	Learning difficulties
Transformation in TL learning purposes	EEP → EAP * General → specific	* Vocabulary learning in general * Listening and speaking skills * Academic writing skills (The differences between L1 and L2 academic skills)
Transformation in TL learning environment	EFL → ESL * Controlled classroom TL learning environment → Uncontrolled naturalistic TL learning environment	* Vocabulary learning in general * Listening and speaking skills * Cultural conflicts between L1 and L2 culture in relation to the differences between the participants' L1 and L2 academic, teacher-student relationship, and social culture, collectiveness vs. individualism
Transformation in TL learning modes	Teacher guided TL learning → Self directed TL learning * EEP oriented → EAP oriented	* The influence of ILVs on TL learning (L1 cultural influence on TL performance)

According to Table 7.2., the L1 cultural elements play an influential role in the concept of transformation in the participants' TL learning. The participants' L1 cultural elements may influence not only the participants' learning of the TL but also their TL performances. For example, the collective aspect of the participants' L1 culture may reduce their opportunities for socializing with other ESL speakers or NSs of the TL in the research environment, which can be regarded as a negative influence of the L1 culture on the participants' learning of the TL. In addition, the different styles of academic writing between the participants' L1 and L2 have a great impact on their TL performance in relation to the aspect of writing.

“... I try to imitate her (supervisor's) writing style but (my writing) has been almost totally rewritten by her. I won't attend any writing course either because it is the problem of different writing styles...” (Participant 5, Interview 2)

Being able to identify their own TL difficulties is regarded as a significant consequence of the SDTLL, because the participants are regarded not only as learners but also the monitors of their own TL development. They are in a position to assess and evaluate their own TL development on the basis of their knowledge of TL grammatical rules, which can be

described as part of the Universal Grammar Model. With the application of the basic knowledge of TL grammatical rules, the participants are able to monitor their own TL development and to modify their TL needs and objectives over time.

With regard to the experience of Interlanguage (IL), language transfer is regarded as closely related to the participants' TLL in the research environment. Because of the great linguistic distance between the participants' L1 and L2, the participants are expected to encounter some language learning difficulties which are closely related to the language transfer between their L1 and L2. Although the participants had a clear understanding of basic TL grammatical rules, they still made some linguistic errors when they were in a state of situational anxiety, such as feeling nervous while speaking in the TL. The biggest TL learning obstacle described by the participants' in relation to their TL learning difficulties caused by language transfer was the accuracy of lexical items.

“... I don't know the correct use of many lexical items. I am not sure what some of lexical items really mean in articles. I don't know what they really mean so I don't know how to use them. Some times your misunderstanding of vocabulary will have great influence your research study...”
(Participant 3, Interview 4)

Vocabulary used in everyday conversations is regarded as different from the lexical items utilized in academic study. In order to reach an academic level of use of the TL, the participants will have to acquire a wide vocabulary to facilitate their academic achievement. With the great language difference between their L1 and L2, the participants may have to devote more effort than their European counterparts, whose languages may be more closely linked to the TL, to the acquisition, comprehension and the application of academic TL lexical items.

In addition, the participants have also been influenced by the L2 culture during the transformation of their TL learning in the research environment. By understanding more about the L2 cultural elements in the research environment, the participants are able to adjust themselves to fit into the L2 cultural environment. In other words, the process of acculturation is believed to benefit not only the participants' TL learning and performance, but also their understanding in TL cultural elements in the research environment.

“... It is of great help if you know more about their (English people’s) culture. For example, they’ll use a certain way to reject you but in a very inoffensive way. You’ll know it right away that they don’t want to do it...” (Participant 4, Interview 4)

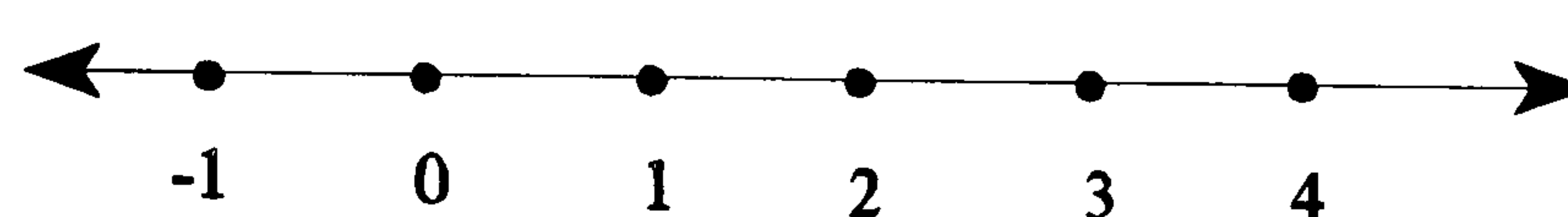
7.4. The time factor in the concept of SDTLL

The longitudinal characteristic of the present research study provides the researcher with the opportunity to observe the TL learning processes of the participants over a certain period of time, October 1996 to March 1997. Four sessions of interviews with individual participants and diaries kept by the participants during this specific period of time provide the researcher with access to insight into the participants’ SDTLL in the authentic TL environment. For example, the influence of the time factor can be observed in the analysis of the diaries kept by the participants (see Figure 5.7., and Appendix 5.1.). Further discussions on this issue will be presented later in the present section.

Discussions on the time factor are divided into 2 categories: (1) the influence of time factor A, which relates to the data collection period of the present research; and (2) the influence of time factor B, which relates to the length of time which the participants stay in the research environment. The data analysis from the diaries kept by the participants is utilized in conjunction with the discussions relating to the time factor A, and the data analysis from the interviews with the participants is applied in combination with the discussions relating to the time factor B. The cross application of the data analysis from the diaries kept by the participants and the interviews conducted with the individual participants will illustrate the influence of the general concept of the time factor, both A and B, in the participants’ SDTLL.

Figure 7.5. below indicates a general time scale of the participants’ stay in the research environment and the four sessions of interviews with the participants. It is important to mention that the length of time between Point 0 and Point 1 in Figure 7.5. varies according to the individual participants, who may be newly arrived or may have been in the research environment for some time when the present research study was conducted.

Figure 7.5. A general time scale showing the participants' residence period in the research environment and the four sessions of interviews



Point -1: Preparation

Point 0: Arrival in the research environment

Point 1: Interview 1

Point 2: Interview 2

Point 3: Interview 3

Point 4: Interview 4

Point -1 is suggested to be the stage of preparation before the participants arrive in the research environment. The participants are supposed to accumulate information on the research environment, including the TL, TL academic and social culture norms, at Point -1. Some of the participants went to the British Educational Exhibition taking place once a year in major cities in Taiwan to ask about the courses offered in different universities prior to coming to the research environment. No data has been collected in relation to the participants' accumulation on general TL social culture norms, which may reduce the degree of culture and language shock they received later in the research environment. It is however an issue which is worthy of further investigation to benefit overseas students, and administrative and academic staff in UK institutions regarding the academic performance and cross-cultural adjustment of overseas students, and general support and facilities which UK institutions can offer to their overseas students to reduce the different forms of anxiety they encounter in different cultural environment.

A. The influence of the time factor A, relating to the data collection period of the present research study

According to Figure 5. 7., and Appendix H., the participants' TL activities are closely related to the different periods of the academic year: Term 1, vacation, and Term 2. Two patterns have been identified among the participants in relation to their TL activities, and they are Pattern V and Pattern \wedge . According to Appendix H, the participants of pattern V devoted themselves less to TL related activities in vacation time, whereas the participants of pattern \wedge increased their TL related activities in vacation time. Most of the participants, nine of them, are categorized as Pattern V learners, who spend less time on TL learning activities during the vacation time compared with the time they spend on TL learning activities during the two term times. Participant 2 is classified as Pattern \wedge learner, whose TL activities were more active during the vacation. Participant 11 is categorized as a combination of Patterns V and \wedge learner, whose TL learning activities both increase and decrease during the vacation. The time factor, term time or vacation, is therefore regarded as influential in relation to the participants' devotion to their TL activities in the research environment.

“... Every is gone in the vacation so for most of the time I am with Taiwanese students. Consequently, I'll speak Chinese all the time and have no chance to practise English at all. Although my American housemate hasn't gone back to the States, I speak to her less than ten minutes a day, or even I don't see her at all for the whole day. I can feel that my English has become very lacking in fluency once I speak to her...” (Participant 9, Interview 3)

B. The influence of the time factor B, relating to the different lengths of time which the participants stay in the research environment

The influence of the time factor, category two, can be observed in the different TL learning difficulties and TL needs of the participants from the interview data. As the participants stay longer in the research environment, they begin to have different levels of TL learning difficulties and TL needs compared with the students who have newly arrived in the research environment. The table below, Table 7.3., indicates the different lengths of time for which the participants had stayed in the research environment when the present research was first conducted in October 1996.

Table 7.3. The lengths of time which the participants had stayed in the UK when the data collection of the present research was first conducted.

The length of time which the participants had stayed in the UK	Participants
A. 1 month - 6 months	9, 10, 11
B. 7 months - 24 months	1, 2, 3, 8
C. More than 24 months	4, 5, 6, 7

According to Table 7.3., among these eleven participants, only Participants 3, 4, and 7 had previous experience in EAP in an authentic TL environment. The different lengths of time which the participants had stayed in an authentic TL, BE, environment are significant to the findings of the present research study. Their prior TL experience and different lengths of time staying in the research environment are related to their different experience in different stages of anxiety, culture and language shock, and their different attitudes and foci on SDTLL according to their different stages of academic work contribute to a wider coverage of information on SDTLL of the present research study.

“... Those four aspects (listening, speaking, reading and writing) have been improved (in living in this authentic environment). I’m much happier with my language competence comparing with when I was studying for a master degree. I have more opportunities to practise English now...”
(Participant 4, Interview 4)

A small vocabulary, different accents used by people in the research environment, and the use of the TL, are regarded as the constant TL learning difficulties among the participants in relation to the four language skills. Nevertheless, the participants initially had different interpretations of their needs in the TL, a finding which is regarded as closely related to the different lengths of time which the participants stayed in the research environment. The table below, Table 7.4., indicates the different levels of TL learning difficulties and TL needs among the participants.

Table 7.4. The different levels of TL learning difficulties and TL needs among the participants

Lengths of time	TL learning difficulties and TL needs
A. 1 month - 3 months	1 - Vocabulary: not big enough to comprehend TL input well, or to express their own ideas verbally 2 - Accents: rather incomprehensible 3 - Use of the TL: to develop basic TL skills
4 months - 6 months	1 - Vocabulary: big enough to comprehend everyday TL input and enough to express their own ideas, yet not big enough to comprehend the TL well in written form 2 - Accents: can be incomprehensible 3 - Use of the TL: to develop better TL skills for academic work
B. 7 months - 24 months	1 - Vocabulary: not big or accurate enough to express what they intend to express in relation to their academic studies 2 - Accents: regional accents can still be incomprehensible 3 - Use of the TL: to develop better TL skills for academic work
C. More than 24 months	1 - Vocabulary: not accurate enough to express what they intend to present in their written work 2 - Accents: being more comfortable listening to different accents 3 - Use of the TL: to develop better TL skills for academic work

In relation to vocabulary, the participants who have newly arrived are regarded as in need of practical lexical items which can help them to survive in the research environment, and later they are able to acquire more lexical items which can help them to comprehend TL input.

“... My vocabulary is rather small. I use some words over and over again, and sometimes I don't know which word is more appropriate...” (Participant 11, Interview 4)

“... In relation to vocabulary, the lexical items related to my research study are related to environmental education and I'm quite familiar with them already. It's not difficult to understand them when I read articles but it's quite difficult for me to use them in my writing. I know these words and I understand what they mean when I come across them in reading but I'm not able to use them correctly and freely in my writing like native speakers do. For example the word summarize means list out main points in Chinese and I want to use a different word to replace it in the sentences but I can't find any other word in my electronic dictionary. I think there should be some other words to replace it...” (Participant 3, Interview 4)

“... The biggest difficulty for me to write the thesis at the present stage is the descriptions on the research environment, such as where the schools are located and how to describe the surroundings of the schools. You often don't know which English vocabulary to use to describe the environment. The selection and the use of the English vocabulary. When we write we usually don't write like novels which tend to have very detailed descriptions of surroundings. You have to describe the environment and how to describe it. I have experience of such kind of writing in my previous experience. I usually just summarize articles I read into an article, so I don't need many adjectives. This is a very serious problem and I don't know how to solve the problem. Sometimes I just find some related articles or books and then copy their uses of different words...” (Participant 3, Interview 1)

The participants who have been in the research environment for more than a year are searching for wider and more accurate lexical items to benefit their academic work and the same circumstance can be observed among the participants who are in the writing-up period of their studies. The use of accurate TL in their academic work is seen by the participants as essential to benefit their academic achievement.

Regarding accents, the newly-arrived participants tend to have great difficulty in comprehending the authentic TL input, and appear to have great anxiety while talking to NSs. The longer the participants stay in the authentic TL environment, the more accustomed they get to hearing various TL accents. It is suggested by the participants that the incomprehensible TL input is mostly caused by the variety of accents.

“... I don't know how to overcome the difficulty in understanding different accents. They just used to speak like that even if I ask them to repeat again it's still the same. I think it's very difficult to overcome such a difficulty. Maybe the longer I stay with them, the easier I'll be able to understand them...” (Participant 9, Interview 1)

“... At this stage, if I can't understand the message then I simply can't. Unless it's very important then I will ask. If it happens when I watch soaps or other unimportant stuff, then I'll just leave it there. I usually can understand roughly what they are talking about when I connect what they say in their previous and succeeding sentences. When they talk about things I don't understand, I mean words, vocabulary I don't understand. I simply skip it because I know what they talk about anyway. For most of the time, I don't understand the meanings of words. Accents too. It's just impossible when the accents are very heavy...” (Participant 7, Interview 4)

“... As long as you're used to it then it's not a problem. The more you have contact with different accents then the easier it is for you to understand them...” (Participant 6, Interview 3)

The participants who have newly arrived in the research environment tend to develop their basic TL skills to help them to survive in the new environment, and later they need to improve their TL skills to meet their academic demands. The development of the TL is, therefore, initially based on the participants' TL needs at the time, which is closely related to the progress of their academic studies in the research environment.

“... I have bigger difficulty in vocabulary. I have the courage to speak more now (than when I newly arrived). I'm more familiar with the sentence structures and patterns now...” (Participant 11, Interview 2)

“... My supervisor told me that my English has been improved. When I talked to him about things which he wanted me to do in Taiwan before I went back to Taiwan, he looked like that he seemed to understand but also seemed not to understand...” (Participant 8, Interview 4)

Discussions of the influence of the time factor on the participants' SDTLL in the research environment reveal that the participants' TL needs and activities are closely related to the different periods of time during the academic year and are also closely connected to the different lengths of time which the participants stay in the research environment. Under the influence of the time factor A relating to the time which the present research study first started, the collected data showed that the participants' TL activities related to different period of academic year. Under that influence of the time factor B relating to the time which the participants had stayed in the UK when the present research study first started, the accumulated data showed that the participants' TL activities appear to be influenced by the different stages of their academic studies. The participants' different TL needs correspond to the different stages of their studies in the research environment. The progress of the participants' academic studies has been identified as influential on the participants' TL development.

Summary

This chapter draws together some of the significant findings drawn from the present research study. It is suggested that there are three major elements which are influential on the concept of SDTLL in an authentic TL environment: cultural factors, TL environmental contextual factors and individual learner factors. The interactions among these three elements contribute to the participants' different degrees of successful SDTLL in an authentic TL environment.

Culture shock, including academic and social culture shock, and language shock, taking place in TL speaking and writing activities, which are regarded as being caused by the differences between the participants' L1 and L2 cultures and languages, are considered as the fundamental obstacles which the participants have to overcome when they arrive in the research environment. To be able to survive and then to achieve academic success, some degree of acculturation is seen as a process which the participants have to go through in order to benefit their primary concern in the research environment. Although total acculturation is not suggested by the present research study, some degree of acculturation is seen as essential for the individual participants to facilitate their SDTLL and academic achievement.

The academic culture shock reveals the different understanding among the participants and their supervisors or lecturers with regard to the academic teacher-student relationship. The concept of showing respect and obedience to teachers and the hierarchy of the social status of teachers in the participants' L1 academic culture are regarded as the focal points causing academic culture shock. Additionally, the different educational goals and traditions between the participants' L1 and L2 academic cultures are considered as influential in academic culture shock.

The difference between the notion of collectiveness and individualism in the participants' L1 and L2 sociocultures contributes to the participants' opportunities for practising the TL in the research environment. The participants, who are brought up with the characteristic of collectiveness in their L1 socioculture, tend to socialise with people who are from a similar cultural background, ethnic Chinese communities. Consequently, the opportunities

for the use of the TL are therefore decreased because of such social habits.

Language shock, described by Schumann as the doubt which L2 learners have when they speak the L2, is extended by the present research into a broader concept, the doubt which L2 learners have when they both speak and write in L2. The two experiences of language shock are found to cause great anxiety to the participants. According to the participants, the first encounter with language shock is seen as much easier to overcome than the second experience of language shock. The lack of training in L2 academic writing and the different academic writing styles between the participants' L1 and L2 are regarded as the key issues which make it very difficult for the participants to overcome the second encounter with language shock.

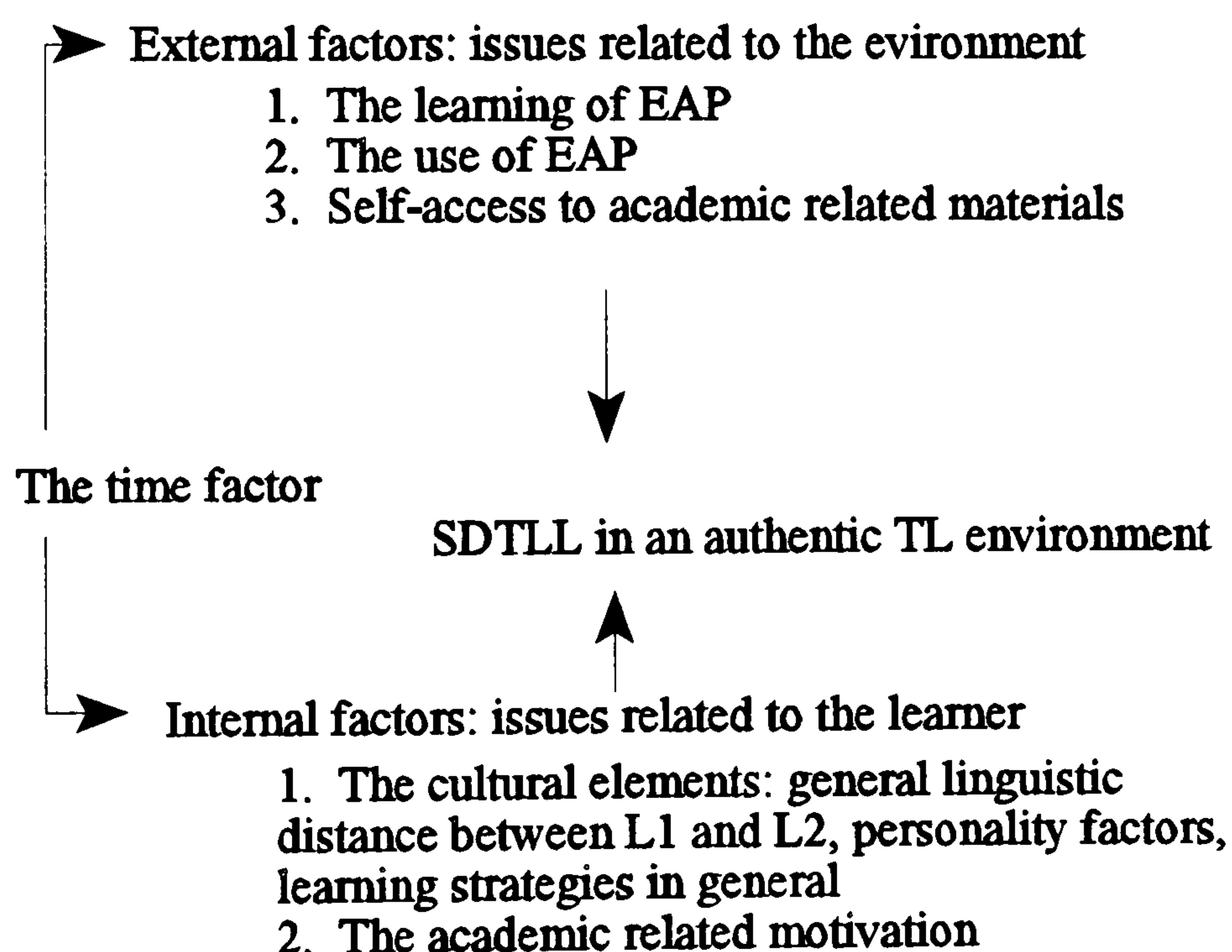
Transformation is regarded as the concept illustrating the different stages of the participants' SDTLL. Three aspects of transformation, TL learning purpose, TL learning environment, and TL learning mode, have been identified to explain the participants' TL development. The transformations in the three areas, from EEP to EAP, from controlled EFL setting to authentic ESL setting, and from teacher-guided TL learning to self-directed TL learning, influence the participants' TL learning objectives, contents and activities. EAP is regarded as the core concept in the context of the SDTLL of the participants. The highly academic motivated participants arrange their TL learning activities according to their TL needs at the time, which is closely related to the different periods of an academic year, and this reveals the importance of the time factor in the participants' TL development.

Two different time scales are utilized to explain the influence of the time factors in the participants' TL development. The first time scale, consisting of two term times and one vacation time, is based on the data collection period of the present research. The data analysis based on the first time scale suggests that the participants' TL learning activities are closely related to the different periods of time during an academic year. Most of the participants tend to have more active TL activities during the term times than the vacation.

The second time scale, based on the different lengths of time which the participants had stayed in the research environment at the time when the data was collected, reveals that the participants tend to have different TL needs and objectives according to their academic progress at the time. It is suggested by the present research study that issues related to the participants' academic studies in the research environment are regarded as the external factors which influence the content of the participants' SDTLL. The participants' L1 cultural elements, including linguistic distance between the participants' L1 and L2, personality factors, and learning strategies in general, and the academic related motivation are regarded as the internal factors which underlie the basis for the participants' TL learning strategies in relation to their SDTLL in the research environment.

The figure below, Figure 7.6. explains the relationship between the time factor and the internal and external factors in the participants' TLL in the research environment.

Figure 7.6. The interaction between the time factor and the internal and external factors in the participants' TLL in the research environment



According to Figure 7.5., the influence of external and internal factors on the participants' achievement of SDTLL is refined by the time factor, which is closely related to the different periods of time during the academic year and also the different stages of academic studies of the participants. It is suggested that the participants may modify or refine their

SDTLL on the basis of their different TL needs and objectives at different periods of time during the academic year and at different stages of their academic studies. Consequently, the time factor is regarded as influential to the participants' different stages SDTLL.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions

8.1. Introduction

The main aim of this empirical research study was to investigate the self-directed target language learning (SDTLL) experience of a group of eleven Taiwanese postgraduate students in an authentic English environment. This group of Taiwanese postgraduate students were studying for academic purposes at the University of York, England, when the present research was conducted. Key research questions of this longitudinal research study, as indicated below, revealed some significant issues related to the context of the SDTLL.

1. Influential TL learning factors: the factors which influence the participants' SDTLL, and how these factors influence the participants' SDTLL.
2. TL language learning difficulties: the TL learning difficulties which the participants have, and how they cope with these TL learning difficulties.
3. TL learning strategies: the ways the participants organize their SDTLL, the resources they access to facilitate their TL learning, and their self-assessment of their TL learning performance.

The primary results drawn from the above key research questions will be presented and discussed in Section 8.2. of the present chapter. The purpose of the present chapter is fourfold: (1) to provide a summary of the main findings revealed by the present research study; (2) to outline the implications for the field of SLL, specifically in SDTLL in an authentic TL environment, and to highlight the main contributions of the present research study to the field of SLL; (3) to offer a number of suggestions for further research; and (4) to draw some suggestions for students preparing to come to study in the UK and for institutions receiving them.

8.2. Summary of the main findings: a concept of conflicts

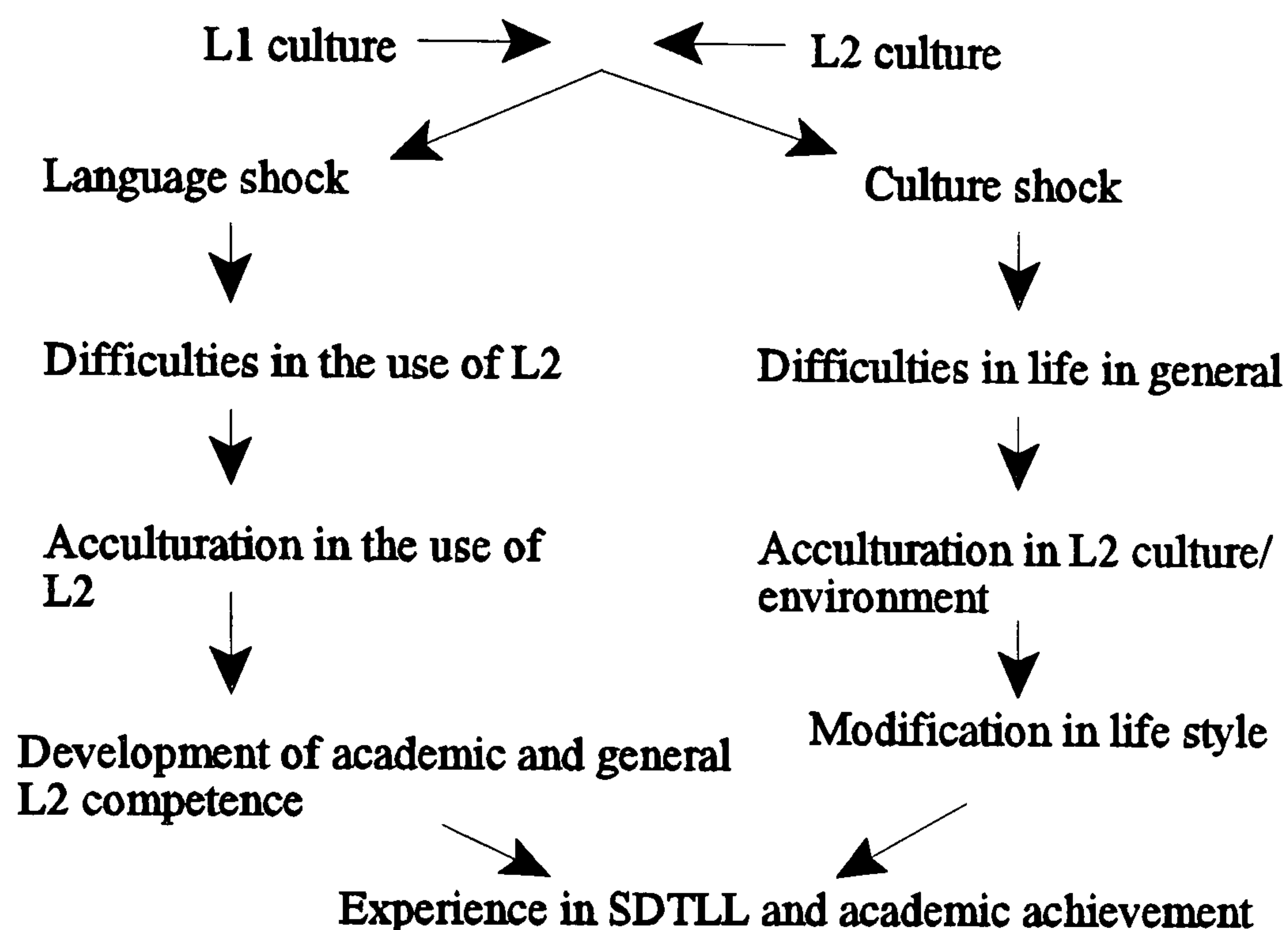
A global concept, a concept of conflicts, has been identified during the conduct of the present research. Three categories of conflicts have been recognised: (1) conflicts in cultural differences between L1 and the TL; (2) conflicts in learning priorities, and in TL learning environment; and (3) conflicts between the time factors, to complete degrees and the aims of SDTLL. Issues related to these three aspects will be summarized to provide insights into the context of SDLL in a cross-cultural and an authentic TL environment.

8.2.1. Issues related to cultural differences in the present research study

One of the most significant findings of the present research study is the interaction of the cultural differences between the participants' L1 and L2, and the influence of these cultural elements on the participants' SDTLL. Issues recognized as related to the differences between cultural elements of L1 and the TL are: (1) culture shock, including academic and social culture shock; (2) language shock, including language shock in TL speaking and in writing activities; and (3) acculturation.

Culture shock and language shock are described as the psychological anxiety which the participants have when they arrive and settle in the TL environment. The enormous cultural differences between the participants' L1 and L2 mean that the participants have to adjust themselves to the new cultural environment to benefit both their academic achievement and their TL development. Acculturation is consequently regarded as essential to the experience of the participants' TLL and academic achievement in the research environment. It is suggested by the present research study that the participants require acculturation to be able to survive in the research environment, and yet individual participants may desire different degrees of acculturation according to their individual needs. The figure below, Figure 8.1., explains the encounter between the L1 and L2 culture and the consequences of this encounter in the present research study.

Figure 8.1. The consequences of the encounter between the L1 and L2 culture of the participants in the research environment



Academic culture shock In relation to the aspect of the academic culture shock, it is revealed by the present research study that the participants reserved part of their L1 culture norms in dealing with academic matters. First of all, the participants may still view their supervisors from a social hierarchy perspective when they have newly arrived in the research environment, and have the tendency to show their respect and obedience to their supervisors in dealing with their teacher-student relationship. Secondly, the participants' passive learning preference, cultivated by the educational tradition in their L1 culture, is also challenged by the strong emphasis of learner autonomy in the British academic culture.

In order to overcome the two major differences between the participants' L1 and L2 academic cultures, academic acculturation is seen as essential to facilitate their academic achievement which is the main concern of the participants in the research environment. Learning to deal with their teacher-student relationship in a more casual way, and learning to self manage their research studies are seen as the participants' first steps forward in their academic acculturation. Advice and experience provided by their peer groups, TSAY or other NNSs are regarded as significant in the process of the participants' academic

acculturation.

Social culture shock In relation to the issue of social culture shock, due to the collectiveness characteristic of the participants' L1 culture which is very different from the individualism of their L2 social cultural norms, the participants tend to look out for support from members of TSAY when they first arrive in the research environment, and later during their studies in the research environment. Being in the 'out-group' and being in a similar TL situation, the participants tend to have more social contact with other NNSs than with NSs in the research environment. In addition, among the NNSs in the research environment, the participants tend to have more frequent social contact with students from Asia, who share some cultural elements with the participants' L1 culture, than students from other regions of the world, where less cultural similarity can be found.

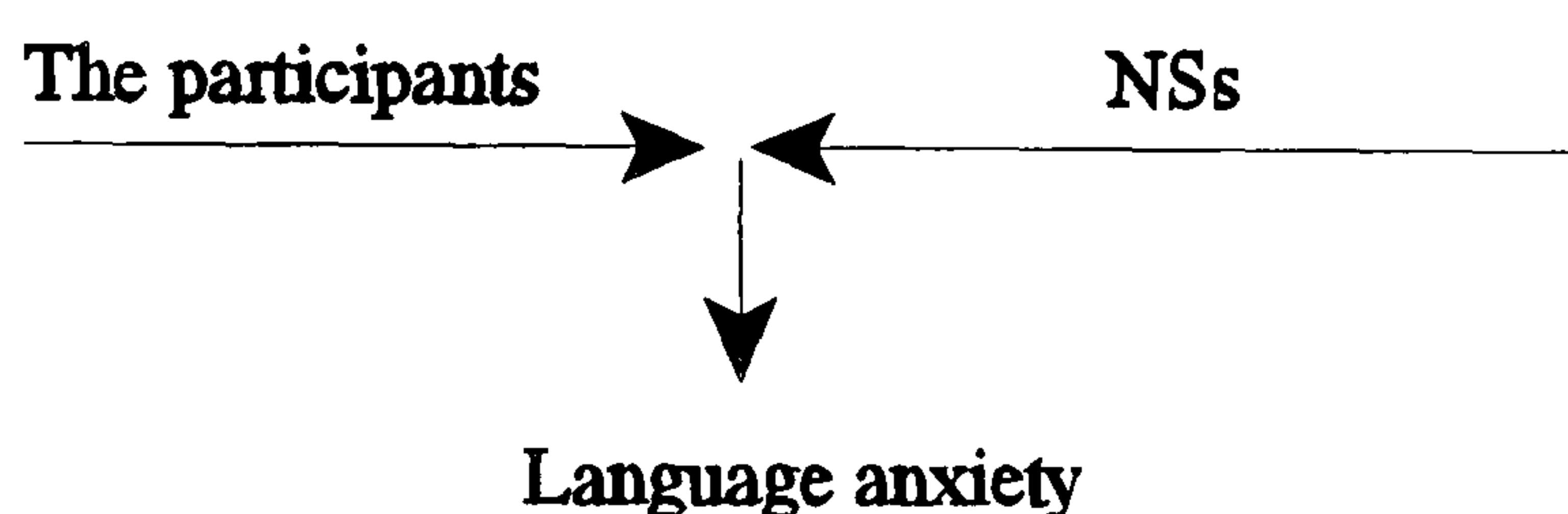
Regarding the concept of acculturation in relation to socio-cultural habits, some of the participants showed less reliance on their L1 social groups when they approached the second year of their studies in comparison with the time when they first arrived in the research environment, such as Participant 4. In addition, with regard to the concept of acculturation in academic-cultural norms, some of the participants were able to modify their attitudes towards the teacher-student relationship, becoming able to talk to their supervisors in a casual manner later in their research studies, such as Participants 7, and 10.

Language shock Due to the lack of training in TL speaking and academic writing in their previous TL education in Taiwan, the participants encounter two levels of language shock, one in speaking the TL and the other in writing the TL. According to the present research study, the participants tend to have fewer difficulties in improving their basic TL speaking skills. Yet, they have more difficulty in acquiring informal TL elements, such slang and colloquial use of the TL, due to the lack of social contact with local NSs and other English students on the campus.

It is notable that the participants tend to have less difficulties in speaking to NSs of the TL from other regions, such as Wales and Scotland, and other countries, such as the USA and

Canada, due to the fact that the attitude of the NSs from these areas and countries is less distant, and the north American accent, is more familiar to the participants. Academic writing is regarded as a serious TL anxiety which the participants have when they reach the final stage of their studies in the research environment. The figure below, Figure 8.2., indicates the reasons for the participants to have different degrees of language anxiety, language shock, when they arrive in the research environment.

Figure 8.2. The causes to the participants' language anxiety



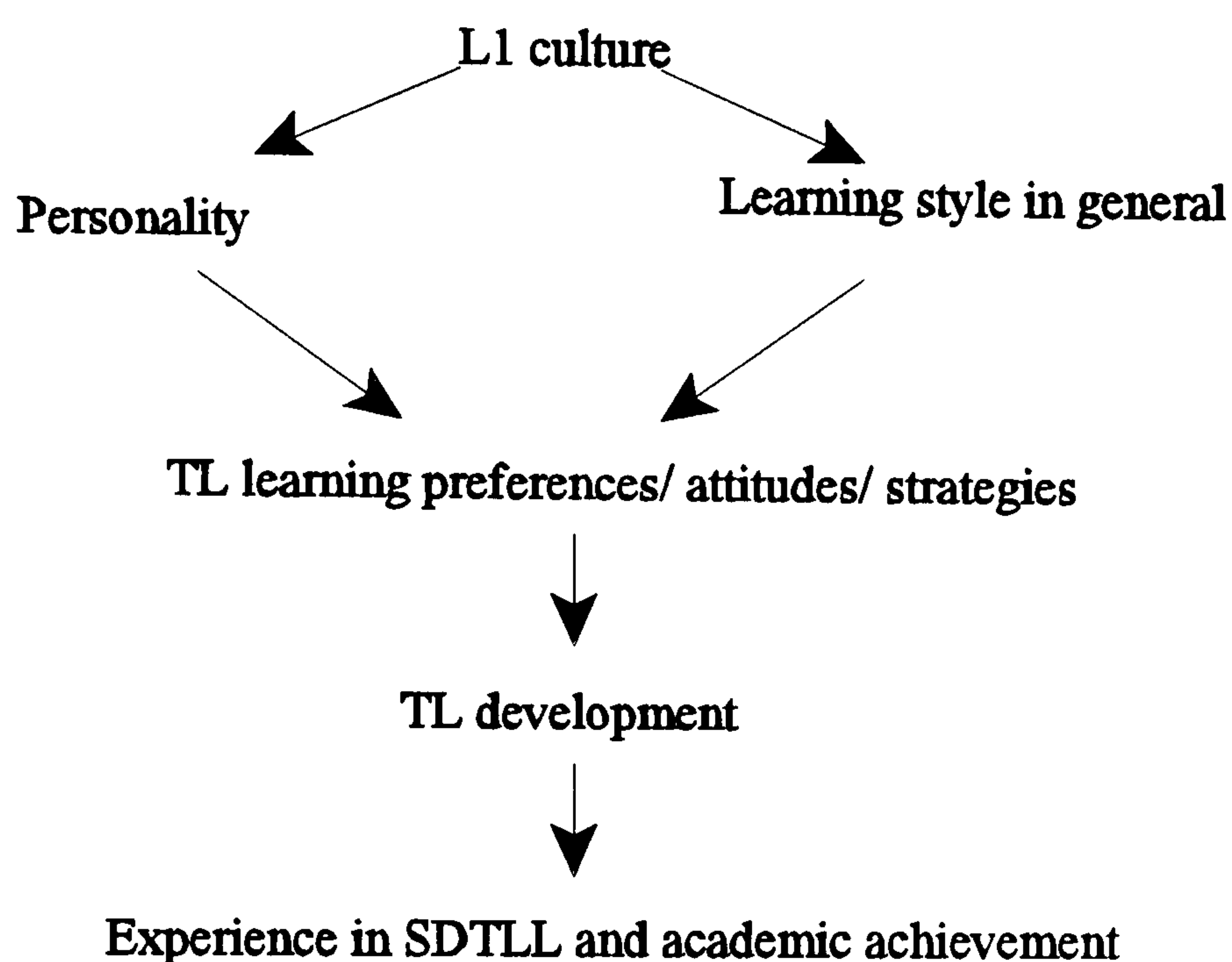
1. Lack of confidence in using the TL
2. Being afraid of making language errors and the assumption that NSs will laugh at their language errors and make comments on their TL competence
3. Lack of experience in using the TL in an authentic TL setting
4. Attitude of the NSs whom the participants talk to
5. Insufficient competence in comprehending the authentic TL input
6. Insufficient competence in understanding and using informal TL elements
7. Lack of training in TL academic writing

With relatively little training in academic writing in their previous TL learning in Taiwan, the participants tend to have greater difficulties in developing their academic TL writing competence. Human resources, NSs, are then regarded as essential to the participants' TL development in relation to academic writing. In order to achieve academic success, a higher degree of acculturation in the use of the TL than in the socio-cultural respect is recognized as essential for the participants.

The other circumstance where the influence of the L1 cultural element on the SDTLL can be observed is in the participants' personality and learning style in general. It has been recognized in SLL that individual learner variables (ILVs) can influence learners' preferences in participating in TL facilitating activities, and such personal learning

preferences may lead the participants to different levels of TL development. Figure 8.3. below explains the influence of the L1 culture on the participants' TL development.

Figure 8.3. The influence of the L1 culture element on the participants' TL development



According to Figure 8.3., the L1 culture may influence learners' personality and learning style in general, which are regarded as closely related to learners' learning preferences, attitudes and strategies. The participants in the present research study indicated that their passive attitude towards learning the TL reduces their opportunities for participating in active TL activities, such as socializing and talking to NSs and other ESL learners. Such a passive learning attitude is recognized as being influenced by the participants' L1 culture and also the education which the participants received in Taiwan, where passive learning is much emphasized. Having been educated in a teacher-centred environment, the participants have been used to learning by following the guidance of others, and therefore the participants have a preference for passive learning, which is the learning style that they are most familiar with.

The passive learning style may not be beneficial to the development of the participants' TL oral/ communicative skills, but it enables the participants to concentrate on the passive TL activities of listening and reading. According to the data analysis from the diaries kept by

the participants, the participants appeared to spend more time on listening and reading activities, which explains the relationship between their personality and TL learning attitudes and strategies. Such a result also corresponds with the data collected from the interviews conducted with the individual participants, in which the participants indicated that they prefer watching TV to having conversations with others when trying to improve their TL listening comprehension in the research environment.

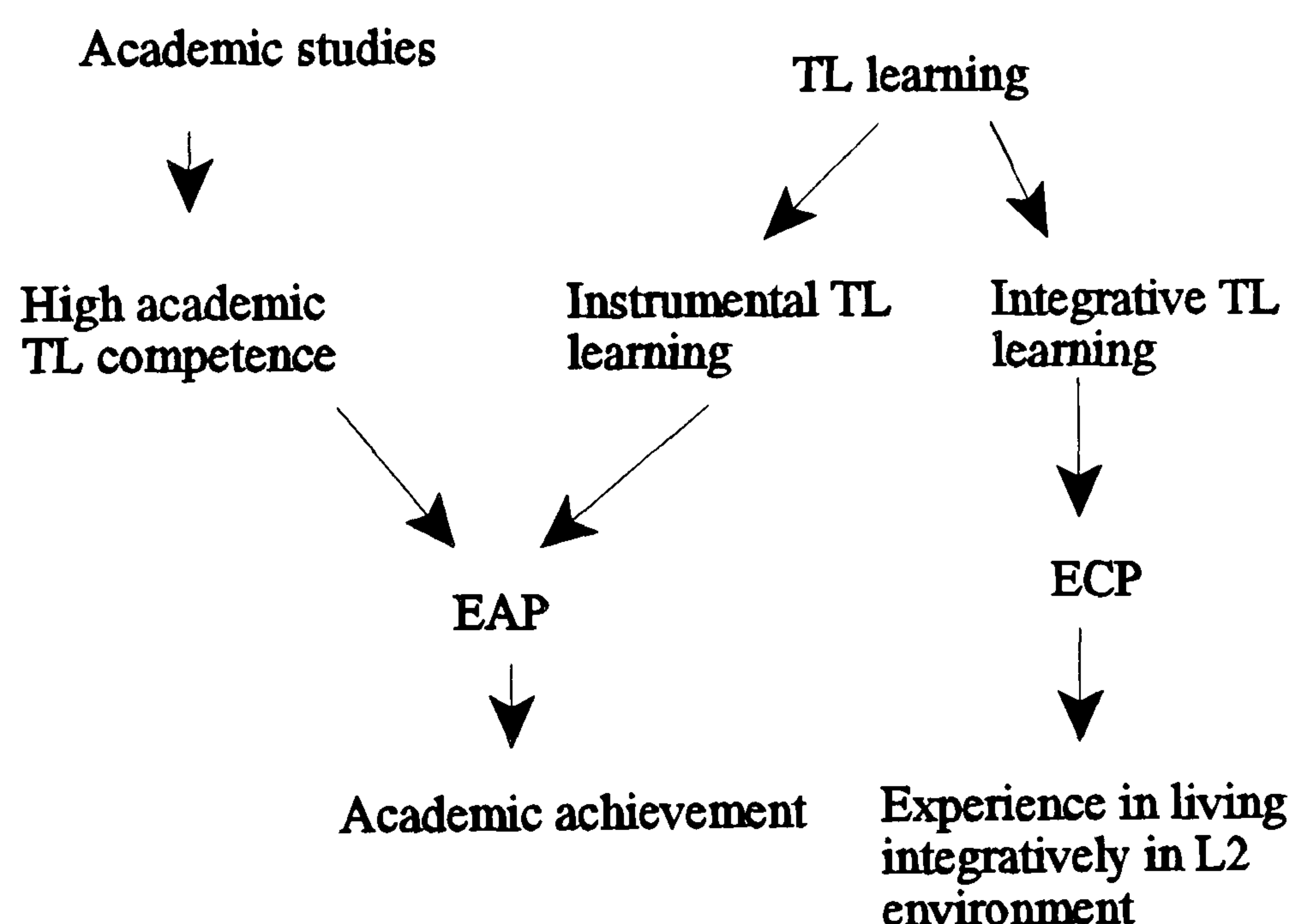
According to Figures 8.1. and 8.3, the final goal which the participants intend to achieve is success in their academic studies, which indicates that TLL is not considered as their primary aim, but without the TL the participants would not be able to achieve their primary goal in the research environment. In order to achieve academic success, TL competence is crucial to facilitate the participants' achievement of their primary objective. Consequently, TL learning and academic success are recognized as significant in the context of SDTLL in the present research study.

8.2.2. Issues related to learning priorities and TL learning environment

Learning priorities According to the participants, academic success is regarded as primary and TL learning is seen as secondary. Yet at the same time, the lack of a good command of the TL can be an obstacle to successful academic achievement. Consequently, a dilemma has been recognized between the participants' academic success and TL learning in the present research study. It is known that successful academic achievement demands a great deal of devotion from the participants, and yet on the other hand it also takes time and effort for the participants to improve their TL competence, a factor which is significant for their academic achievement. However, with limited time available, the participants may have to modify their learning attitudes towards both of their targets, academic success and TL learning, to suit their primary goal in the research environment. EAP is therefore regarded as the most suitable means through which the participants can aim to achieve both their academic objective and TL improvement.

With a strong motivation towards academic-success in mind, the participants are driven to concentrate on improving their academic TL competence. Consequently, the content of their TL activities is closely related to their academic work. According to the present research study, the participants describe themselves as active in acquiring and improving their academic-related TL competence, and yet passive in acquiring everyday communicative TL skills, some of which may be related to the L2 socio-cultural elements. This correlates significantly with the different degree of acculturation which the participants wish to achieve in their academic TL competence and L2 socio-cultural activities. The EAP orientation confirms the instrumental and functional purpose of the participants' TL learning, and therefore the participants have a stronger desire to improve their academic TL competence to benefit their academic achievement. On the other hand, the participants may have less integrative motivation when they use the TL in the research environment. Figure 8.4. explains the relationship between the participants' academic success and TL learning in the present research study.

Figure 8.4. The relationship between academic success and TL learning of the participants



According to Figure 8.4., EAP is considered as beneficial to both the participants' academic concerns and TL learning in the research environment, and consequently TL learning for EAP is utilized to facilitate the participants' academic success and to benefit

their TL development. The ideal relationship between EAP and SDTLL in the present research study is therefore considered as a pattern of content-approach. In this relationship, EAP is the TL learning content in the participants' SDTLL and self direction is the approach. TL related to the participants' academic subjects is the centre to their SDTLL in the present research study.

In addition, an interesting result drawn from the present research study is that the participants who are doing research in the field of humanities or social science tend to put more emphasis on the correlation between TL competence and academic success, whereas the participants who are doing research in the field of science tend to see less connection between TL competence and academic success. This is, however, due to the different language demands from individual academic fields.

As it is suggested that EAP is an important indicator in the participants' SDTLL, the participants tend to self-direct their TL learning according to their TL needs resulting from their academic work. Due to such a close linkage between the participants' SDTLL and EAP in the present research study, the time factor is regarded as significant in influencing the individual participants' TL development, which is further discussed in the following section.

TL learning environment The research environment is an authentic TL setting but it is also a special TL learning environment where the participants can have contact with not only local NSs and NSs from other English speaking countries but also with other NNSs from different countries. According to the participants, the limited contact with NSs and frequent involvement with NNSs in the research environment reduce their opportunities in acquiring informal/ sociolinguistic TL skills. In addition, spending much of their time doing their academic related activities by themselves on the campus, the participants also have less opportunities to immerse themselves in the authentic TL environment. Consequently, though the research environment is an authentic TL setting, the participants may have limited accesses and opportunities to improve their TL skills, especially sociolinguistic aspect.

8.2.3. The time factor in SDTLL in the present research study

It is revealed by the present research study that the participants may have different TL needs for their academic work during different periods of time within an academic year or the course of their studies. Consequently, the participants may modify their TL learning objectives from time to time to meet their TL needs. It is recognized by the present research study that there are two different time scales which may influence the participants' SDTLL: (1) the time scale of an academic year, based on the data collection period of the present research study; and (2) the time scale of an academic course, such as a Master's or M.Phil./ D.Phil. programme.

According to the present research study, the participants who recently arrived in the research environment tend to have a stronger desire to improve their speaking and listening skills, which is due to the lack of training in their previous TL education in Taiwan. To be able to survive in the research environment, an improvement in TL speaking and listening competence is required to fulfil the participants' TL needs at the time. As the start of their academic courses, the participants may modify their TL learning objectives according to their TL needs at the time, which are suggested to be closely related to their academic work. The participants on taught-course programmes may need to improve their TL speaking and listening skills when they attend seminars or lectures provided by their departments at the beginning of the academic year, whereas the participants on research-based programmes may feel a need to improve their TL, speaking, listening and reading comprehension skills when they start their research courses and start to discuss matters related to their research work with their supervisors.

The participants set their TL learning objectives according to their TL needs drawn from their academic studies. Different periods of an academic year may lead the participants to different TL learning activities. As the time goes on, TL writing skills become more and more important in the participants' SDTLL, which is due to the approach of the course assessment period. To be able to complete their academic studies, the participants are required to submit a piece of written work, dissertation or thesis, to be evaluated, and consequently a good command of TL writing is considered as essential at the final stage of academic study.

With regard to the participants who are registered for M.Phil./ D.Phil. studies, the change in their TL needs is regarded as very similar to their master's degree counterparts. They may also lay more emphasis on their TL speaking and listening skills at the beginning of their studies because they have to discuss their research projects with their supervisors at the initial stage of their research work. The need for reading comprehension skills emerges as the participants enter a different stage of their studies, which may require the accumulation of a large amount of information related to their research subjects. TL writing skills will be strongly emphasized when the participants come to the final stage of their academic studies, when they have to submit a dissertation or thesis to complete their studies.

The development of listening and speaking skills always takes priority when the participants first start their academic studies, and reading competence is challenged when the participants are in the need to accumulate academic related information. Finally, TL writing skills are emphasized when the participants come to the final stage of their academic studies. It is, therefore, revealed by the present research study that the change in the TL learning patterns of the participants who are registered as M.Phil./ D.Phil. students is very similar to the participants who are registered as Master's degree students, and the only difference between the two patterns is that the M.Phil./ D.Phil. students have a prolonged time scale in comparison to their Master's degree counterparts.

The table below, Table 8.1., explains the change in TL needs among the participants. The language skills in bold font in Table 8.1. indicate that the participants lay more emphasis on the improvement and their competence of these specific language skills.

Table 8.1. The change in TL needs and TL learning objectives among the participants

The participants\ Period of time	Term 1/ Year 1	Vacation/ Year 2	Term 2/ Year 3 and onwards
Master degree students	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing
MPhil/ DPhil students	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing	Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing

According to Table 8.1., the focus on the improvement in TL listening and speaking skills is highlighted at the beginning of academic study, and the improvement in writing competence is highly emphasized at the final stage of academic study. Such a result supports the correlation between the close relationship of the participants' SDTLL and EAP in the present research study.

8.3. Implications and contribution to knowledge and understanding of SDLL

The present research study was considered as the first of its kind, conducted in an authentic TL environment with a group of eleven Taiwanese postgraduate ESL learners, that sought to explore how these TL learners self-direct their TL learning activities, how the participants interact and utilize the TL resources to benefit their TL development, which factors can influence the participants' SDTLL and how these factors influence the participants' SDTLL. The results that emerged from the present research study contribute to our understanding of L2 learners and L2 learning in three ways: (1) issues related to the Socio-Educational Model; (2) issues related to the Acculturation Model; and (3) issues related to the Universal Grammar Model and the Interlanguage Theory.

8.3.1. Issues related to the Socio-Educational Model

Motivation has been identified as one of the major factors contributing to the participants' success in academic achievement and TL learning. Having a strong motivation to achieve academic success, the participants will do whatever is necessary to benefit the progress of their academic studies. In order to facilitate their academic achievement, the participants have to improve their academic TL competence to facilitate their academic progress. Consequently, the TL learning motivation of the participants is recognized as instrumental.

According to Gardner's Socio-Educational Model, language learners with either integrative or instrumental motivation can achieve success in TL learning. The participants appear to be very determined to achieve success in their academic studies, and consequently, they are regarded as active in the improvement of their academic TL competence.

One implication drawn from the participants' instrumental motivation is the participants' social preferences. Due to the strong emphasis on the instrumental aspect of the TL, the participants tend to utilize the TL less as a means to integrate with other members in the research environment. It is therefore suggested that not only the collectiveness characteristic of the participants' L1 culture, but also the instrumental TL learning motivation of the participants contributes to the participants' preference for socialising with people who originate from their L1 culture, such as Taiwanese, Chinese and other ethnic Chinese, or people who are from a shared or similar culture background, such as Japanese, and others with Asian origins. Such social preference in meeting people from their L1 culture or shared cultural background is regarded as less beneficial to the participants' TL development.

8.3.2. Issues related to the Acculturation Model

In connection with the findings in relation to Schumann's Acculturation Model, the results drawn from the present research study correspond with the point made by Schumann, that a good language learning environment is regarded as one that is culturally congruent to the learner's L1 culture. The participants' L1 culture is regarded as rather different from their L2 culture, and consequently some of their L1 cultural norms may not benefit their L2 development. Nevertheless, although the participants' L1 culture elements may bring some obstacles to their SDTLL, the participants seem to be able to cope with these obstacles and eventually to be able to achieve their academic success. It is therefore suggested that the individual learner variables are strong factors that benefit and facilitate the participants' TL development in the context of SDTLL.

With regard to the influence of individual learner variables (ILVs) on the participants' SDTLL, personality and motivation are considered as important factors in the participants' preferences for TL learning strategies, activities and contents. The participants, who have

been educated in a teacher-centred educational climate, tend to prefer passive learning strategies, in other words, spending more time on the TL listening and reading activities. Speaking or interacting with others, which may increase the potential for conflicts, are not regarded as part of the teacher-centred educational approach in the participants' L1 culture, which is also deeply influenced by a strong emphasis on the social hierarchy system and the ideological harmony of Confucianism. Having been educated in such a passive educational system, the participants have consequently been cultivated into rather passive personality traits which lead them to preferences for passive learning activities, such as listening and reading, which consist of less interaction with others. The influence of such passive personality traits can also be observed in other social and classroom interactions of Taiwanese students.

Regarding the influence of L1 and L2 cultural elements on the participants' SDTLL, the participants' experience of language shock is suggested to be more significant than their experience of culture shock. The Acculturation Model by Schumann is further extended by the results from the present research study. It is suggested that the use of the TL, not only in speaking but also in writing, is recognized as stress-promoting. To be able to communicate verbally is regarded as stress-provoking, especially when the participants speak to NSs of the TL. Being afraid of making language mistakes in front of NSs of the TL is considered as the initial language anxiety among the participants.

The face-losing culture norm of the participants plays a significant role in the participants' language anxiety while talking with NSs of the TL. The second experience of language shock takes place when the participants are at the writing-up stage of their dissertations and theses, which requires substantial TL writing competence. The lack of training in TL academic writing from their previous TL education in Taiwan, and the difference in the styles of academic writing between the participants' L1 and L2 create another level of language anxiety in the participants' TL learning. The second encounter with language shock is suggested to be more difficult to overcome than the first encounter with language shock. Human resources, proof readers who are NSs, is heavily in demand by the participants to facilitate their improvement in TL writing competence.

In relation to culture shock, it is suggested by the present research study that with the help of the participants' peer groups, including their Taiwanese friends, the Taiwanese Students Association York, and other Chinese ethnic social groups in the research environment, the participants are able to overcome the psychological anxiety caused by the differences between their L1 and L2 culture at a faster pace than their encounter with language shock. The collective quality of the participants' L1 culture at this point benefits their experience of culture shock. On the other hand, although the collectiveness characteristic of the participants' L1 culture helps them to overcome the experience of culture shock, it is regarded as a factor hindering the participants' opportunities for using and practising the TL in the research environment.

The other experience of culture shock which the participants encounter is the different style of teacher-student relationship in the L2 academic culture. The participants tend to apply their L1 culture format to their teacher-student relationships in the research environment, and the hierarchical social role of teachers in the participants' L1 culture norms creates some anxiety, including TL anxiety, among some of the participants. The L1 elements which have been discussed in the present research study are regarded as drawbacks in relation to the participants' SDTLL.

Figure 8.5. is proposed at this point to describe the general concept of the interaction between an individual participant and the research environment when he/ she has stayed in the research environment for some time. Figure 8.5. is a further development from Figure 1.1. The difference between Figures 1.1. and 8.5. are the circular lines which lie between the participants and the TL environment. The circular lines in Figure 1.1. are solid and dotted, which indicates that the role of the participant is either totally different from the TL environment or they had previous experience in other authentic TL when they first arrived in the research environment. The circular lines in Figure 8.5. are dotted in a wider spacing than they are in Figure 1.1., which indicate that the participants have undergone acculturation through the authentic TL input and TL cultural elements.

It is suggested by the present research that different participants may have different degrees of acculturation due to the characteristics of the individual differences of the participants. The participants acculturate themselves to a certain degree where their personal needs and acquired TL elements have reached a balanced condition to facilitate their personal goals in the research environment.

Figure 8.5. The interaction between the participants and the research environment: Model 2

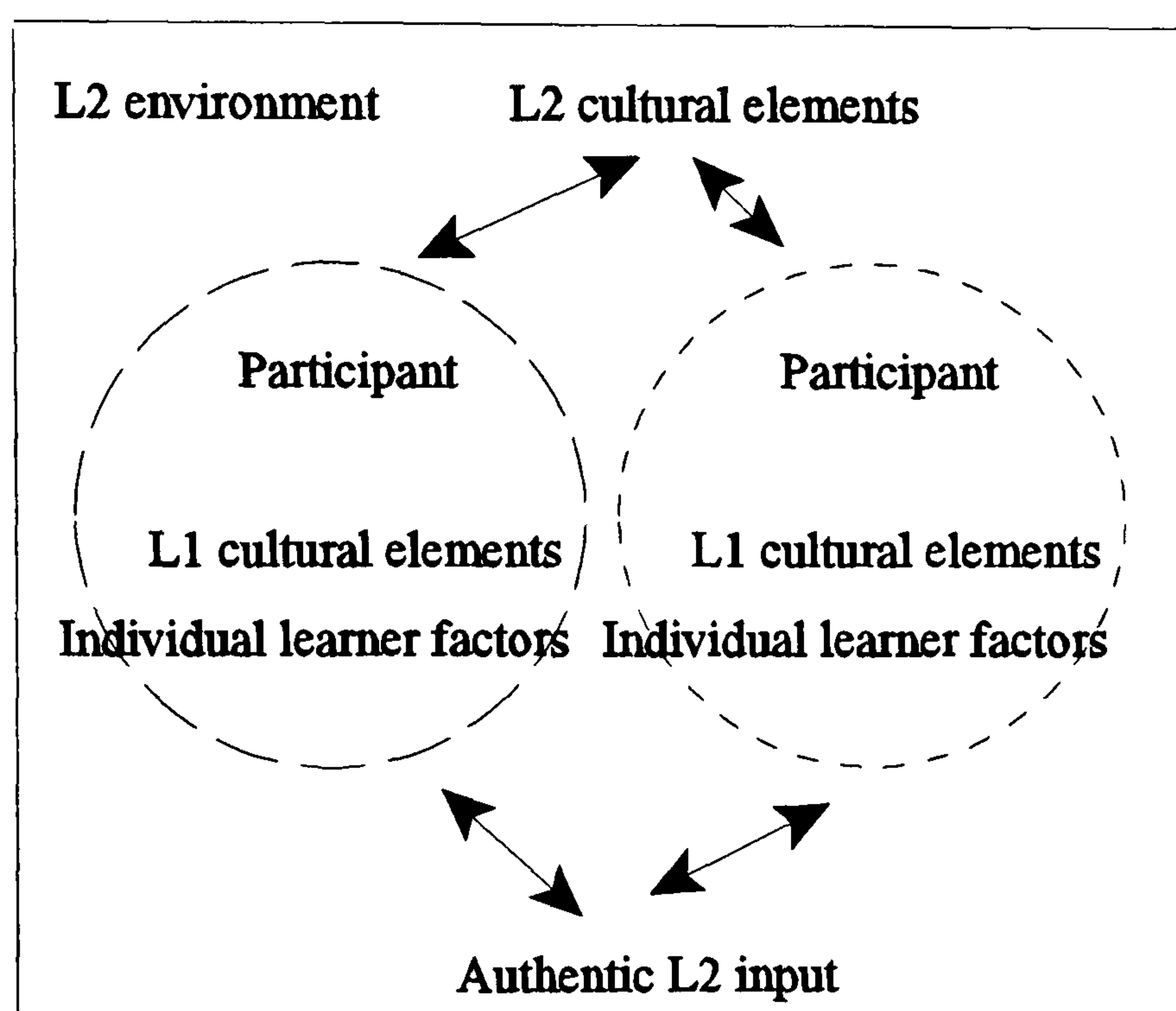


Figure 8.5. indicates that dotted lines separate the participant and the L2 environment, which show that a degree of acculturation has been taking place in the interaction between the participant and the TL environment. Different participants have acculturated themselves into the L2 environment to different degrees according to their individual needs. The dotted lines suggest that the participants may have modified themselves or accepted some differences between themselves and the research environment, which is regarded as a crucial step in the participants' SDTLL. Coming from a different cultural background and TL learning experience, the participants may have to modify part of themselves to benefit their SDTLL in the research environment.

8.3.3. Issues related to the Universal Grammar Model and the Interlanguage Theory

The TL education received prior to the arrival in the present research environment has provided the participants with basic knowledge of the TL. Such a basic understanding of the TL is described as a system of Universal Grammar (UG) to facilitate the participants' TLL. The participants are able to utilize the fundamental TL rules to produce and comprehend the TL in the research environment, and such a system is seen as the most basic TL foundation to the participants' TL development and improvement in the research environment.

Issues relating to the interlanguage theory in the present research study is the influence of L1 on the TL performances. Simplification of the use of one form, infinitive, for all tenses and pronouns is the most commonly seen TL errors among the participants, and it is the influence of the participants' L1 on their TL performance. Though the participants have solid understanding of TL grammatical rules, the influence of their L1 still can be observed in their mis-use of tenses of verbs and the errors in using a wrong pronoun to represent a pronoun with a certain gender. For example, the participants would say " I 'see' him yesterday." and " My mom is ill. 'He' has high blood pressure." There is only one form, the infinitive, for all verb tenses and one pronoun to represent all the third person singular pronouns in the participants' L1 , consequently the participants can easily make TL errors in these two aspects.

8.4. Recommendations and suggestions for future research

The present research study has revealed some significant issues related to the context of SDTLL in a cross-cultural context and in an authentic TL environment. Two categories of recommendations and suggestions drawn from the present research study in relation to SDTLL and cross-culture issues need to be further investigated.

(1) The learner's perspective

Issues to be discussed in this section are closely related to the participants' TL learning experience in specific, and their lives in an authentic TL environment in general.

Anxiety Culture and language shock, and the anxiety of being afraid of speaking to NSs of the TL and making TL mistakes, caused by both the participants' L1 culture itself and the great distance between the participants' L1 and L2 culture, are described as significant negative factors influencing the participants' TL development in the research environment. More research studies need to be conducted regarding this aspect to find out the specific origin and cause of such anxiety and its impact on the learners' TL development.

Two different experiences of culture shock have been identified in the present research study, and they are: social culture shock and academic culture shock. In relation to the experience of social culture shock, more research needs to be carried out regarding the influence and effectiveness of the pre and post-departure orientation to prepare overseas students, especially the ones whose native culture is very different from the host culture in which they are going to stay, for a new life in a different cultural environment. Such preparation and orientation, including the introduction to general social patterns among the students on and off the campus, may reduce the degree of anxiety which overseas students may have in relation to their first encounter with social culture shock.

With regard to the experience of academic culture shock, more investigation needs to be conducted to bring a full picture of general academic differences between educational systems in different countries to minimize the academic anxiety of overseas students in the authentic TL environment. It is, however, necessary to include the strong emphasis on the learner-centred academic tradition in the UK educational system to overseas students in the UK academic institutions' overseas student recruitments. For example, the participants have been educated in the teacher-centred academic tradition so that they had difficulties in adapting themselves to a learner-centred educational system when they first arrived in the research environment. Consequently, a general introduction on the close relationship between teachers and students in the orientations of overseas student recruitments may help to minimize the degree of academic culture shock among overseas students who are from a teacher-centred academic tradition. In addition, it is necessary to prepare the academic staff regarding the general academic differences of their recruited overseas students. Both overseas students and academic staff need some time to adjust themselves

to encounter a different educational system. A mutual understanding of the L1 and the L2 culture of overseas students is necessary to benefit the interactions between different cultural communities.

Two experiences of language shock have been identified by the present research study: the first experience in speaking and the second experience in writing, originate from the differences between the participants' L1 and TL and their TL1- AE and TL2-BE. It has been identified that it is easier for the participants to overcome their first experience of language shock by socializing with NSs or utilizing TV and radio to improve their TL listening and speaking competence. However, it is more difficult for the participants to overcome their second experience of language shock, which is closely related to not only the TL writing competence but also the differences in writing styles between L1 and TL. Human resources have been identified as important to facilitate the participants to overcome the second encounter of language shock, and yet the needs of such human resources are described as limited by the participants, and they had to look for suitable resources according to their academic subjects. General EFL writing courses have been recognised as not able to fulfil the participants' specific TL needs. It is, therefore, suggested by the participants that more organized human resources, such as TL tutor with specific knowledge in different academic fields, can be arranged by the University to facilitate EFL students' TL needs in writing skills.

Pre-departure orientation It is necessary for the participants to prepare themselves before they leave for a different cultural context and to study for academic purposes. With the help of the globalized electronic networking, surfing on the homepages of different universities is the first step which students can do to equip themselves with a general information on TL educational institutions.

(2) Administrative aspect

Issues discussed in this section are intended to enable the administrative authorities to understand what they can do to help their recruited overseas students have successful academic achievement in their institutions.

Overseas student recruitment Educational exhibitions, which focus on the course facts in different institutions, should provide more information on academic cultural elements, such as the strong emphasis on learner autonomy in UK institutions. As mentioned earlier, with the help of the electronic networking, it is not difficult to access to the course facts of different institutions in different countries. However, a contrastive analysis of the educational systems and emphasis between the TL institutions and overseas students' L1 institutions may provide more specific in-depth information to facilitate and to prepare people who are interested in coming to study in a TL institution. Such pre-departure orientation may not only inform overseas students to prepare themselves to transform to a different educational system but also prepare them for a different style of teacher-student relationship when they come to study in UK institutions.

In addition, it is necessary to provide general information on the use of BE in the orientations when recruiting overseas students. For example, as students in Taiwan have been educated in AE and have very little or no experience in confronting BE, notice of the use of BE would therefore prepare them psychologically for the experience of different degrees of language anxiety. Having acquired notice of the use of BE in the pre-departure orientation, students in Taiwan may decide whether or not to seek BE resources to improve their TL competence before they come to study in a UK institution.

Having given out general information on the L2 educational system and emphasis, and notice on the use of L2 in general in the pre-departure orientations, some post-arrival orientations, including introduction to L2 social culture in general, L2 academic culture in specific, and the use of L2 in the authentic L2 environment, could also be organized to help overseas students to adapt to a new environment.

TL support TL supporting facilities, especially in relation to the learners' TL writing skills, are desperately needed. It is suggested by the participants that there is an urgent need from the TL learners in relation to the improvement of their academic TL writing skills. Although there are writing courses provided by the research environment, the effectiveness of these courses, as suggested by the participants, can be further reinforced by offering courses which are specific academic subject-oriented writing courses, since

different academic disciplines have different writing styles.

Providing free proof-reading services is urged by the participants who also believed that the University should provide such services to support overseas students because of the high tuition fees which the University charges overseas students. Some of the participants, such as Participant 9, indicated that some UK universities, such as St. Andrews, are able to provide their overseas students with such services and therefore it was suggested such services should be introduced by the University. In addition, EFL language instructors with a better general understanding of different cultures may be beneficial to facilitate overseas students from different cultural backgrounds in their EFL courses. Two of the participants who took a pre-session course at the University indicated their unpleasant experience in associating with some of the language instructors who had less empathy for them causing great anxiety in their initial stage of academic life on the campus.

Other relevant support The participants suggested that the quantity of computer facilities, materials and equipment in the self-resource room in the language teaching centre (LTC), and the volume of books and references in the library should be improved and upgraded to facilitate students' academic work at the University. The insufficient quantity of computer facilities on the campus makes it difficult for the participants to utilize the resources on the Internet to facilitate their academic work and their SDTLL. The design and the management of the resource room in the LTC and the audio-visual room in the university library did not encourage the participants to utilize them as TL learning resources to their SDTLL. None of the participants utilized the self-resource room in the LTC, the audio-visual room in the university library or York municipal library to facilitate their SDTLL.

Cross-cultural understanding Cross-cultural understanding needs to be promoted. Overseas students need to prepare themselves to study and live in a different cultural context and at the same time people in the UK institutions also need to develop their general understanding of different cultures to benefit their experience in working with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Better understanding of different cultures will help the movement of globalization in the academic environments and benefit the progress

of academic achievement.

Appendices

Appendix A. The TL experience of the participants

Participant	Age of starting formal TL learning	Duration of formal TL learning	Additional TL experience	Duration of additional TL experience
1	13	7	0	0
2	13	7	Visiting student at a university in England Student of pre-sessionnal course at University of York, England	3 months 2 months
3	13	7	Student of ESL programme and student at a university in Canada	2 years
4	13	7	Student of 2 ESL programmes at universities in 2 universities in USA Student of pre-sessionnal course at a university in England MA student at a university, England	2 months 2 months 1 year
5	13	7	0	0
6	13	7	0	0

7	13	10	MA student at a university in Wales	1 year
8	13	7	0	0
9	13	7	Student of ESL programme at a university in England Student of pre-sessional course at University of York, England	2 months 2 months
10	13	10	Student of ESL programme at a university in England	2 months
11	13	7	Student of pre-sessional course at a university in England	1 month

Appendix B. A list of ILVs

Altman and James (1980)	Skehan(1989)	Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991)
1. Age	1. Language aptitude	1. Age
2. Sex	*2. Motivation	2. Aptitude
*3. Previous experience with L2	*3. Language learning strategies	*3. Socio-psychological factors
a. General	4. Cognitive and effective factors	a. Motivation
b. Specific to the TL	a.	b. Attitude
*4. Proficiency in L1	Extroversion/introversion	*4. Personality
*5. Personality factors	b. Intelligence	a. Self-esteem
6. Language aptitude	c. Field independence	* b. Extroversion
*7. Attitudes and motivation	* d. Anxiety	* c. Anxiety
a. Motivational orientation		*d. Risk-taking
- integrative		e. Sensitivity to rejection
- instrumental		f. Empathy
b. Attitude toward		g. Inhibition
- the TL		h. Tolerance of ambiguity
- the TL culture or people		5. Cognitive style
- language leaning in general		6. Hemisphere specialization
- the TL teacher/supervisors		*7. Learning strategies
- the learning environment		8. Other factors
8. Learning rate		
9. General intelligence		
10. Sense modality preference		
11. Sociological preference		
a. Whole-class environment		
b. Large-group environment		
c. Small-group environment		
d. Independent study		
e. Self-instruction		
f. Learning with peers		
g. Learning with teachers		
12. Cognitive styles		
*13. Learning strategies		
14. Learner errors		

* indicates the ILVs which are discussed in Section 2.1.2.a., Chapter Two.

Appendix C. Learning strategies and definitions (O'Malley et al. 1985)

Learning strategy	Definition
I. Metacognitive strategies	
<i>Planning</i>	
Advance organizers	- Previewing the main ideas and concepts of the material to be learned, often by skimming the text for the organizing principle.
Directed attention	- Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant distractors.
Functional planning	- Planning for and rehearsing linguistic components necessary to carry out an upcoming language task.
Selective attention	- Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of input, often by scanning for key words, concepts, and/ or linguistic markers.
Self-management	- understanding the conditions that help one learn and arranging for the presence of those conditions.
<i>Monitoring</i>	
Self-monitoring	- Checking one's comprehension during listening or reading to checking the accuracy and/ or appropriateness of one's oral or written production while it is taking place.
<i>Evaluation</i>	
Self-evaluation	- Checking the outcomes of one's own language learning against a standard after it has been completed.
II. Cognitive strategies	
Resourcing	- Using TL reference materials such dictionaries.
Repetition	- Imitating a language model, including overt practice and silent rehearsal.
Grouping	- Classifying words, terminology, or concepts according to their attributes or meaning.
Deduction	- Applying rules to understand or produce the TL
Imagery	- Using visual images (either mental or actual) to understand or remember new information

Appendix C. (Continued)

Learning strategy	Definition
Auditory representation	- Planning back in one's mind the sound of a word, phrase, or longer language sequence.
Keyword method	- Remembering a new word in the TL by:(1) identifying a familiar word in the L1 that sounds like or otherwise resembles the new word, and (2) generating easily recalled images of some relationship with the L1 homonym and the new word in the L2.
Elaboration	- Relating new information to prior knowledge, relating different parts of new information to each other, or making meaningful personal associations with the new information.
Transfer	- Using previous linguistic knowledge or prior skills to assist comprehension or production.
Inferencing	- Using available information to guess meanings of new items, predict outcomes, or fill in missing information.
Note taking	- Writing down key words or concepts in abbreviated verbal, graphic, or numerical form while listening or reading.
Summarizing	- Making a mental, oral or written summary of new information gained through listening or reading.
Recombination	- Constructing a meaningful sentence or larger language sequence by combining known elements in a new way.
Translation	- Using the L1 as a base for understanding and/ or producing the TL.
III. Social mediation	
Question for clarification	- Eliciting from a teacher or peer additional explanations, rephrasing, examples, or verification.
Cooperation	- Working together with one or more peers to solve a problem, pool information, check a learning task, model a language activity, or get feedback on oral or written performance.

(O'Malley and Chamot 1990, pp. 119-120)

Appendix D. Four sessions of interview questions

Interview 1 : Week 3 - 4, October 28 - November 9, 1996

1. Influential language learning factors
 - a. What are the factors influencing your self-directed language learning here at the University of York, England?
 - b. How do these factors influence your self-directed language learning?
2. Language learning difficulties
In relation to the four language skills
 - a. What kind of language learning difficulties do you have?
 - b. How do you cope with these difficulties?
3. Language learning strategies
In relation to the four language skills
 - a. How do you organize your self-directed language learning/ immersion activities?
 - b. What are the resources you access to learn/ become immersed in the target language - English?
 - c. Do you self assess your language learning process/ language performance?
If so, why and how?

Interview 2: Week 8, December 2 - 7, 1996

1. Influential language learning factors
 - a. What are the factors influencing your self-directed language learning here at the University of York, England?
 - b. How do these factors influence your self-directed language learning?
2. Language learning difficulties
In relation to the four language skills
 - a. What kind of language learning difficulties do you have?
 - b. How do you cope with these difficulties?
3. Language learning strategies
In relation to the four language skills
 - a. How do you organize your self-directed language learning/ immersion activities?
 - b. What are the resources you access to learn/ become immersed in the target

- language - English?
- c. Do you self assess your language learning process/ language performance?
If so, why and how?
 - d. How do you feel about learning English in this authentic target language environment?
 - e. How do you feel about using mass media to improve your four language skills, and why?
 - f. How do you feel about talking to native speakers (NSs), and non-native speakers (NNSs), and why do you have this feeling?

Interview 3: Week 1 - 2, January 13 - 26, 1997

1. Influential language learning factors
 - a. What are the factors influencing your self-directed language learning here at the University of York, England?
 - b. How do these factors influence your self-directed language learning?
2. Language learning difficulties
In relation to the four language skills
 - a. What kind of language learning difficulties do you have?
 - b. How do you cope with these difficulties?
3. Language learning strategies
In relation to the four language skills
 - a. How do you organize your self-directed language learning/ immersion activities?
 - b. What are the resources you access to learn/ become immersed in the target language - English?
 - c. Why do you use these resources?
 - d. Do you self assess your language learning process? If so, why and how?
4. Environmental contextual factors
 - a. How do you feel about learning English in this authentic environment?
 - b. In relation to the four language skills, which aspect do you think has

- benefited most from this authentic environment; why and how?
- c. How do you feel about using mass media to improve your four language skills?
 - d. How do you feel about talking to native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs), and why do you have this feeling?
 - e. English as a foreign language (EFL) course:
 - I. Have you ever taken any EFL course(s) in the language centre at the University of York or at other institute(s)?
 - II. If yes, why did/ do you take the course(s)?
 - III. Do you think you benefit from taking the course(s)? If so how?
 - IV. Do you think the course(s) you take/ took help your self-directed language learning? If so how?

Interview 4: week 7 - 9, February 24 - March 15, 1997

1. Influential language learning factors
 - a. What are the factors influencing your self-directed language learning here at the University of York, England?
 - b. How do these factors influence your self-directed language learning?
2. Language learning difficulties
In relation to the four language skills
 - a. What kind of language learning difficulties do you have?
 - b. How do you cope with these difficulties?
 - c. How do you feel about your use of academic English?
 - d. How do you feel about your use of daily conversational English?
 - e. If you have different feelings about your use of academic and daily conversational English, why?
3. Language learning strategies
In relation to the four language skills
 - a. How do you organize your self-directed language learning/ immersion activities, and why?
 - b. What are the resources you access to learn/ become immersed in the target language - English, and why?

- c. Do you self assess your language learning process? If so, why and how?
 - d. Have you received any comments on your English from others over the time you have stayed here? If so, from whom and how do you feel about these comments?
 - e. In relation to the 4 language skills, what are your own views on your English performance after having stayed here for some time, and why?
 - f. Have you noticed any particular point during your time here after which your English skills started to improve? If so, how and why?
4. Environmental contextual factors
- a. How do you feel about learning English in this authentic environment, and why?
 - b. In relation to the four language skills, which aspect do you think has benefited most from this authentic environment, why and how?
 - c. How do you feel about using mass media to improve your four language skills, and why?
 - d. How do you feel about talking to native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs), and why?
 - I. According to your experience, how do you feel about talking to
 - I. NSs who are from England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and why?
 - ii. NSs who are from other parts of the world, and why?
 - II. According to your experience, how do you feel about talking to
 - I. NNSs who are from Asia, and why?
 - ii. NNSs who are from Europe and other parts of the world, and why?
 - e. English as foreign language (EFL) course:
 - I. Have you ever taken any EFL course(s) in the language centre at the University of York or at other institute(s)?
 - II. If yes, why did/ do you take the course(s)?
 - III. Do you think the course(s) you take/ took help your self-directed language learning? If so, how?
 - IV. What additional activities could you suggest to be included in the

- EFL course(s) you take/ took, and why?
- V. Will it help to improve your English skills if information about the target language culture is introduced into the EFL course(s)?
 - VI. What do you think about the relationship between the target language culture, your English performance and your academic achievement?
 - VII. There is a language self access centre in the Language Teaching Centre (LTC) and other resource centres in the university library and in the York municipal library?
 - VIII. Have you ever gone there to use the language learning resources available? If so, why?
 - VIII. What role does the Taiwanese Students' Association (TSA) and your peer group of Taiwanese students play in your life here, and why?
5. Is there anything else you think is important to mention in relation to any of the questions covered in this interview, and why?

Appendix E. A copy of the diary used in the present research study

Week - 3	Sunday	February 2, 1997		Duration				Contents of language activity	
		Four language skills	Focus of language activity	0 min.	1-30mins	31-60 mins	1-2 hrs		More than 2 hrs
1. Speaking	1.	Native speaker(s)	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2.	EFL speaker(s)	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	3.	Other: _____	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2. Listening	1.	Native speaker(s)	-	-	-	-	-	1. Daily conversation
		2.	EFL speaker(s)	-	-	-	-	-	2. Personal interest topic(s)
		3.	TV	-	-	-	-	-	3. Research topic(s)
		4.	Radio/ CD/ Cassette	-	-	-	-	-	4. Current affairs, e.g. news
		5.	Other: _____	-	-	-	-	-	5. Entertainment 6. Practical matters, e.g. recipe, instruction, manual
	3. Reading	1.	Newspaper(s)	-	-	-	-	-	7. Language related matters, e.g. grammar book
		2.	Magazine(s)	-	-	-	-	-	8. Personal matters, e.g. relating to events happening in your life
3.		Novel(s)	-	-	-	-	-	9. Other: _____	
4.		Academic material	-	-	-	-	-		
5.		Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs	-	-	-	-	-		
6.		Information leaflet(s)	-	-	-	-	-		
7.		Letter, E-mail	-	-	-	-	-		
8.		EFL material	-	-	-	-	-		
9.		Internet	-	-	-	-	-		
10.		Other: _____	-	-	-	-	-		
4. Writing	1.	Assignment(s), essay(s)	-	-	-	-	-		
	2.	Letter, E-mail	-	-	-	-	-		
	3.	Diary	-	-	-	-	-		
	4.	Other: _____	-	-	-	-	-		

Thoughts on your activities relating to the four language skills:

1. Listening:

2. Speaking:

3. Reading:

4. Writing:

Other thoughts:

Appendix F. Results of the diaries kept by the participants - Part 1

Participant 1

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Contents of language activity
1. Speaking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 1, 8
2. Listening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. TV 4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette 5. Other: <i>movie/ musical</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 1, 8 4, 5 5 5
3. Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newspaper(s) 2. Magazine(s) 3. Novel(s) 4. Academic material 5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs 6. Information leaflet(s) 7. Letter, E-mail 8. EFL material 9. Internet 10. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4, 5 2, 4, 5 2 3 4, 5 4, 5 8 5
4. Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assignment(s), essay(s) 2. Letter, E-mail 3. Diary 4. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 8

1. Daily conversation
2. Personal interest topic(s)
3. Research topic(s)
4. Current affairs, e.g. news
5. Entertainment
6. Practical matters
recipe, instruction, manual
7. Language related matters,
e.g. grammar book
8. Personal matters, e.g.
relating to events
happening in your life
9. Other: _____

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Contents of language activity
1. Speaking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 3, 8, 9 (shopping) 1, 3, 8
2. Listening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. TV 4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette 5. Other: <i>movie</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 3, 8, 9 (shopping) 1, 3, 8 4, 5 5 5
3. Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newspaper(s) 2. Magazine(s) 3. Novel(s) 4. Academic material 5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs 6. Information leaflet(s) 7. Letter, E-mail 8. EFL material 9. Internet 10. Other: <i>book</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2 2, 4, 5 3 3 5 2, 4 8 8, 2 2
4. Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assignment(s), essay(s) 2. Letter, E-mail 3. Diary 4. Other: <i>note taking</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 3, 8 3

1. Daily conversation
2. Personal interest topic(s)
3. Research topic(s)
4. Current affairs, e.g. news
5. Entertainment
6. Practical matters
recipe, instruction, manual
7. Language related matters,
e.g. grammar book
8. Personal matters, e.g.
relating to events
happening in your life
9. Other: _____

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Contents of language activity
1. Speaking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. Other: <i>self</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 3, 6, 8 1, 2, 3, 6, 8 8
2. Listening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. TV 4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette 5. Other: <i>movie</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 3, 6, 8 1, 2, 3, 6, 8 2, 4, 5 2, 4, 5 2
3. Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newspaper(s) 2. Magazine(s) 3. Novel(s) 4. Academic material 5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs 6. Information leaflet(s) 7. Letter, E-mail 8. EFL material 9. Internet 10. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2, 4, 8 2, 4, 5, 8 2, 3 3 2, 6 2, 3, 6 1, 2, 3, 8 2, 3, 7
4. Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assignment(s), essay(s) 2. Letter, E-mail 3. Diary 4. Other: <i>note taking</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 1, 2, 3, 8 3

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Contents of language activity
1. Speaking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2, 3, 8 2, 3, 8
2. Listening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. TV 4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette 5. Other: <i>movie</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2, 3, 8 2, 3, 8 2, 4, 5 4, 5 5
3. Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newspaper(s) 2. Magazine(s) 3. Novel(s) 4. Academic material 5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs 6. Information leaflet(s) 7. Letter, E-mail 8. EFL material 9. Internet 10. Other: <i>other language learning, movie subtitles</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2, 4 2, 4 2 3 2, 8 2, 8 8 7 2 2
4. Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assignment(s), essay(s) 2. Letter, E-mail 3. Diary 4. Other: <i>note taking</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 8 3

1. Daily conversation
2. Personal interest topic(s)
3. Research topic(s)
4. Current affairs, e.g. news
5. Entertainment
6. Practical matters
7. Language related matters, recipe, instruction, manual e.g. grammar book
8. Personal matters, e.g. relating to events happening in your life
9. Other: _____

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Contents of language activity
1. Speaking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 3, 4, 8 1, 3, 8
2. Listening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. TV 4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette 5. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 3, 4, 8 1, 3, 8 4, 5 5
3. Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newspaper(s) 2. Magazine(s) 3. Novel(s) 4. Academic material 5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs 6. Information leaflet(s) 7. Letter, E-mail 8. EFL material 9. Internet 10. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2, 3, 4, 5 3 4 1, 2, 3, 8 8
4. Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assignment(s), essay(s) 2. Letter, E-mail 3. Diary 4. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 1, 2, 8

1. Daily conversation
2. Personal interest topic(s)
3. Research topic(s)
4. Current affairs, e.g. news
5. Entertainment
6. Practical matters
7. Language related matters, recipe, instruction, manual e.g. grammar book
8. Personal matters, e.g. relating to events happening in your life
9. Other: _____

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Contents of language activity
1. Speaking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. Other: <i>self/ pray</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 3, 8 1, 2, 3 2, 3, 8
2. Listening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. TV 4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette 5. Other: <i>church service</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 3, 8 1, 2, 3 4, 5 4, 7 2
3. Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newspaper(s) 2. Magazine(s) 3. Novel(s) 4. Academic material 5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs 6. Information leaflet(s) 7. Letter, E-mail 8. EFL material 9. Internet 10. Other: <i>word puzzle</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2, 4, 5 2, 4, 5 2 2, 3 2, 6, 8 2, 4, 6, 8 1, 2, 3, 8 7, 9 (dictionary) 2, 3, 4, 5 5
4. Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assignment(s), essay(s) 2. Letter, E-mail 3. Diary 4. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 1, 2, 3, 8

1. Daily conversation
2. Personal interest topic(s)
3. Research topic(s)
4. Current affairs, e.g. news
5. Entertainment
6. Practical matters
recipe, instruction, manual
7. Language related matters,
e.g. grammar book
8. Personal matters, e.g.
relating to events
happening in your life
9. Other: _____

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Contents of language activity
1. Speaking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
2. Listening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. TV 4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette 5. Other: <i>movie</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 4, 5 4, 5 2, 3, 7
3. Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newspaper(s) 2. Magazine(s) 3. Novel(s) 4. Academic material 5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs 6. Information leaflet(s) 7. Letter, E-mail 8. EFL material 9. Internet 10. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4, 5 1, 2, 4, 6 2, 3 3, 7 4, 5, 6 4, 5 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 7 2, 3, 4, 6, 7
4. Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assignment(s), essay(s) 2. Letter, E-mail 3. Diary 4. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8

1. Daily conversation
2. Personal interest topic(s)
3. Research topic(s)
4. Current affairs, e.g. news
5. Entertainment
6. Practical matters
recipe, instruction, manual
7. Language related matters,
e.g. grammar book
8. Personal matters, e.g.
relating to events
happening in your life
9. Other: _____

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Contents of language activity
1. Speaking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 3, 6 1, 3, 6
2. Listening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. TV 4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette 5. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 3, 6 1, 3, 6, 8 5 5
3. Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newspaper(s) 2. Magazine(s) 3. Novel(s) 4. Academic material 5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs 6. Information leaflet(s) 7. Letter, E-mail 8. EFL material 9. Internet 10. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5 3
4. Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assignment(s), essay(s) 2. Letter, E-mail 3. Diary 4. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 3, 8

1. Daily conversation
2. Personal interest topic(s)
3. Research topic(s)
4. Current affairs, e.g. news
5. Entertainment
6. Practical matters
7. Language related matters, recipe, instruction, manual e.g. grammar book
8. Personal matters, e.g. relating to events happening in your life
9. Other: _____

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Contents of language activity
1. Speaking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8
2. Listening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. TV 4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette 5. Other: <i>movie</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 4, 5 4, 5 5
3. Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newspaper(s) 2. Magazine(s) 3. Novel(s) 4. Academic material 5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs 6. Information leaflet(s) 7. Letter, E-mail 8. EFL material 9. Internet 10. Other: <i>movie subtitles</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2, 4, 5 3, 5 3 3 2, 4, 5, 6 3, 6 1, 2, 4, 8 7 2, 4, 6, 8 5
4. Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assignment(s), essay(s) 2. Letter, E-mail 3. Diary 4. Other: <i>note taking</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 1, 4, 8 8 3

1. Daily conversation
2. Personal interest topic(s)
3. Research topic(s)
4. Current affairs, e.g. news
5. Entertainment
6. Practical matters
7. Language related matters, e.g. grammar book
8. Personal matters, e.g. relating to events happening in your life
9. Other: _____

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Contents of language activity
1. Speaking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 1, 2, 3, 7, 8
2. Listening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. TV 4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette 5. Other: <i>movie</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 4, 5, 6 4, 5 4, 5
3. Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newspaper(s) 2. Magazine(s) 3. Novel(s) 4. Academic material 5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs 6. Information leaflet(s) 7. Letter, E-mail 8. EFL material 9. Internet 10. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 2, 3, 5, 6 2, 3 5, 6, 8 5, 6, 8 1, 2, 3, 8 2, 7 2, 3, 4, 8
4. Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assignment(s), essay(s) 2. Letter, E-mail 3. Diary 4. Other: <i>note taking</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 2, 3, 6, 8 8 3

1. Daily conversation
2. Personal interest topic(s)
3. Research topic(s)
4. Current affairs, e.g. news
5. Entertainment
6. Practical matters
recipe, instruction, manual
7. Language related matters,
e.g. grammar book
8. Personal matters, e.g.
relating to events
happening in your life
9. Other: _____

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Contents of language activity
1. Speaking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 3, 8 1, 2
2. Listening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Native speaker(s) 2. EFL speaker(s) 3. TV 4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette 5. Other: <i>movie/ musical</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 2, 3, 8 1, 4 4, 5 5 5
3. Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newspaper(s) 2. Magazine(s) 3. Novel(s) 4. Academic material 5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs 6. Information leaflet(s) 7. Letter, E-mail 8. EFL material 9. Internet 10. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2, 4 2, 5, 8 3 4 2 8 2, 8
4. Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assignment(s), essay(s) 2. Letter, E-mail 3. Diary 4. Other: _____ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2, 3, 5 8

1. Daily conversation
2. Personal interest topic(s)
3. Research topic(s)
4. Current affairs, e.g. news
5. Entertainment
6. Practical matters
recipe, instruction, manual
7. Language related matters,
e.g. grammar book
8. Personal matters, e.g.
relating to events
happening in your life
9. Other: _____

Appendix G. Results of the diaries kept by the participants - Part 2

Participant	Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Term 1	Vacation	Term 2	Total 1	Total 2
1	1. Speaking	1. Native speaker(s)	60 days	21 days	63 days	144 days	
		2. EFL speaker(s)	150	41.5	152	343.5	
		3. Other: _____	6.5	5	20.5	32	
	2. Listening	1. Native speaker(s)	150	41.5	152	343.5	
		2. EFL speaker(s)	7	5	20.5	32.5	
		3. TV	91.5	31	113	235.5	
		4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette	10	4.5	52	66.5	
		5. Other: _____	11	2.5	20	33.5	711.5
	3. Reading	1. Newspaper(s)	25.5	0.5	7.5	33.5	
		2. Magazine(s)	12.5	8.5	32.5	53.5	
		3. Novel(s)	0.5	0	0	0.5	
		4. Academic material	98.5	20	110	228.5	
		5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs	8.5	0.5	5	14	
		6. Information leaflet(s)	8	1.5	4.5	14	
		7. Letter, E-mail	17	6	13.5	36.5	
8. EFL material		0	0	0	0		
9. Internet		0.5	0	0	0.5		
10. Other: _____		0	0	0	0	381	
4. Writing	1. Assignment(s), essay(s)	68.5	10	58	136.5		
	2. Letter, E-mail	14.5	6	15	35.5		
	3. Diary	0	0	0	0		
	4. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	172	

Total 1 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language activity

Total 2 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language skill

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Term 1	Vacation	Term 2	Total 1	Total 2
1. Speaking	1. Native speaker(s)	65 days	18 days	68 days	151 days	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	22.5	6	30.5	59	
	3. Other: _____	34.5	10	12	56.5	
		0	0	0	0	115.5
2. Listening	1. Native speaker(s)	53.5	9	35	97.5	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	38.5	9.5	13.5	61.5	
	3. TV	46	22.5	80	148.5	
	4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette	2.5	0.5	6.5	9.5	
	5. Other: _____	0	0	2	2	322
3. Reading	1. Newspaper(s)	2	0	2	2	
	2. Magazine(s)	5.5	1	9	15.5	
	3. Novel(s)	1	0.5	1	2.5	
	4. Academic material	22.5	9.5	39	71	
	5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs	1	0	0	1	
	6. Information leaflet(s)	2	1	0	3	
	7. Letter, E-mail	2.5	6.5	30.5	62	
	8. EFL material	0	0	0	0	
	9. Internet	13	4	19.5	36.5	
	10. Other: _____	1	0	0	1	194.5
4. Writing	1. Assignment(s), essay(s)	2	10	21.5	33.5	
	2. Letter, E-mail	32	7.5	33.5	73	
	3. Diary	0.5	0	0	0.5	
	4. Other: _____	1.5	0	0	1.5	108.5

Total 1 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language activity

Total 2 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language skill

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Term 1	Vacation	Term 2	Total 1	Total 2
1. Speaking	1. Native speaker(s)	64 days	19 days	55 days	138 days	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	78	2.5	22.5	103	
	3. Other: _____	68.5	20.5	27	116	
		2	0	0	2	221
2. Listening	1. Native speaker(s)	78	2.5	22.5	103	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	69	20.5	27	116.5	
	3. TV	73.5	28.5	102.5	204.5	
	4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette	48	7.5	5	60.5	
	5. Other: _____	4.5	0	3.5	8	492.5
3. Reading	1. Newspaper(s)	5	0	0.5	5.5	
	2. Magazine(s)	9	2	5.5	16.5	
	3. Novel(s)	1	0	1	2	
	4. Academic material	79	12.5	90	181.5	
	5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs	5	1	1	7	
	6. Information leaflet(s)	4.5	0.5	1	6	
	7. Letter, E-mail	24.5	6	39	69.5	
	8. EFL material	0	0	0	0	
	9. Internet	8	1	20.5	29.5	
	10. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	317
4. Writing	1. Assignment(s), essay(s)	2.5	0.5	55.5	58.5	
	2. Letter, E-mail	22	6	39.5	67.5	
	3. Diary	0	0	0	0	
	4. Other: _____	24	1.5	0	25.5	151.5

Total 1 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language activity

Total 2 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language skill

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Term 1 62 days	Vacation 21 days	Term 2 70 days	Total 1 153 days	Total 2
1. Speaking	1. Native speaker(s)	36	12.5	47.5	96	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	106	20	125	251	
	3. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	347
2. Listening	1. Native speaker(s)	39.5	12.5	52	104	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	110	20	128	258	
	3. TV	71.5	40	73	184.5	
	4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette	10.5	0.5	0	11	
	5. Other: _____	6	0	3	9	566.5
3. Reading	1. Newspaper(s)	6	0	4	10	
	2. Magazine(s)	16.5	4	20	40.5	
	3. Novel(s)	39	16.5	3.5	59	
	4. Academic material	26	13	46	85	
	5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs	4	1	3	8	
	6. Information leaflet(s)	3	0	1	4	
	7. Letter, E-mail	13.5	3.5	15	32	
	8. EFL material	0	0	1	1	
	9. Internet	0	0	0	0	
	10. Other: _____	3	0	3	6	245.5
4. Writing	1. Assignment(s), essay(s)	71	6	128.5	205.5	
	2. Letter, E-mail	13.5	5.5	11.5	30.5	
	3. Diary	0	0	0	0	
	4. Other: _____	0	0	0.5	0.5	236.5

Total 1 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language activity

Total 2 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language skill

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Term 1 63 days	Vacation 0 day	Term 2 21days	Total 1 84 days	Total 2
1. Speaking	1. Native speaker(s)	69.5	0	35.5	105	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	4	0	0	4	
	3. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	109
2. Listening	1. Native speaker(s)	73	0	35.5	108.5	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	4.5	0	0	4.5	
	3. TV	79.5	0	30.5	110	
	4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette	0.5	0	0	0.5	
	5. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	223.5
3. Reading	1. Newspaper(s)	0	0	0	0	
	2. Magazine(s)	25.5	0	9	34.5	
	3. Novel(s)	0	0	0	0	
	4. Academic material	17.5	0	29	46.5	
	5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs	0.5	0	0	0.5	
	6. Information leaflet(s)	0	0	0	0	
	7. Letter, E-mail	28	0	6.5	34.5	
	8. EFL material	0	0	0	0	
	9. Internet	0.5	0	0	0.5	
	10. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	116.5
4. Writing	1. Assignment(s), essay(s)	5	0	0	5	
	2. Letter, E-mail	23.5	0	0.5	30	
	3. Diary	0	0	0	0	
	4. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	35

Total 1 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language activity

Total 2 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language skill

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Term 1	Vacation	Term 2	Total 1	Total 2
1. Speaking	1. Native speaker(s)	60 days	21 days	62 days	143 days	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	50	16.5	46	112.5	
	3. Other: _____	49.5	19.5	62.5	131.5	
		1.5	1	0	2.5	246.5
2. Listening	1. Native speaker(s)	51.5	16	58	125.5	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	49.5	19.5	63	132	
	3. TV	52	17.5	65.5	135	
	4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette	30.5	9.5	28	68	
	5. Other: _____	6	1	7	14	
3. Reading	1. Newspaper(s)	21	3	18	42	
	2. Magazine(s)	30.5	10	30	70.5	
	3. Novel(s)	2	1.5	4	7.5	
	4. Academic material	119	32.5	120.5	272	
	5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs	28.5	3.5	23	55	
	6. Information leaflet(s)	20.5	6.5	16	43	
	7. Letter, E-mail	27.5	10.5	29.5	67.5	
	8. EFL material	9.5	0	0	9.5	
	9. Internet	70.5	25	60.5	156	
	10. Other: _____	1	0	0	1	724
4. Writing	1. Assignment(s), essay(s)	38.5	16.5	101.5	156.5	
	2. Letter, E-mail	23.5	6.5	27.5	57.5	
	3. Diary	0	0	0	0	
	4. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	214

Total 1 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language activity

Total 2 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language skill

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Term 1 61 days	Vacation	Term 2 70 days	Total 1 152 days	Total 2
1. Speaking	1. Native speaker(s)	107.5	29.5	149	286	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	88	29	90	207	
	3. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	493
2. Listening	1. Native speaker(s)	93.5	21.5	138	253	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	68	25	65.5	158.5	
	3. TV	145	36.5	164	345.5	
	4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette	138.5	30	160	328.5	
	5. Other: _____	0	0	7.5	7.5	1093
3. Reading	1. Newspaper(s)	3	5.5	11.5	20	
	2. Magazine(s)	3	6	7.5	16.5	
	3. Novel(s)	13	0	41	54	
	4. Academic material	145.5	12.5	150	308	
	5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs	19	0.5	14	33.5	
	6. Information leaflet(s)	19	0	21	40	
	7. Letter, E-mail	42	4	55.5	101.5	
	8. EFL material	1	0	0	1	
	9. Internet	33.5	0	0	0	
	10. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	659
4. Writing	1. Assignment(s), essay(s)	134.5	12.5	138.5	285.5	
	2. Letter, E-mail	48	6	57	111	
	3. Diary	0	0	0	0	
	4. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	396.5

Total 1 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language activity

Total 2 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language skill

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Term 1 61 days	Vacation 0 day	Term 2 14 days	Total 1 75 days	Total 2
1. Speaking	1. Native speaker(s)	16	0	3	19	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	10	0	2.5	21.5	
	3. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	40.5
2. Listening	1. Native speaker(s)	75.5	0	3	78.5	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	22	0	2.5	24.5	
	3. TV	56.5	0	22	78.5	
	4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette	0.5	0	2.5	3	
	5. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	184.5
3. Reading	1. Newspaper(s)	0	0	0	0	
	2. Magazine(s)	0.5	0	0	0.5	
	3. Novel(s)	0	0	0	0	
	4. Academic material	57	0	12.5	69.5	
	5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs	0	0	0	0	
	6. Information leaflet(s)	0	0	0	0	
	7. Letter, E-mail	13	0	3	16	
	8. EFL material	0	0	3	3	
	9. Internet	0	0	0	0	
	10. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	89
4. Writing	1. Assignment(s), essay(s)	79	0	23	102	
	2. Letter, E-mail	12	0	2.5	14.5	
	3. Diary	0	0	0	0	
	4. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	116.5

Total 1 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language activity

Total 2 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language skill

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Term 1	Vacation	Term 2	Total 1	Total 2
1. Speaking		53 days	21 days	54 days	128 days	
	1. Native speaker(s)	51	16	58.5	125.5	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	29.5	9.5	30	69	
	3. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	194.5
2. Listening		79	16.5	75.5	171	
	1. Native speaker(s)	30	12	33.5	75.5	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	38	27	80	218.5	
	3. TV	11.5	27	80	218.5	
	4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette	4.5	0	2	6.5	580.5
	5. Other: _____					
3. Reading		7	2.5	5.5	15	
	1. Newspaper(s)	0.5	0	1.5	2	
	2. Magazine(s)	15.5	0	0	15.5	
	3. Novel(s)	102	25.5	102.5	235	
	4. Academic material	8.5	0	1.5	10	
	5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs	1.5	0	1	2.5	
	6. Information leaflet(s)	17.5	1.5	17	36	
	7. Letter, E-mail	5.5	0	0	5.5	
	8. EFL material	4	0.5	0	4.5	
	9. Internet	2	0	2.5	4.5	330.5
	10. Other: _____					
4. Writing		8	0	24	32	
	1. Assignment(s), essay(s)	14.5	3	16.5	34	
	2. Letter, E-mail	0.5	0	0	0.5	
	3. Diary	24.5	2.5	3	30	96.5
	4. Other: _____					

Total 1 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language activity

Total 2 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language skill

Four language skills	Focus of language activity	Term 1	Vacation	Term 2	Total 1	Total 2
1. Speaking	1. Native speaker(s)	54 days	21 days	70 days	145 days	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	65	7.5	90.5	163	
	3. Other: _____	73.5	46.5	136.5	256.5	420.5
		1	0	0	1	
2. Listening	1. Native speaker(s)	74.5	9.5	91.5	175.5	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	78.5	44	136	258.5	
	3. TV	74.5	48	40	162.5	
	4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette	129.5	35.5	120.5	285.5	
	5. Other: _____	4.5	2	0.5	7	889
3. Reading	1. Newspaper(s)	36	3.5	19	58.5	
	2. Magazine(s)	14.5	5.5	0	20	
	3. Novel(s)	12.5	18.5	4	35	
	4. Academic material	84.5	2.5	49.5	136.5	
	5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs	14	0	1	15	
	6. Information leaflet(s)	23	1.5	2.4	27	
	7. Letter, E-mail	39.5	9	45.5	94	
	8. EFL material	6	2	5	13	
	9. Internet	8	2	12	22	
	10. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	
4. Writing	1. Assignment(s), essay(s)	34.5	3	13	50.5	
	2. Letter, E-mail	34.5	13	46	93.5	
	3. Diary	0	0	0	0	
	4. Other: _____	17	2.5	0	19.5	163.5

Total 1 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language activity

Total 2 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language skill

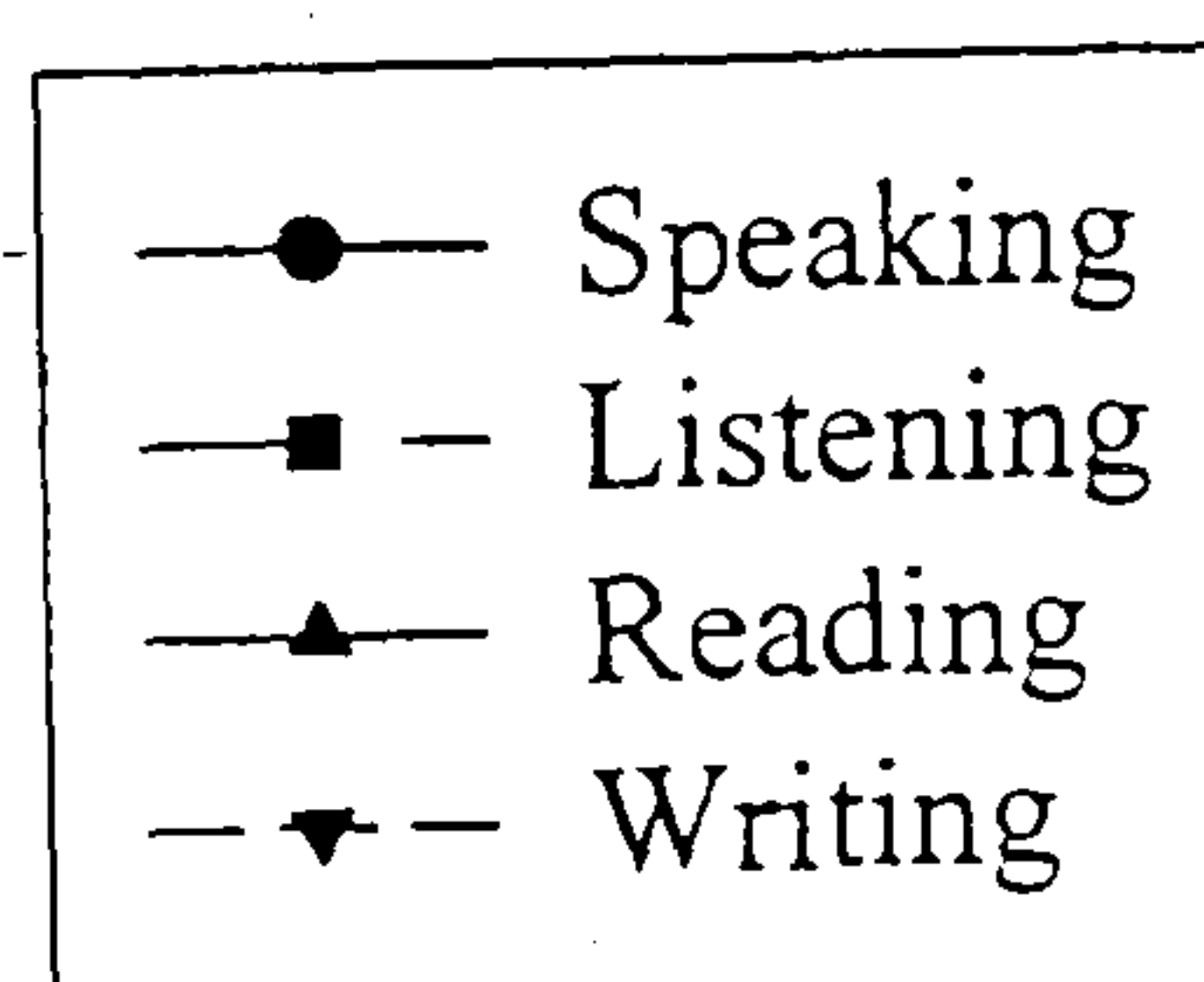
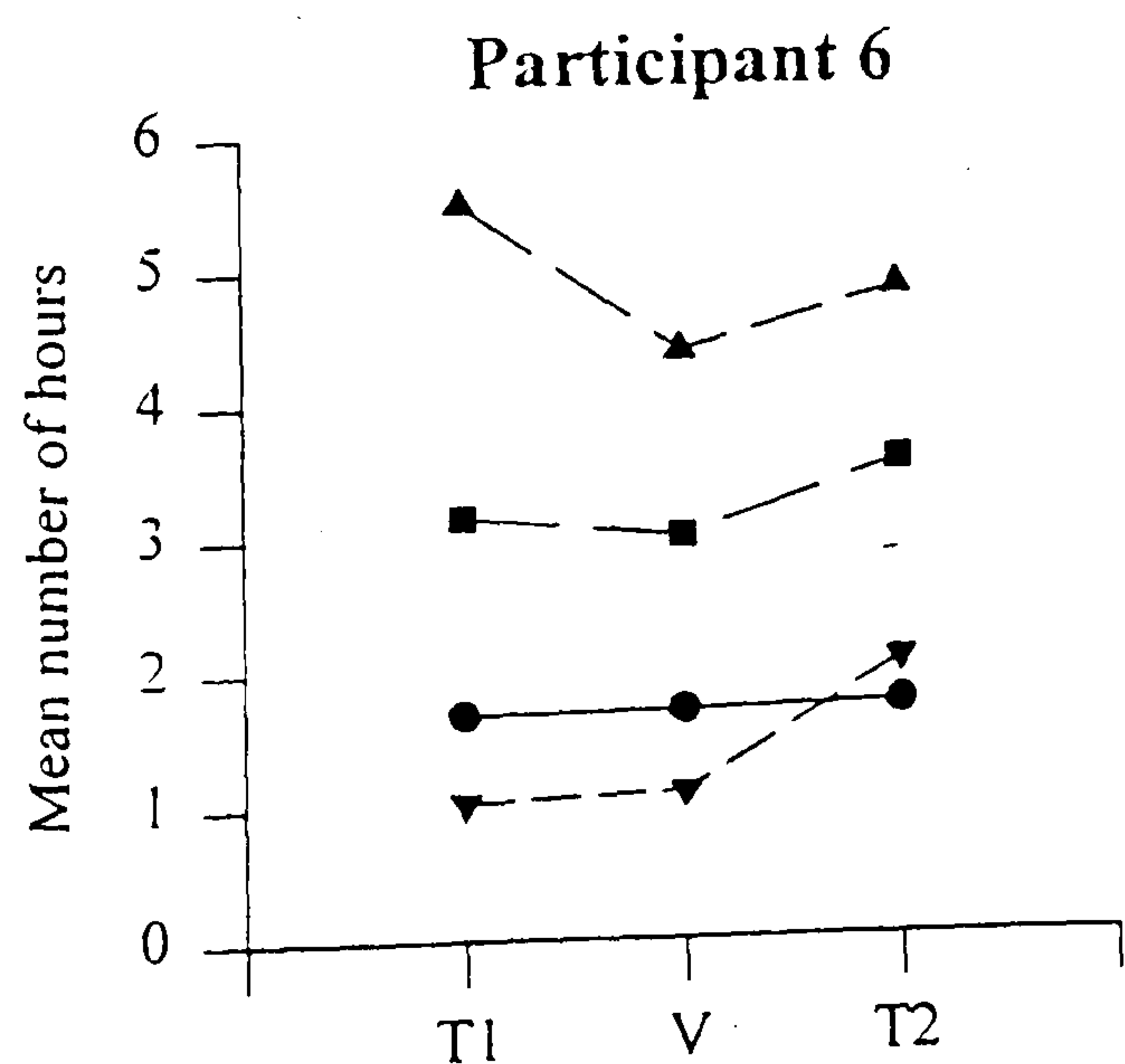
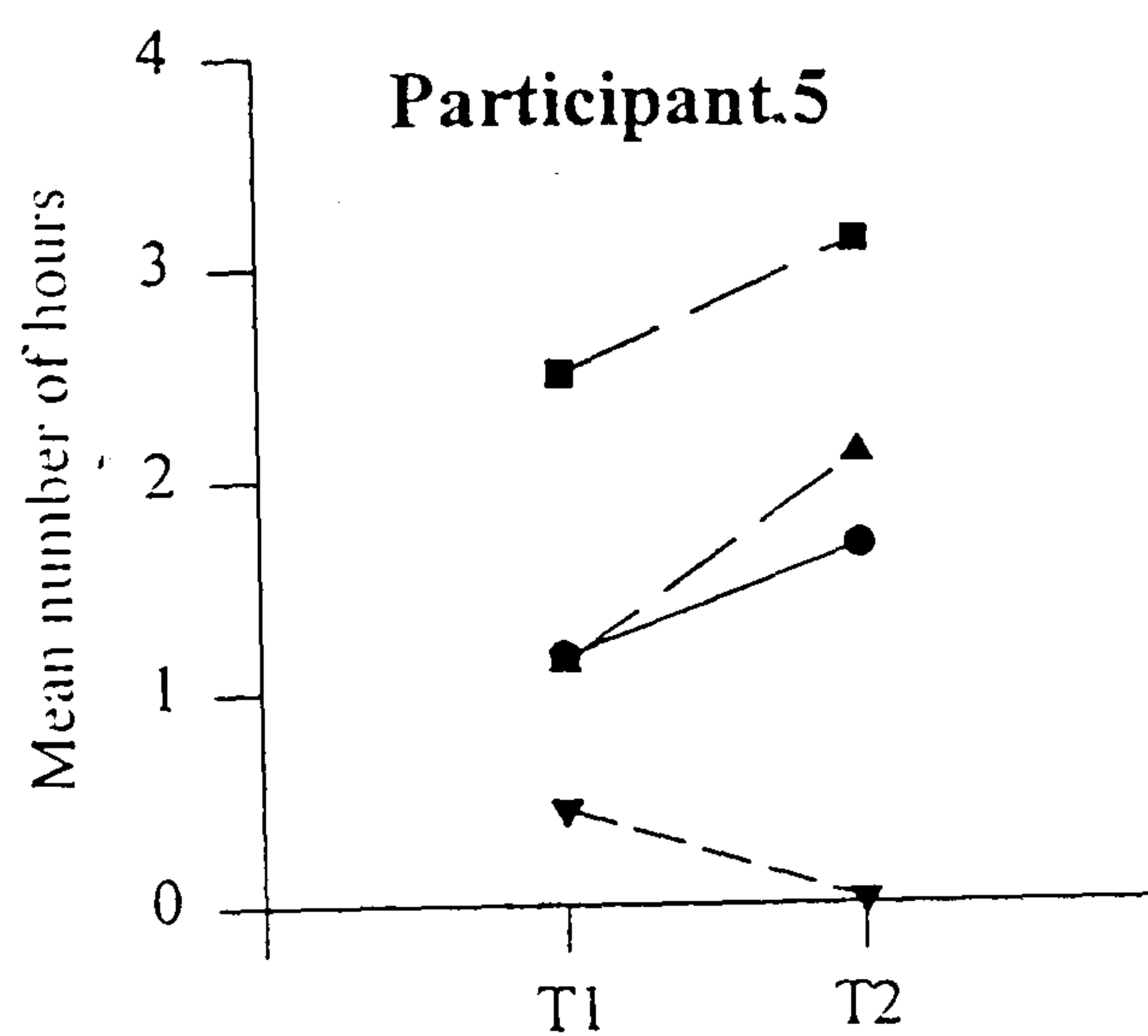
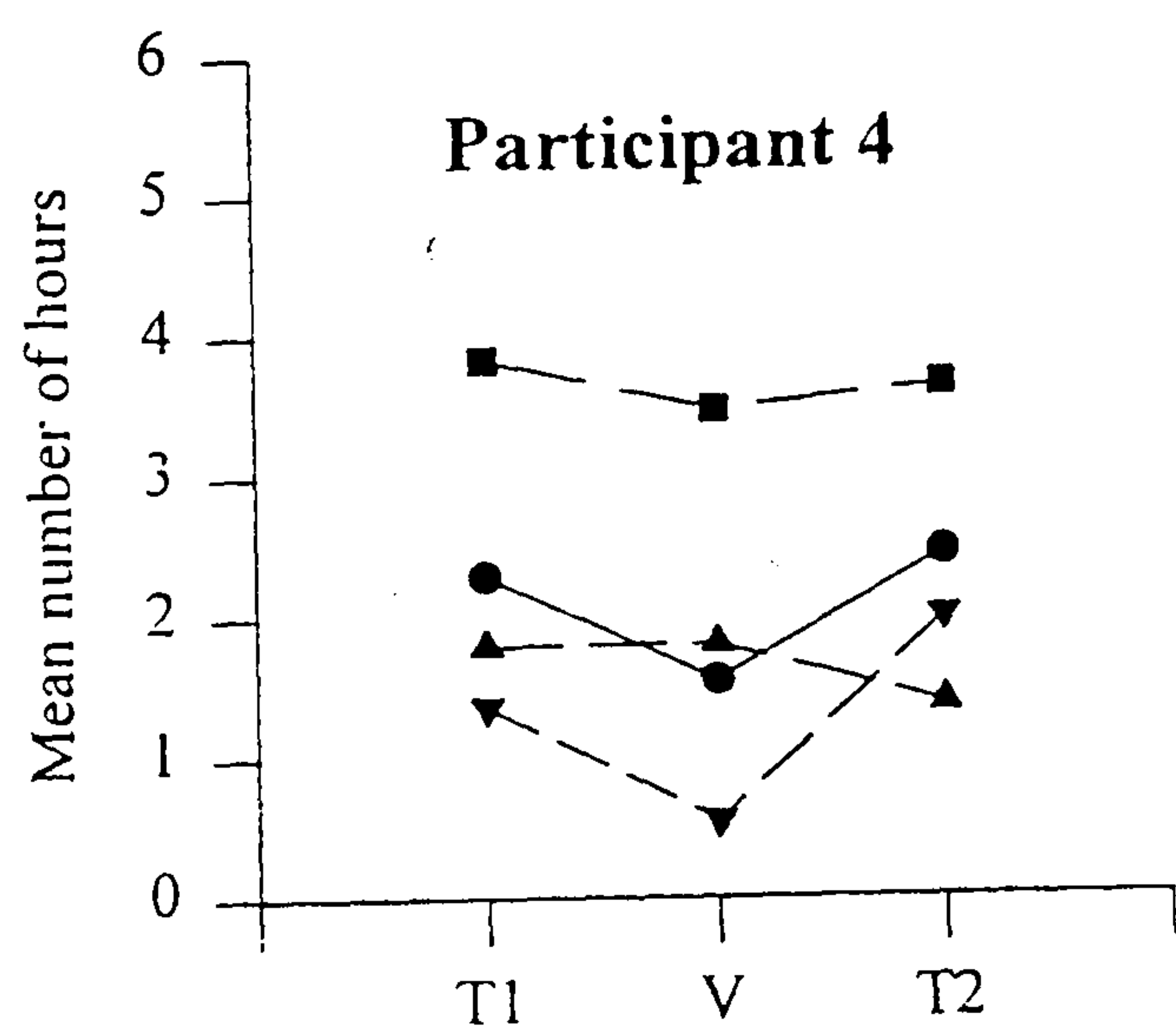
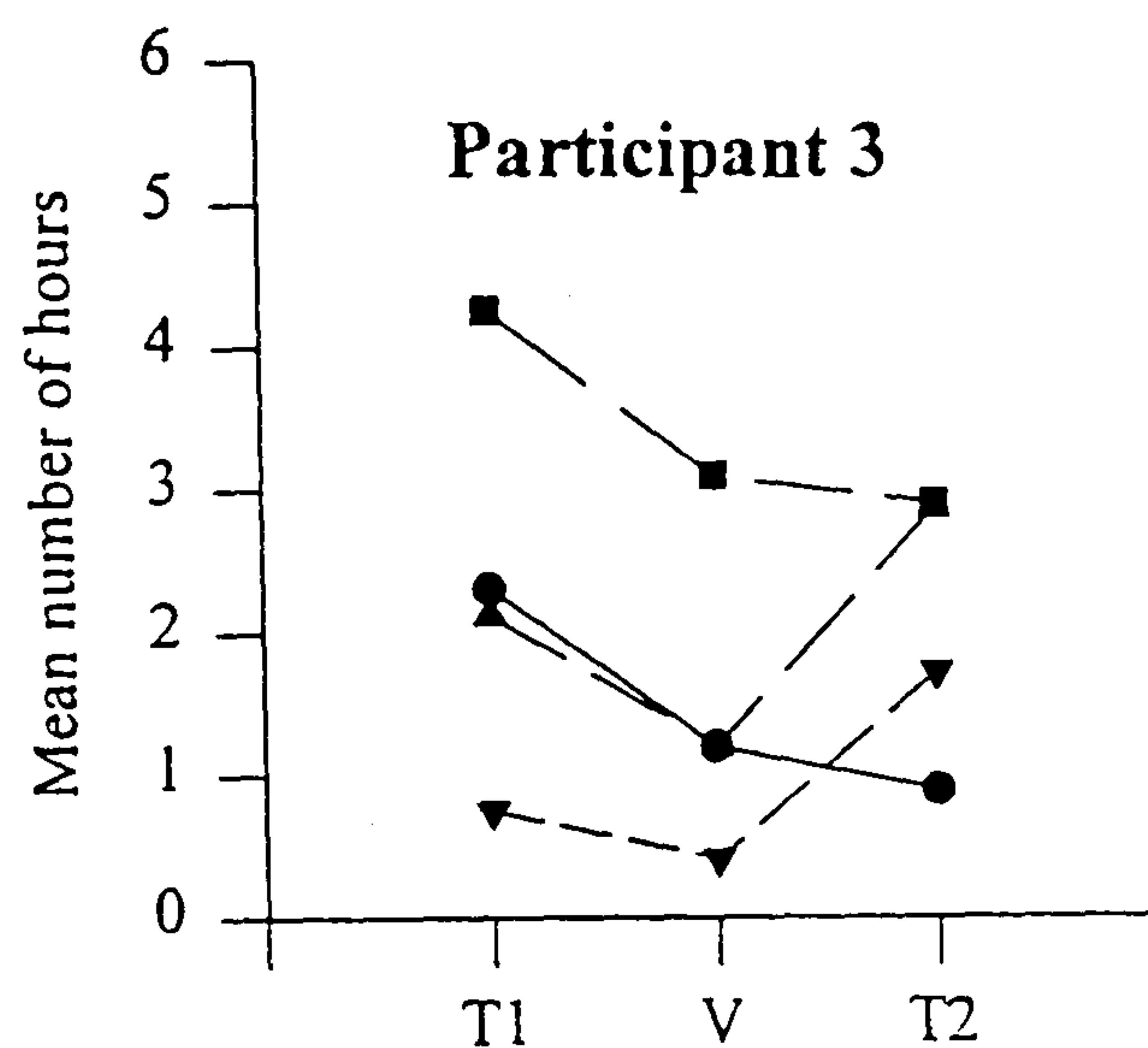
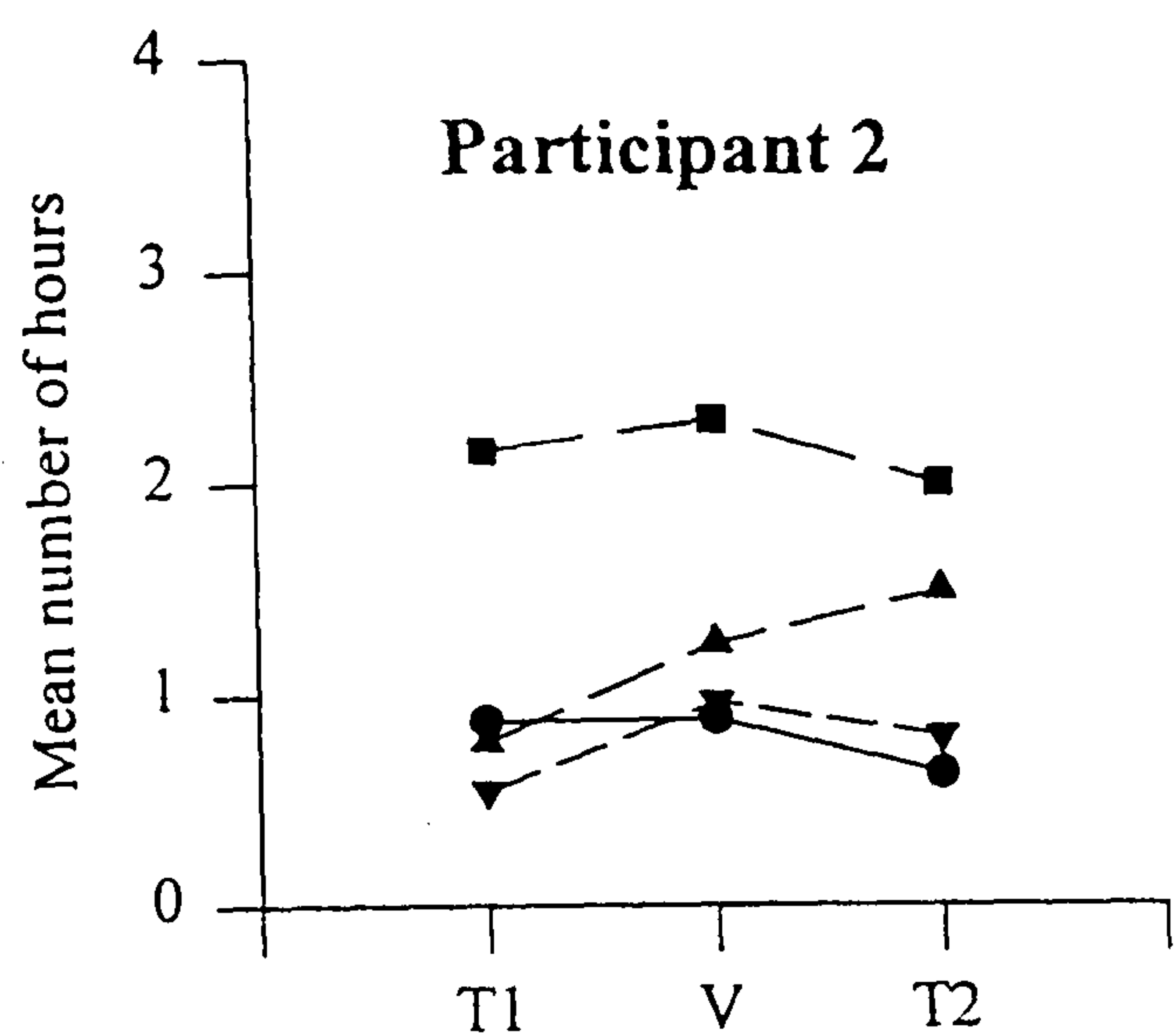
Four language skills

	Focus of language activity	Term 1 54 days	Vacation 4 days	Term 2 70 days	Total 1 128 days	Total 2
1. Speaking	1. Native speaker(s)	48	3	58	109	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	41	2.5	46.5	90	
	3. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	199
2. Listening	1. Native speaker(s)	97.5	3.5	103.5	204.5	
	2. EFL speaker(s)	41	2.5	50	93.5	
	3. TV	70	9	111.5	190.5	
	4. Radio/ CD/ Cassette	88	8	117.5	213.5	
	5. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	702
3. Reading	1. Newspaper(s)	6	0	3	9	
	2. Magazine(s)	22	5.5	36.5	64	
	3. Novel(s)	0	0	0	0	
	4. Academic material	84.5	12.5	159.5	256.5	
	5. Advertisement(s), flyer(s), campus/city affairs	1	0	0.5	1.5	
	6. Information leaflet(s)	0.5	0	0	0.5	
	7. Letter, E-mail	17	1	18	36	
	8. EFL material	0	0	0	0	
	9. Internet	8.5	0	12.5	21	
	10. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	388.5
4. Writing	1. Assignment(s), essay(s)	33	0.5	66	99.5	
	2. Letter, E-mail	11.5	1	12.5	25	
	3. Diary	0	0	0	0	
	4. Other: _____	0	0	0	0	124.5

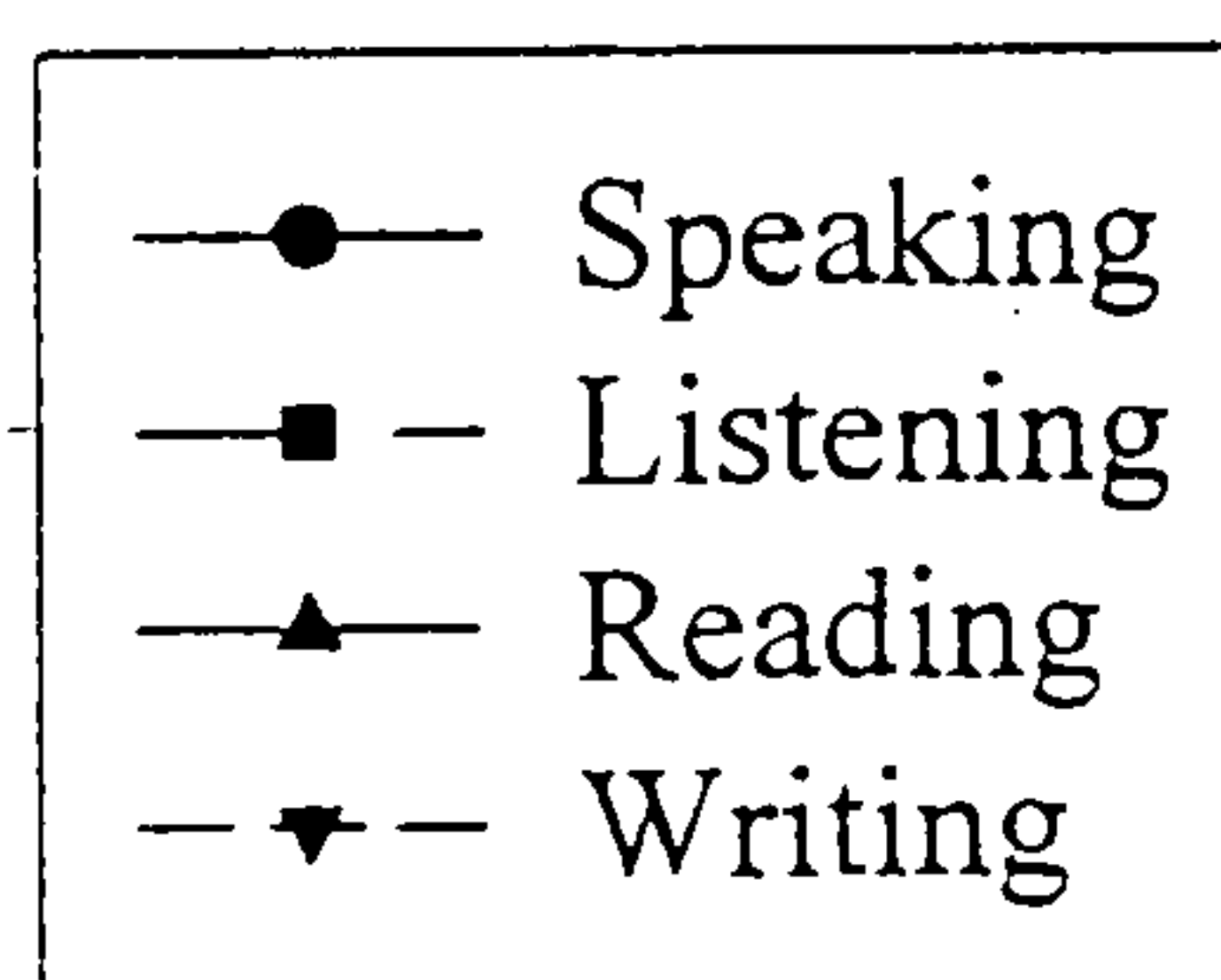
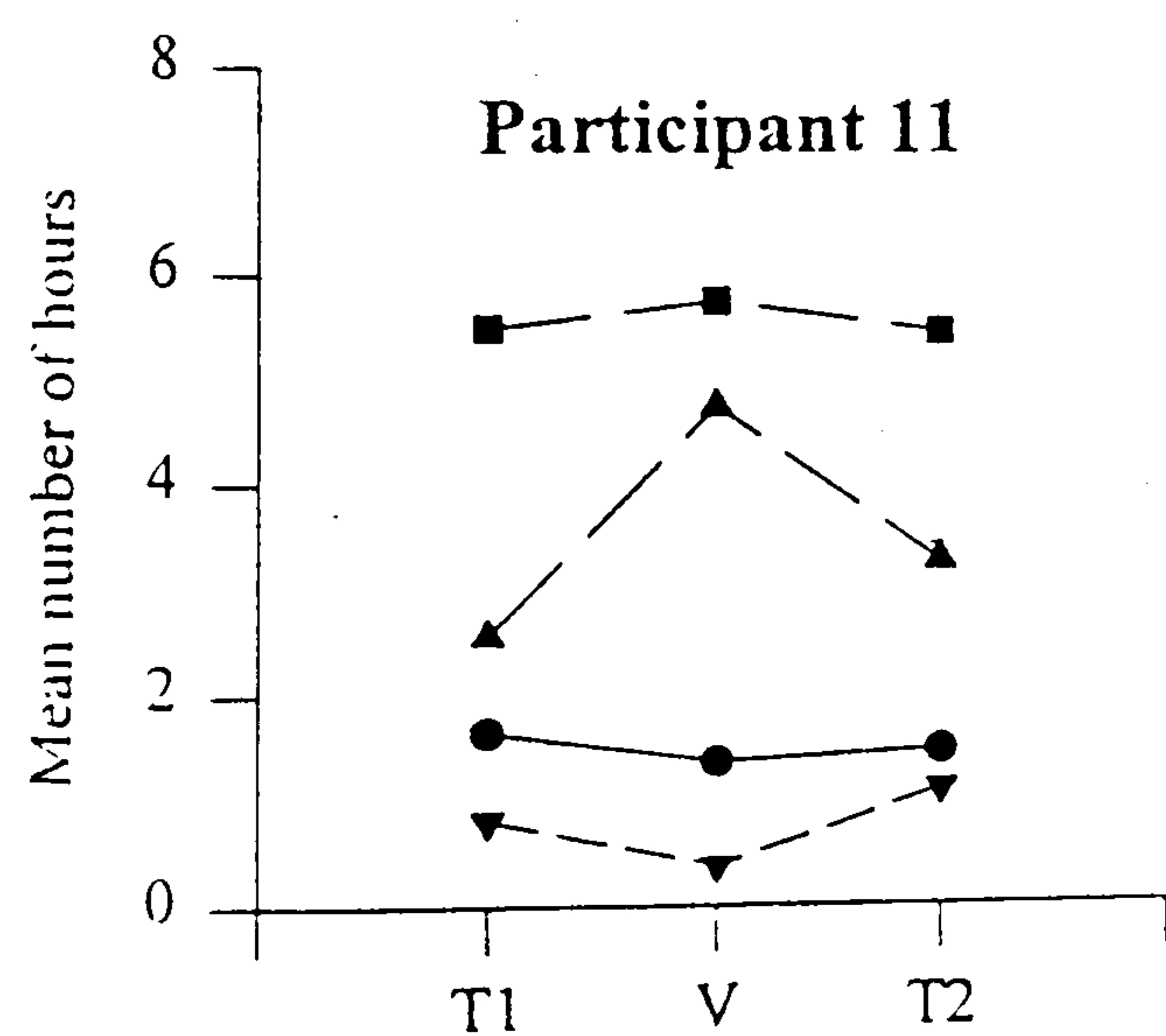
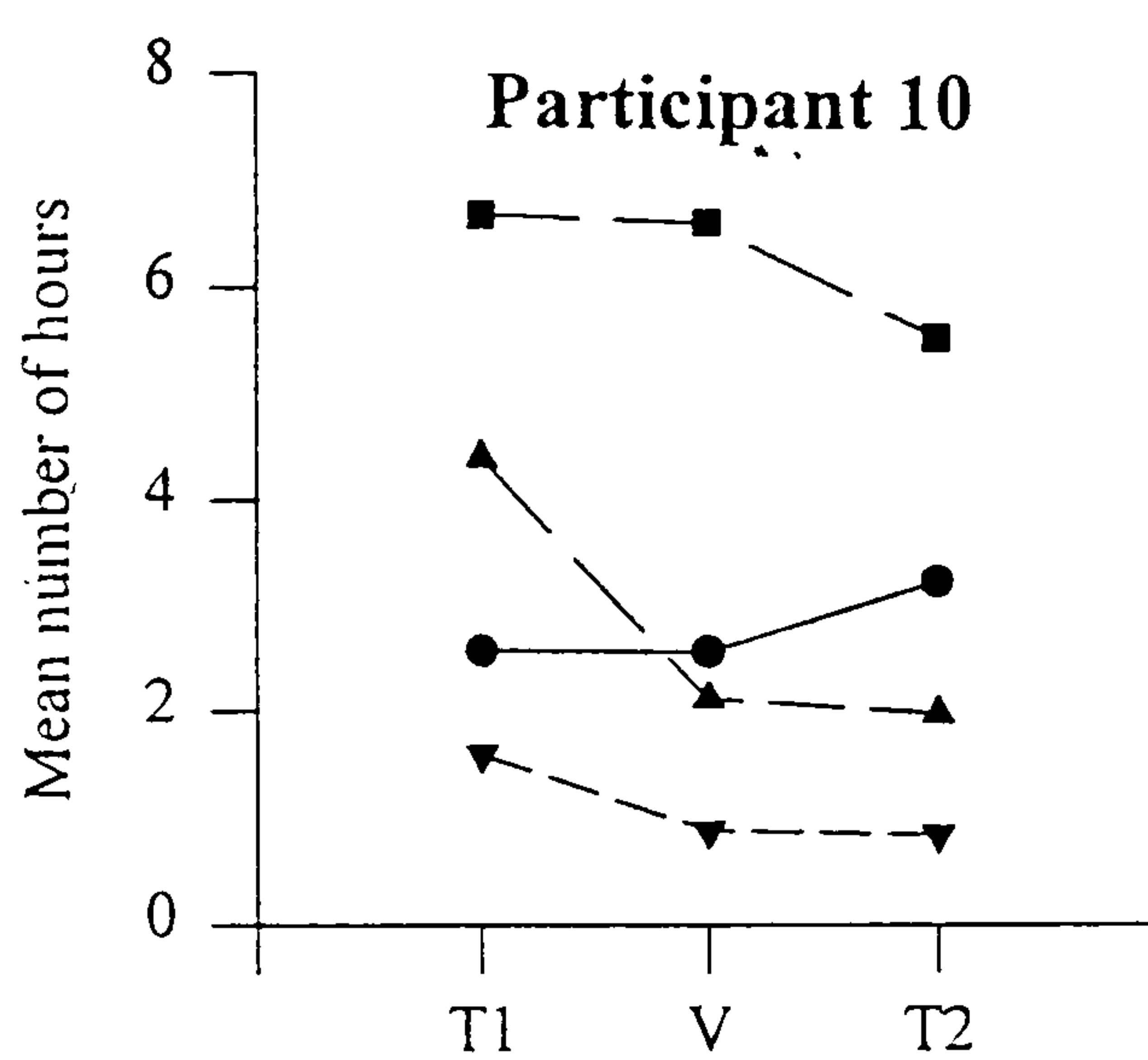
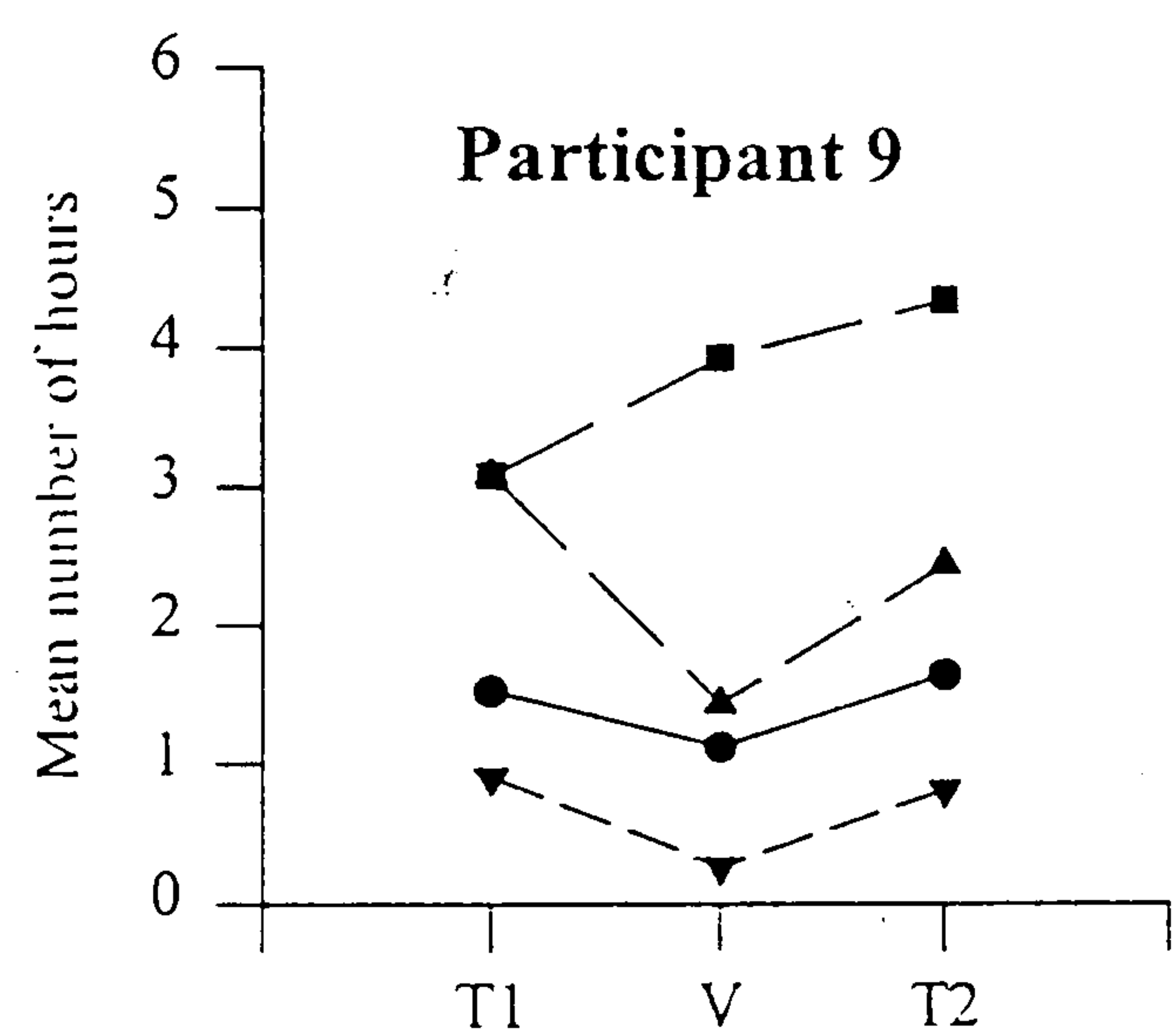
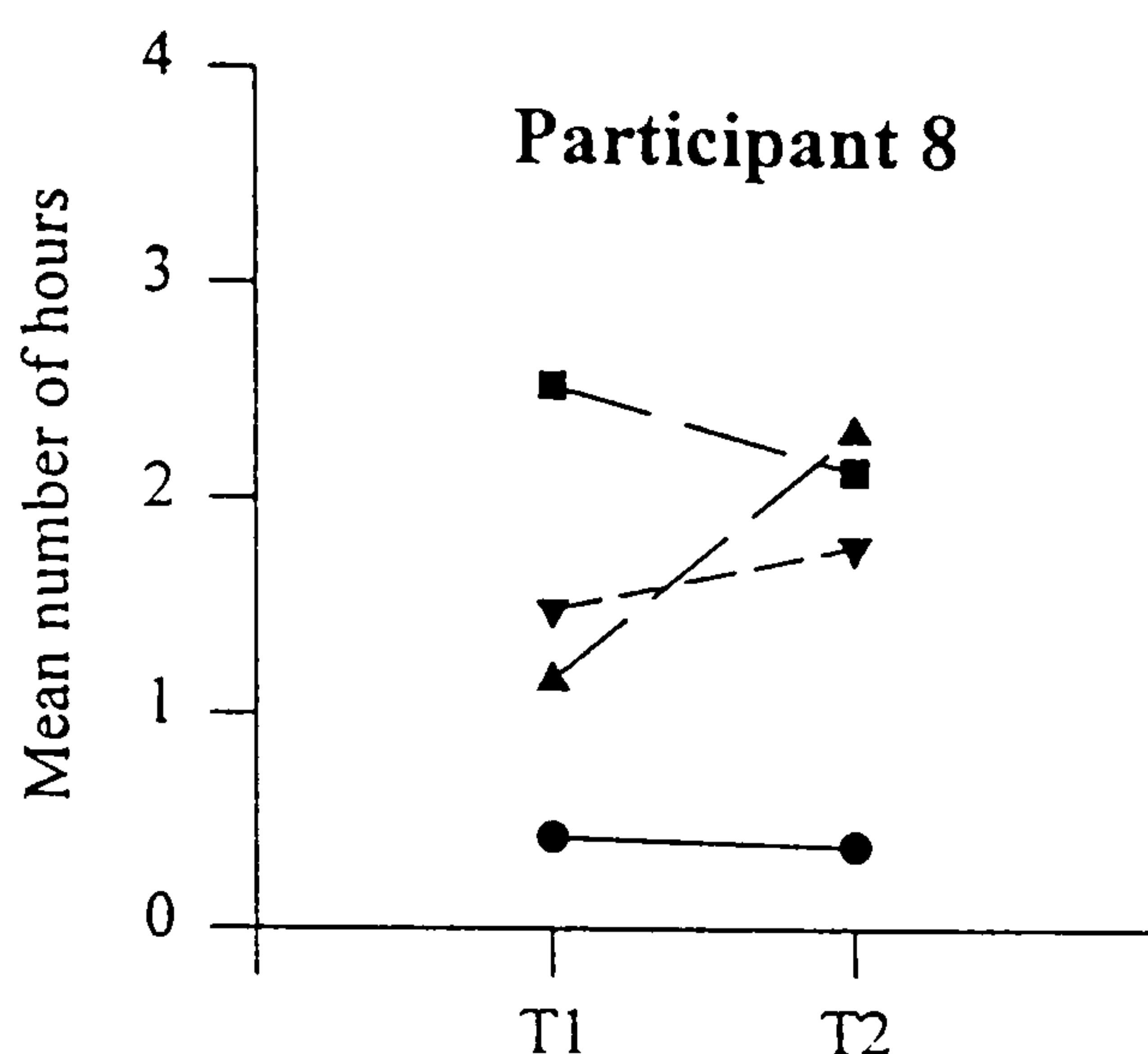
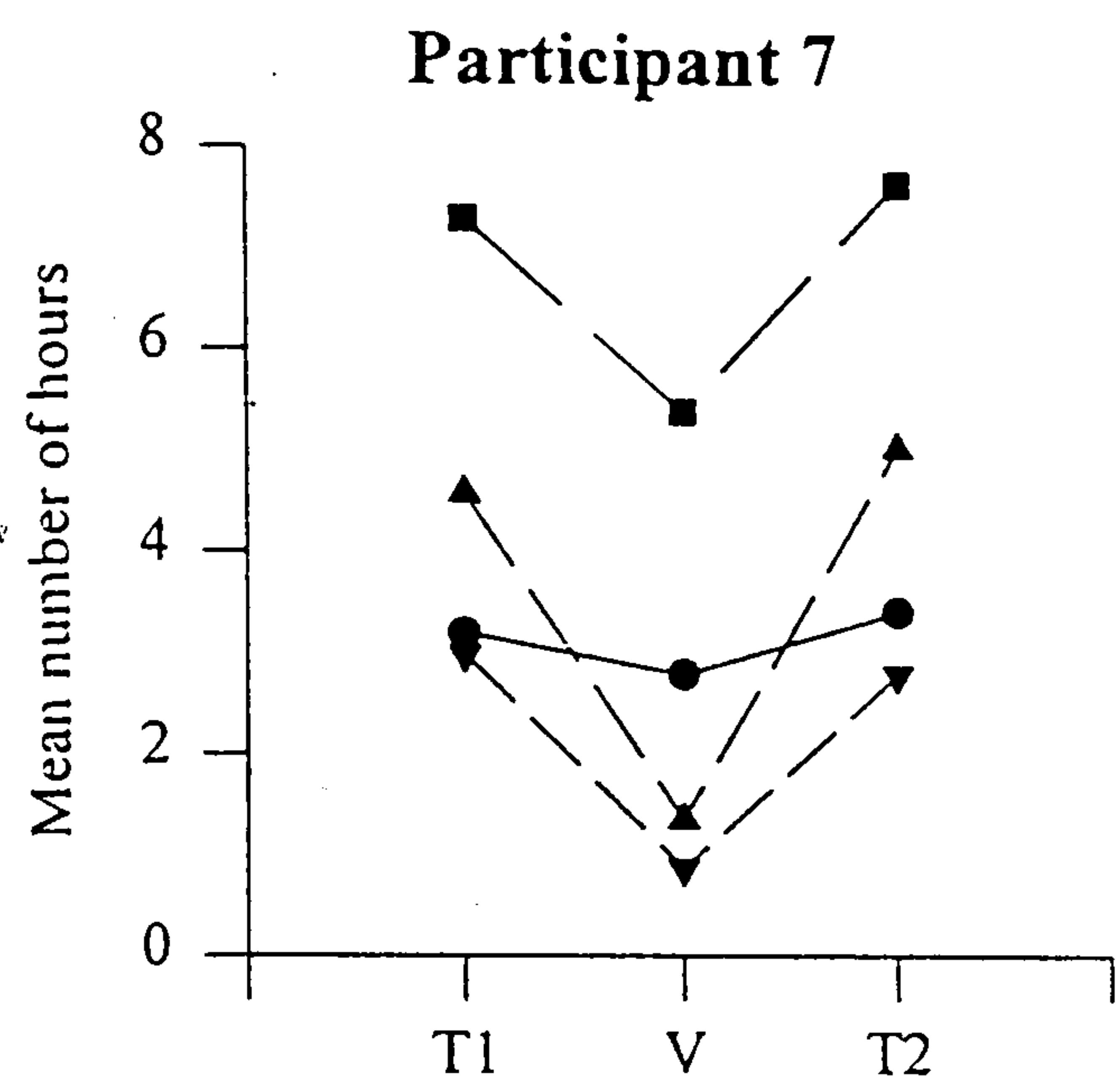
Total 1 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language activity

Total 2 indicates the total hours which the participant spent on the individual language skill

Appendix H. The average time per day which the participants spent on the TL related activities during two term times and the vacation in the research environment



Appendix H (continued). The average time per day which the participants spent on the TL related activities during two term times and the vacation in the research environment



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