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An Analysis of Clause Usage in Academic Texts Produced by African American, Haitian, and Hispanic Community College Students

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AN ANALYSIS OF CLAUSE USAGE IN ACADEMIC TEXTS PRODUCED BY AFRICAN AMERICAN, HAITIAN, AND HISPANIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

By

Wendy Brooks

A DISSERTATION

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AN ANALYSIS OF CLAUSE USAGE IN ACADEMIC TEXTS PRODUCED BY
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The growth of multicultural and multilingual student populations in community colleges has presented difficulties for instructors who teach academic writing. This study was motivated by the desire to understand the challenges faced by novice writers from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds as they grappled with the register features which defined academic writing. One of the major challenges observed in academic texts produced by novice writers has been the tendency to transfer the register features typical of speech into their academic texts. This study examined the writing challenges faced by students from three ethnolinguistic backgrounds in a South Florida community college. More specifically, the study focused on challenges faced by African-American, Haitian, and Hispanic students as they made choices regarding clause structures, one of the many register features of written academic texts.

In addition, the study took the position that academic writing takes place within English-language programs which offer instruction to a range of students in public institutions, including native speakers of Standard English, native speakers of nonstandard dialects of English (for whom Standard English is a second dialect), and nonnative speakers of Standard English (for whom Standard English is a second
Historically, English-language programs have been portrayed as a dichotomy with the underlying assumption that there are only native speakers of Standard English and nonnative speakers of Standard English, the latter being referred to as learners of English as a second language (ESL). This assumption of a dichotomy has excluded speakers of nonstandard dialects of English who are found all over the world due to the contact of indigenous languages with Standard English during the era of the British Empire and after British colonization. Thus, the study acknowledged the existence of post-colonial varieties of English and nonstandard dialects of English in countries which were formerly British colonies. In the United States, for example, African-American Vernacular English, colloquially known as “Ebonics” and formerly known as Black English, is a case in point. Therefore, the study expanded on previous research which had focused on native versus nonnative English speakers (ESL) in English-language programs, by including African American students who are speakers of English as a second dialect (ESD) as well as Generation 1.5 students, who have command of conversational English, come to the U.S. as first or second generation immigrants, and graduated from U.S. high schools, but they lack the written academic skills to perform at the college level.

One of the challenges faced by speakers of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) lies in the fact that the dialect occurs predominantly in spoken discourse; therefore, African Americans come to school with no written frame of reference for their mother tongue when they enter the public school system. These challenges are compounded later when they have to acquire register features of academic texts. In contrast, many Generation 1.5 students such as Haitians and Hispanics speak native
languages, which have standardized orthographies, and these students may come to school having been exposed to register features of written discourse in Haitian Creole (or French) and Spanish.

There are many register features that must be acquired in order to produce academic writing. For example, one of these register features is the specific use of clause structures that characterize academic texts. Based on the foregoing differences among the ethnolinguistic backgrounds of African Americans, Haitians and Hispanics, the study examined whether there were different challenges faced by these students as they made choices regarding clause structure in the academic texts. In other words, the study focused on the following questions: (1) To what extent do African-Americans as ESD students transfer clause structures typical of the registers of spoken discourse into written academic texts? (2) To what extent do Haitians and Hispanics, as Generation 1.5 students, transfer clause structures typical of the registers of spoken discourse into written academic texts? (3) How do these students from the three different ethnolinguistic backgrounds compare with respect to their use of clause structures typical of academic texts?

An analysis of clause structures using writing samples collected from 45 community-college students, 15 from African-American, Haitian and Hispanic students respectively, showed the degree to which the students used hypotactic and paratactic clauses indicative of the speech register instead of the main and embedded clauses characteristic of the written academic register in their writing. As a result, the choice for writing hypotactic and paratactic clauses in written academic discourse was an indication
of the challenges students faced as they struggled with clause-structuring strategies in their academic texts.
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale for Choice of Ethnolinguistic groups</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research questions</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trends in the Research on Second Language Writing: A Historical View</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systemic Functional Linguistics Approach</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field, Tenor and Mode and their Relationships to Registers</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause Structure</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESD and Generation 1.5 Writing Challenges</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESD and Generation 1.5 Students and Systemic Functional Linguistics</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESD and Generation 1.5 Students: Home and School Literacy Practices</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Objectives</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samples and Procedures</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 RESULTS</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Findings</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of Findings</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications of Study</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of Study</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A - Instructions for teachers</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B - Writing prompt</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Types of Clauses</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Questionnaire Responses</td>
<td>70-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics for mean Percentage of Clause by Group</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hypotactic Clauses</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Paratactic Clauses</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics for Mean Percentage of Simple and Complex Main Clauses by Groups</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Main Clauses in Simple Sentences</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Main Clauses in Complex Sentences</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Embedded Clauses</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Examples from Student Essays of Clause Chaining</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Results of Levene’s Test of Homogeneity for Each Clause Type</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Results of ANOVA for Each Clause Type</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Results of Tests of Simple Effects of Gender on Group for Significant Interactions</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Results of Test of Simple effects of Group on Gender for Significant Interactions</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

Introduction

One of the dilemmas facing educators in the United States today is the increasing enrollment of students from varied linguistic backgrounds. This increase of multicultural and multilingual students represents an upsurge in the immigration of families and the growth of the indigenous minority population (Harklau, Siegal, & Losey, 1999). In the United States, Texas, California, Illinois, New York, and Florida have long been affected by this situation; however, to date, the upward trend is frustrating teachers and students in school systems and colleges throughout the country (Harklau et al., 1999). Students from these diverse backgrounds are particularly challenged in the acquisition of literacy skills necessary for the academy, for which a conventional structure dictated by the linguistic conventions of the dominant culture is required. As the demand for accountability and equity in education intensifies, there is a need to examine more effective ways for these students to acquire academic writing.

According to the Florida Community College Fact Book, 46% of community college students in the state of Florida enrolled in the Fall 2007/2008 were linguistic minorities with African-Americans, Hispanics, and Haitians representing the largest student groups (FL Dept. of Education, 2008). For the purpose of this study, African Americans are considered to be language minorities because many speak African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and consequently Standard English (SE) is spoken as a second dialect\(^1\) (ESD). The other large groups of language minority students

\(^1\) Defined by Finegan (1999), a dialect is a variety of language that is shared by a group of people. Dialects can be characteristic of regions, ethnicities, socioeconomic status, or gender groups. Dialects that are favored by the mainstream culture or socially favored culture are considered standard dialects; however,
are Hispanic and Haitian students, some of whom may be fluent in English and have written skills comparable to native speakers entering college, while the English language proficiency of others may range from not being fluent in English and therefore needing English as a second language (ESL) instruction, to being fluent in conversational English but needing instruction in academic English (Valdes, 1992).

This study focuses on the African Americans who speak AAVE and are considered ESD students, as well as a particular segment of the Hispanic and Haitian populations who are not considered ESL learners since they are fluent in conversational English but need instruction in academic English (Valdes, 1992). Distinguished from ESL students, these Hispanics and Haitians have been identified by Rumbaut and Ima (1988) as “Generation 1.5” because they are either first generation or second generation immigrants and come from a non-English speaking background (NELB). For example, they may have come to the U.S. as children or been born here, and therefore are sons and daughters of immigrants (Harklau et al., 1999). In other words, Generation 1.5 students arrive to the U.S. at a very early age, or may even have been born in the U.S., and are educated in U.S. schools, but their knowledge of their primary (i.e., Spanish) and second (English) languages never progresses beyond a social conversational level. This is problematic because Generation 1.5 students typically do not acquire the language of school or the texts used in schools. Additionally, these students may not always be fully integrated into the English language culture, and consequently they are referred to as

dialects that are stigmatized by the mainstream culture are called nonstandard. The judgment has nothing to do with the complexity of the linguistic system (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 1998).  

2 Academic English refers to the Standard English required at school and reflective of the type of language spoken by the mainstream dominant culture.  

3 Both ESD and Generation 1.5 students are offended if they are designated as ESL students; after all, they are not “foreign” (Blanton, 1999).
language minorities (Chiang & Schmida, 1999). For the purposes of this study, Hispanic participants will be limited to those students who are from the Spanish-speaking areas of the Caribbean, Central America, and Latin America.

After taking college placement tests (CPT), those who are considered to be ESD and Generation 1.5 language minority students often need instruction in academic English and may be placed in Prep English (developmental) classes (Blanton, 1999; Valdes, 1992). They have faced many challenges in the public school system, particularly, in acquiring written academic discourse. However, since the difficulties were not previously accurately identified and addressed, they continue to exhibit similar, and eventually more complex, writing challenges as community college students. In order to achieve the skill of academic writing, students must learn to understand the functions of different linguistic forms and to acquire and manipulate them by choosing the appropriate lexical and grammatical features that construe the written academic register (Schleppegrell, 2001). Since African Americans, Hispanics, and Haitians come from speech communities that differ from those of native English speakers, who represent the dominant culture, they face unique challenges in acquiring the lexical and the grammatical resources that are characteristic of the written register.

Registers

Registers, as defined by Schleppegrell (2004), are configurations of certain lexical and grammatical resources that are appropriate for particular language use within a particular discourse context. For instance, there are different lexical and grammatical resources that are typical of both the register of spoken discourse and the register of written discourse. This means that the register that is appropriate for spoken discourse
would not always be appropriate for written academic discourse. For this reason, students need to choose words, phrases, and clause\(^4\) structures to realize the appropriate register features of academic writing depending on the particular writing task. One case in point is that in speech or spoken registers, there are dialogic interactions of the participants that contain “precise” lexical and grammatical choices such as the use of certain conjunctions, chain-linking clauses\(^5\), shorter and fewer clauses, and less lexical density\(^6\). On the other hand, the registers of written academic English are characterized by monologic organization, nominalizations\(^7\) and nominal group structures, which are used to create embedded clauses and facilitate lexical density (Schleppegrell, 2001). All of these register features will be discussed in the next chapter. Based on the foregoing definition of register and how it relates to spoken and written discourse, it is clear that register features are subtle but pervasive. This means that while a teacher can recognize that a writing sample lacks the sophistication needed for academic writing, he/she may not be able to detect what is contributing to this lack of writing complexity (Clachar, 2004).

*Functional Language Analysis*

In his explanation of register, Halliday (1994) states that it is important to understand the functions of language in order to conceptualize the meaning of registers. He identifies three semantic components of register that are realized through the lexical

---

\(^4\) A clause is defined by Finegan (1999) as being a unit of syntax with a verb (verb phrase) that can stand alone (simple sentence) or be part (constituent) of another clause (embedded or subordinated to).

\(^5\) Clause chaining is a continuing linkage of clauses in conversation usually with the conjunction “and”.

\(^6\) Lexical density as defined by Halliday(1994) counts the number of content words for each non-embedded clause in a text. To tabulate lexical density, Halliday takes a proportion of the number of content words to the entire discourse. Academic registers have more content words and thus more information within a clause.

\(^7\) Also called a grammatical metaphor, nominalization occurs when an adjective or verb is “nominalized” by becoming a noun (ex. prefer becomes preference; poor becomes poverty). This creates nominal group structure with the noun acting as subject or object in a sentence.
and grammatical choices writers make as they respond to the particular requirements of the written academic texts. These are the ideational, interpersonal, and textual semantic components, simultaneously appearing in the structure of every English clause (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008).

First, the ideational component, also known as field, is the social context in which language occurs, as well as the content of language. It refers to the information or the conglomeration of ideas that is conveyed by clauses. More specifically, the ideational component or the field is what is talked about in spoken and conversational discourse or what is written about in academic discourse (Schleppegrell, 2004).

The second component of register is the interpersonal or semantic component known as tenor, which indicates the social relationship between the speaker and the listener in spoken or conversational discourse, as well as the relationship between the writer and the reader in written texts (Schleppegrell, 2004). Thus, the interpersonal component of register is related to phenomena such as power status, emotional relations, and the degree of familiarity between the speaker and the listener as well as the writer and the reader. In light of this fact, the interpersonal component of register is represented by the lexical and grammatical resources, expressing various stances and positions of the speaker/listener in speech or of the writer/reader in written discourse.

The third component of register is the textual, or what is also referred to as the mode. The textual refers to the mode or medium through which language is communicated, whether it is spoken or written (Schleppegrell, 2004). Therefore, the textual component of register is realized through the lexical and grammatical resources of language chosen by the speaker or the writer, which, in turn, is structured and organized.
into clauses. These three components of register (ideational, interpersonal, and textual) will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

Clause Structure

One important feature of register is clause structure. Some clause structures are typical of the register features of spoken or oral discourse, and some clause structures are characteristic of the register features of written academic discourse. As students respond to written academic tasks, the ability to use appropriate clause structure can be a mark of understanding the register required in a particular context. Therefore, by examining language in its written form, particularly clause structure, students are able to identify and analyze the differences between the lexical and grammatical resources of the spoken register and those of the written register (Scheppegrell, 1998).

Since there are clause-structuring strategies that are appropriate for spoken or conversational discourse, and concomitantly that are not appropriate for written academic discourse, the challenge for many language minority college students is to recognize and use the clause-structuring strategies that are typical and thus appropriate for written academic discourse. Generally, novice writers, and in particular linguistic minorities, transfer the clause–structuring strategies that are characteristic of speech or spoken discourse into their academic writing (Schleppegrell, 2004). This study will focus on four types of clause-structures: (1) main, and (2) embedded clauses (typical of written academic discourse) as well as (3) paratactic and (4) hypotactic clauses ( typical of spoken or oral discourse). The primary goal of the investigation was to focus on the extent to which students from three ethnolinguistic
backgrounds transferred the register features of paratactic and hypotactic clauses into their written academic discourse.

**Rationale for the Choice of the Three Ethnolinguistic Minorities**

In community colleges, the language minority population is growing. One major difficulty facing educators is the need to recognize and address the cultural and language disparities that exist when these students attend school (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Heath, 1983; Silva, 1997). Another is the need to examine ways for students who are from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds to acquire the academic skills that will help them perform various writing tasks at the postsecondary level. A third difficulty that educators in community colleges must recognize and address is the use of students’ patterns of oral discourse and their tendency to produce these same patterns in written academic discourse. Moreover, if educators are not aware of such subtle features of the register of academic discourse, they are not likely to teach these features explicitly to students. For example, the register of spoken discourse tends to use clause-chaining strategies (paratactic clauses) whereas the register of written academic discourse tends to pack information in very compact ways (embedded clauses) (Schleppegrell, 1998; Finegan, 1999) (see Table 1).
### Types of Clauses

<table>
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</table>
| **Clause Chaining**| 1. We used to get everyone together and we’d have a picnic but when the telephone was invented we could talk and we didn’t have to make plans to visit.  
2. The dog barked and the children woke up from their naps so they were cranky. |
| **Compact Clauses**| 1. The invention of the telephone has made it easier to talk with everyone. (This example is from Schleppegrell, 2004)  
2. The barking dog woke the cranky children from their naps. |

If current immigration trends continue, larger numbers of language minority students will be enrolled in basic writing courses in community colleges since many do not have an understanding of how clause structure, as one of the register features of written academic texts, affects their ability to produce academic discourse.

In addition to structural knowledge of language mentioned in the above section, students need social experience in order to understand the functional purposes for using different registers and know what is required in the academic register. This experience allows them to make the appropriate linguistic choices by responding to their perception of the social context and by constructing the text accordingly. Halliday (1994) states that using language is a social process\(^8\) that is dependent on the purpose for which it is used; students need to know how to construct meaning for different social contexts. To this end, there is a certain degree of difficulty that students with an inadequate level of

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\(^8\) Halliday uses the word “process” as something ongoing and continuously evolving. Language is a process and learning the social meanings associated with certain situations is a social process. Also, nominalization is a process; changing verbs into nouns to create lexical density (itself a process) is a process.
sociolinguistic skills and social experience have in acquiring the register features of academic discourse and attaining success in school. For example, students who come from a social class and cultural background that is aligned with the mainstream dominant culture already have an easier access to the register features of the academic world (Heath, 1983). However, it is often assumed by educators and policy makers that students who come from another language or dialect background will learn to use academic English, the dominant discourse, simply by being exposed to it. This assumption precludes opportunities for instruction and development of sociolinguistic skills that are needed in order to make the students aware of the requisite academic skills. The assumption also lies in the history of second-language writing research, an issue taken up in the next chapter.

Until recently, the area of second-language writing research has treated programs for English-language learners (ELL’s) as if they represent dichotomies of native speakers of English versus ESL learners (Matsuda, 1999; Valdes, 1992). This means that research has concerned itself with these two groups and therefore excluded students who are speakers of nonstandard dialects of English, such as African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), or speakers for whom Standard English is a second dialect (hereafter, ESD) as distinct populations (Clachar, 2003). In other words, the literature generally includes AAVE speakers with native English speaking populations despite agreements among linguists that AAVE has its own structure (Rickford, 1999). In addition, these dichotomies have also confused Generation 1.5 students who come from a background other than English, but who are U.S. high school graduates, with international students who come to the U.S. for post-secondary education (Harklau et al., 1999; Roberge, 2009).
This study attempted to address the shortcoming of the native English speaker versus the ESL student dichotomy by including speakers of AAVE representing ESD speakers, and Generation 1.5 representing NELB speakers as participants belonging to distinct English speaking populations. The goal was to ascertain whether AAVE speakers as ESD’s, encountered different challenges than Generation 1.5 students as NELB’s in their acquisition of clause structures typical of written academic discourse. The following section describes the linguistic profile of AAVE speakers of an ESD and the hypothesized effect of this profile on the acquisition and use of clauses characteristic of written academic discourse.

**AAVE.** One of the main distinctions of AAVE is that it shows considerable vocabulary overlap with Standard English (SE), but differs from SE with respect to the morphological and syntactic systems. The fact that there is a lexical overlap between SE and AAVE makes it difficult for the AAVE speaker to discern the grammatical differences between how he speaks and the written academic register required in school. Since AAVE occurs mainly in spoken or oral discourse, AAVE-speaking students come to school with no written frame of reference for their native tongue and, therefore, are less sensitive to register features of written academic discourse (Clachar, 2004). It follows that they face challenges in acquiring these register features during their school years and concomitantly, often enter community colleges without the knowledge of such features (Harklau et al., 1999).

Other language minority students, in contrast, such as Generation 1.5 students who are speakers of Haitian Creole and Spanish, have native languages that are phonologically, morphologically, lexically, and syntactically different from English. In
contrast with AAVE, these languages have standard orthographies, and therefore Creole and Spanish speakers may come to school with a written frame of reference for their first languages. For example, they may have been exposed to newspapers and literature in Haitian Creole (or French) and Spanish and thus, have had the opportunity to become sensitized to specific register features of written academic discourse such as clause structure.

My interest in doing this study was piqued by the large number (46%) of linguistic minorities in Florida community colleges, as well as listening to the frustrations of fellow community college professors who find themselves in classrooms with language minority students from diverse language experiences. For this reason, I focused on a major aspect of written academic discourse which poses challenges for ESD and Generation 1.5 students - clause structure- one of the register features that distinguishes the chain-linking of clauses in speech or oral discourse from the compactness of content words creating the lexical density found in written academic discourse. The analysis of the clause-structuring strategies of African-Americans, Hispanics, and Haitians, many of whom are struggling in the educational system, may help in understanding the errors that are made by ethnolinguistically diverse students and promote understanding that will eventually give support to both the students and educators in the classroom.

Research Questions

In light of the different linguistic backgrounds of African-American students (ESD’s) and Haitian and Hispanic students (Generation 1.5’s), it seemed feasible to question whether these three ethnolinguistic minorities which make up a very large population of the community colleges in Florida, do grapple with, acquire, and use
unfamiliar register features of academic discourse in unique ways. Based on the foregoing, this study hypothesized that AAVE-speaking students were more likely to draw on the clause structures of spoken discourse in their academic writing than their Generation 1.5 counterparts. Therefore, the main questions which guided this study were: (1) To what extent do African-Americans as ESD students transfer clause structures typical of the registers of spoken or conversational discourse into written academic discourse? (2) To what extent do Haitians and Hispanics as Generation 1.5 students transfer clause structure typical of the registers of spoken or conversational discourse into written academic discourse? (3) Do AAVE-speaking students as ESD’s show a higher frequency of clauses typical of speech than their Haitian and Hispanic Generation 1.5 counterparts
CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

The questions posed in Chapter I reflect the ongoing challenges that African Americans as ESD students and Haitians and Hispanics as Generation 1.5 students in higher education face as they acquire the register features of written academic discourse. The specific focus of this study was to analyze the register feature of clause structure used by ESD and Generation 1.5 students in their academic writing. The first section of this chapter reviews the history of second-language writing research and some of the more important pedagogical approaches to second-language writing, which have emerged from the research. The second section focuses on current trends in second-language research, particularly systemic functional linguistics and its approach to understanding clause structure in the production of academic writing. The last section of the chapter addresses the writing challenges faced by ESD and Generation 1.5 students.

Trends in the Research on Second Language Writing: A Historical Overview

Recently, there has been interest in addressing the literacy needs of the diverse groups of language minority students that exist today (Matsuda & De Pew, 2002). For almost forty years the focus of second language writing on college campuses has been on the international student (EFL-English as a foreign language) and neglected the language disparities of the indigenous and immigrant populations (Harklau, et al., 1999).

Product Approach

The relatively short history of modern second language writing began with Charles Fries, the linguist, and the oral approach in 1945, which was implemented as an EFL language teaching approach. The oral approach emphasized listening and producing
speech; thus, writing was considered incidental and merely supportive of the theory that language was speech, and as a representation of speech, it would be accomplished by forming habits (Matsuda, 2003). The linguistic influence regarded writing simply as speech written down (Harklau, 2001); in fact, writing was secondary to listening, speaking, and reading (Silva, 1990). Soon, the oral approach led to the audio-lingual approach, popular in the 1950’s and 1960’s for teaching foreign languages by emphasizing speech through grammar patterns, drills, and listening labs (Leki, Cumming, Silva, 2008).

Since the focus was on teaching international students or EFL’s⁹, there was no specific direction for ESL instruction and especially ESL writing until 1966 after the TESL/TESOL Association (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) was established (Matsuda, 2003). The creation of TESOL was helpful because it stimulated more second language (L2)¹⁰ research (Matsuda, 2003). Until that point, ESL instruction had been influenced both by the audio-lingual approach and composition studies, although neither area had specifically addressed the needs of the ESL student (Matsuda, 1998). In fact, it wasn’t until the 1990’s that the concept of L2 writing expanded and became a legitimate area of concentration, distinct from EFL (Silva, 1990, Matsuda, 2003).

By the 1960’s, the increase in the number of college-level ESL and international students brought an awareness of ESL students’ language needs, which were different than those of a native speaker or EFL student (Matsuda, 2003). Thus, it became apparent

⁹ Although EFL’s and international students come under the very large umbrella of ESL, in this study, they are distinguished from ESL students as students who may be on a student visa and have not immigrated.

¹⁰ L2 refers to someone who is learning a second language, but it does not have the political innuendo of ESL. Many students don’t mind being referred to as an L2, but they are offended at being designated ESL.
at the college level that the first language/second language dichotomy was not realistic and could not cover the diverse language levels, which now include many native speakers speaking non-native varieties of English (Valdes, 1992). For that reason, ESL students could not be identified in a single category; their language abilities and needs fit on a continuum.

Throughout the 1960’s the product approach to second-language writing was pervasive, but there was a need to respond to what the student needed to know, the purpose of the writing, and the audience. However, the trend was still to teach and learn language by focusing on errors and the end product produced by the ESL student with an emphasis on form and correction of each error (Silva, 1990). At that time, written language was still viewed structurally as a product consisting of a system of grammatical rules and as a model of the expected pattern of written work that was presented by teachers for students to imitate. The writing approach was called controlled composition, a habit-forming theory that emphasized learning sentence structure through imitation (Silva, 1990). Although composition was part of the title, there was no composing. Instead, the focus was on learning to manipulate grammatical forms and avoid error (Silva & Leki, 2004).

Not all researchers agreed with controlled composition because the approach was not concerned with readers and how they were likely to interpret what students wrote, nor did it identify the purpose of the writing task. As a result, a more lenient version of guided composition, which focused on imitating a text, was implemented. In fact, at this time some researchers were calling for free writing and an approach postulating that writers should have some control over what they wrote even though the majority of
researchers like Pincas (1964) still supported a focus on formal accuracy and error correction.

The proponents of the product approach conceived writing as a skill, which was created in the context of developing and perfecting good habits by reinforcing grammar and using well-formed sentences as well as language patterns (Hyland, 2003). Again, this perspective had drawbacks since assessment of written academic texts was about contexts. For example, improvement in writing was evaluated by how well ESL students could compose complex sentences and how well they were able to use accurate grammar. In his critique of the product approach, Hyland states “No feature can be a universal marker of good writing because good writing is always contextually variable” (2003, p.5). Finally, the interest in focusing on errors in compositions diminished when researchers realized that the focus ignored the ideational content of what the writer was composing (Raimes, 1991). Eventually, in the mid 1960’s there was a push to bridge the gap between controlled writing and free writing, taught in college level composition courses (Silva, 1990).

**Contrastive Rhetoric**

In 1966, Kaplan introduced an approach called contrastive rhetoric that started moving away from a focus on the product. With this theory, Kaplan began to look at the process approach, advocated by composition studies, and examine the cross-cultural writing styles of L2 students using contrastive rhetoric as a framework. The main point was to look at the logical construction and the arrangement of discourse forms in paragraphs (Silva, 1990). Kaplan theorized that the organization of the text is different among languages, and contrasting texts in the teaching of writing is helpful to L2
students in acquiring academic discourse since the linear development of the English language can be contrasted with other languages through imitation of paragraphs or essays (Kaplan, 1967). Kaplan’s theory supported the realization that language is about experience (Matsuda, 2003). Comparing writers who are native English speakers with writers who are L2 students, Kaplan (1966) states that L2 students often express “a rhetoric and a sequence of thought that violate the expectations of the native reader”\(^\text{11}\) (p. 4). Thus, teachers and researchers need to be aware that L2 students are coming from a different experience and may be used to structuring texts differently in their L1 (Raimes, 1991). In 1988, Purves did a similar study of writing samples throughout fourteen countries. He provided a cross-cultural description of the state of writing and recognized that contrastive rhetoric reflected in the written product was not a pedagogical issue, but a link between culture and writing since his data supported the theory that rhetoric often varies from one culture to another.

\textit{Process Approach}

As a reaction to “focus on error” and “product approaches,” the 1970s triggered an interest not only in the errors made in writing, but also in the cognitive processes students use to create texts (Kroll & Shafer, 1978; Zamel, 1976). The movement was toward process and meaning by looking not only at patterns of errors but also their causes (Kroll & Schafer, 1978). At the same time, parallel interests were emerging in applied linguistics and composition studies. In applied linguistics, there was an interest in bilingualism and multiculturalism and the growing linguistic minority population, while in composition studies there was acknowledgement of language and cultural diversity of students. Writing was beginning to be perceived as an interdisciplinary field, and the

\(^{11}\) Kaplan (1967) states that rhetoric is a “method of organizing syntactic units into larger patterns.”
process approach with an interest in composing and conveying ideas and expressing meaning was embraced (Silva & Leki, 2004). Now, different perspectives evolved: a focus on the writer, a focus on the content, and a focus on the reader (Raimes, 1991); each will be discussed in the following sections. At last, attention had shifted from the forms and patterns of the text to the writer as the creator of the text (Raimes, 1991).

Focus on the writer. By the 1970s and 1980s, the focus was on the social stance and personal perspective of the writer. In this way, the student could self-discover and self-express without dwelling on grammatical or lexical errors; he could create meaning that could be imparted to his readers (Flower, 1989). It was a “non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discovered and reformulated their ideas as they attempted to approximate meaning” (Zamel, 1983, p.165). At this time, encouraging students to focus on ideas and organization took precedence over grammatical accuracy (Raimes, 1991). Many studies supported the emphasis on process over product (Cumming, 1989; Friedlander, 1990), but some said growth was limited in the field because there were not enough case studies in the prevailing literature to support generalizations about the advantages of the process approach (Krapels, 1990; Raimes, 1991).

One benefit of the process approach was that it encouraged creative expression; the L2 writer was allowed to explore his thoughts. However, there was disagreement about the value of attention to the writer. For instance, some researchers noted that focus on the writer was not beneficial to the L2 student’s acquisition of writing skills because it did not address his cultural differences, social requirements, and communicative needs. In addition, the belief was that too much attention was paid to the writer and his inner
thoughts (Hyland, 2003). Horowitz (1986b) stated that there was too much emphasis on the writer’s meaning and that this approach did not focus on what was important to second-language writers: the social relevance of the written texts, the role that language plays, and the organization of the text to foster the acquisition of writing skills. In fact, many researchers viewed this new approach as unsuitable for academic requirements (Hyland, 2003). The argument was that L2 writers first needed to learn that different lexical and grammatical forms perform different communicative functions for different meanings before they could use this knowledge to respond to different writing tasks (Raimes, 1991).

*Focus on content.* Some who did not agree with a preoccupation with the writer supported a focus on content. In 1972, Hymes theorized that language could not be looked at in isolation; it needed to be considered jointly with the context. Soon after, Mohan (1979) concurred with Hymes’s theory and also recommended a content approach. By the early 1980s, the focus had shifted to content, and thus, there was more interest in content and the topics students wrote about than in form. “Focus on product alone, without consideration of the contexts of writing and the process through which a text is developed, can result in formulaic responses that do not make the full range of meanings that the student is capable of producing” (Schleppegrell, 2004, p.149).

However, the content approach was not always easy for L2 students because of their lack of familiarity and experience with topical issues in the content areas, such as history, science, and math; also, it did not teach students how to respond to the many required academic written tasks (Hyland, 2003). As a result, reactions to studies of L2 students’ writing in content areas were controversial. One caveat expressed by Raimes (1991) was
that an L2 class tied to content would be limited by the genre\textsuperscript{12} required for that course while an L2 class that was not tied to content would not be confined to one style. For example, different content classes, such as history or science classes, had different requirements for style and demanded different writing tasks, so writing in the content area precluded an L2 student from learning any other writing style than what was required for that class.

\textit{Focus on the reader.} As a result of the criticisms leveled at the focus on content, a third approach developed that focused on the reader or audience as one of the demands of academic writing (Horowitz, 1986b). By focusing on the reader, the teaching of academic writing was seen “as socialization into the academic community - not as humanistic therapy” (Horowitz, 1986c, p. 789). The reader was perceived as an individual not only in the classroom, but also as a member of an audience outside the classroom. In fact, the reader could be a reference to a named or unnamed body that becomes the target community for whom the writer is constructing his text. For instance, communicating to readers in environments that are familiar, such as home, classroom, and workplace, is easier because of a “shared community schema” that the writer has with the audience which tends to facilitate processing of the information (Hyland, 2003, p. 25). In contrast, communicating to readers in unfamiliar and new social environments is more difficult because of a lack of shared knowledge and an inability to anticipate the reader’s needs.

According to proponents of the focus on the reader, the L2 student’s success in academic writing is incumbent upon being able to adapt to different styles of writing for various discourse communities. Therefore, having knowledge of how to write for the

\textsuperscript{12} Genre as defined by Schleppegrell (2004, p. 82) refers to usage of a particular text or discourse type.
target discourse community enables writers, readers, and the text to interact meaningfully since successful writers are able to foretell the perspective and the needs of the target readers. However, it takes a great deal of experience to work with different contexts, personal interactions, and audiences so that the writer and the reader can easily share their knowledge as members of the same discourse community. For instance, different discourse communities require knowledge of different forms, processes, and content, and the writer still has to adhere to a certain form (Hyland, 2003) even if the audience is unknown to the writer.

Finally, it is important for L2 students to learn to be cognizant of an audience or reader and write clearly by paying attention to purpose, meaning, and structure. Their culture and language backgrounds in particular, influence ESD and Generation 1.5 students, so teachers and students need to be aware that the expectations of the audience may differ among cultures (Hyland, 2003), as well as disciplines (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008). On the other hand, if students have had a successful experience in writing in their native languages, they already know a lot about their role as writers and the expectations of the audience.

**Product and Process**

For years, the product and process approaches were viewed as mutually exclusive. However, Schleppegrell (2004) states that product and process cannot be presented as if one is more important than the other because both are important for L2 writing and need to be regarded as interrelated. In fact, product and process complement each other. Raimes (1991) also sees the different theories about second-language writing working together and not separately. For example, the product is the focus as the L2 student goes
through the process of using different register features in different genres. In other words, the process approach needs to have a focus on form if it is to be successful; however, there has been little focus on form due to the fact that proponents of the process approach have not been motivated to examine the way language is used and to distinguish between the features consistent with oral discourse and those of written discourse (Schleppegrell, 2004). Theories that promote spoken English but neglect contrasting it with the distinctive features of academic-based writing are short-changing students. As a result, there has been a failure to help these students prepare for the writing requirements of academic discourse. Consequently, when Generation 1.5 students, as well as ESD students, show fluency in speaking English but not in writing English, they may be considered cognitively impaired and tracked into academically lower-level classes (Schleppegrell, 2004), which has implications for remaining in a lower academic track (Banks & Banks, 2007; Roberge, 2009).

It became obvious to some researchers, such as Schleppegrell (2004), that it is not helpful to novice writers for researchers to dwell on product versus process; instead, L2 students and novice writers need to understand the challenges of acquiring the register features of academic texts and the forms that construct the meanings of the academic texts. In fact, they need to acquire the linguistic resources that will help them convey ideas. Shaughnessy (1977) stated that novice writers do not lack ideas, but they often lack the lexical and grammatical resources, as well as discourse strategies, that will help them improve their writing. In fact, she says weak writers’ ideas are just as good as those of stronger writers (1977). For that reason, a semantic and functional understanding of language, as proposed in systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Halliday & Hasan, 1976;
Halliday, 1978; 1985; 1994), helps students to understand different discourse strategies, registers, and language structures that are created in various contexts. By combining product and process approaches, SFL helps students acquire the written academic discourse skills they need to perform language tasks in schools by contrasting them with the oral discourse that the students use outside of school.

*Systemic Functional Linguistic Approach to Academic Writing*

For the purpose of providing a better understanding of language, Halliday (1985) theorized a systemic functional linguistic approach to the conceptualization of language use, which maintains that language cannot be separated from meaning. This philosophy postulates that functional grammar is different from traditional school grammar in that it focuses on language as a meaning-making resource rather than as a set of rules, and it emphasizes the link between the linguistic choices of speakers and writers and the contexts those linguistic choices realize (Schleppegrell, 2004). Traditionally, approaches had focused on the product or the process in learning language, but by the 1990s, more and more researchers began to relate communicative capabilities to different functions by linking structure to meaning. As a result, functional grammar was seen as the means for achieving the goals of writing since different linguistic structures function as a reflection of different meanings; thus, students can be aware of the functions of grammar in performing a greater number of language requirements (Hyland, 2003). Halliday’s (1985) theory of systemic functional linguistics allows us to see the way that language, as a semiotic tool, interacts with different social contexts in conveying different meanings. He presents an analytical approach that will enable Generation 1.5 and ESD students to differentiate between the kinds of language required for spoken discourse and written
academic discourse. Through this approach, students can actually see the relationship between language and meaning by looking at the use of particular linguistic features tied to certain social constructs (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008). For example, certain linguistic features are acceptable to convey oral discourse, while other linguistic features are appropriate for written academic discourse.

In describing systemic functional linguistics, Halliday (1978) delineates three strata: semantic, which refers to meaning; lexico-grammatical, which refers to the linguistic choices for vocabulary and grammar; phonological and orthographic, which refers to forms for sounds and alphabet systems. He states that in the context of the situation “meaning is put into wording, and wording into sound or writing” (Halliday, 1978, p.5). The culmination becomes the text, which Halliday (1978) describes as “a unit of language, spoken or written, with no particular length, but forming social meaning in a particular context” (p.60). The language that is used in a text reflects the context of the situation (or social context) through the “systematic relationship between the social environment and the functional organization of language” (Halliday, 1978, p. 11).

Since language does not function alone, it is always functioning in relationship to something that gives it meaning. “The context of the situation refers to the environment in which language functions, that is language relevant to the situation” (Halliday, 1978, pp.28- 29). “This linguistic framework, that is systemic functional linguistics, views language as a strategic, meaning-making resource, allowing us to relate lexico-grammatical forms to specific functions in certain contexts that achieve particular purposes” (Colombi, 2002, p. 68).
Furthermore, systemic functional linguistics can help teachers instruct students in using appropriate register features for language tasks and, in turn, may assist students in responding to a particular writing task by expanding their experience in using a variety of register features. Moreover, teachers are able to analyze students’ texts and discuss the linguistic features and the structure of texts with them, aiding in teachers’ knowledge about students’ writing development (Schleppegrell, 2007). For these reasons, Halliday’s theory of systemic functional linguistics (1978; 1985) and Schleppegrell’s (2004; 2007) interpretation combines to form the theoretical framework that supports an analysis of clause structures, the focus of this study for the purpose of understanding the challenges that face ESD and Generation 1.5 students who exhibit the tendency to transfer register features of spoken discourse to the written academic discourse.

Field, Tenor and Mode and their Relationship to Registers

As stated in Chapter 1, a register represents the configuration of lexical and grammatical resources of language for particular purposes. In his analysis of language through systemic functional linguistics, Halliday (1994) states that a register is the product of the relationship among three semantic phenomena - field, tenor and mode. These three phenomena are intricately interwoven, but each will be discussed separately in order to facilitate reading.

Field

Field denotes the ideational component of the semantic system (Halliday, 1978). In other words, it activates the ideational meaning that realizes experience. Thus, the concept of field determines the activities of the participants by showing their level of engagement and what the text is about. It represents the social context in which language
occurs, as well as the content of language, and it realizes the subject matter and the purpose of language by representing what is being discussed in a social context and whether it is between a speaker and an addressee or between a writer and a reader (Halliday, 1978). More specifically, field is what is talked about, what is written about, and what is happening. Therefore, by construing all of this meaningful information, field helps to determine the context of the situation. Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that “field is the total event in which the text (spoken or written) is functioning, together with the purposeful activity of the speaker or writer including the subject matter as one element in it” (p. 22).

Field is represented by certain lexical and grammatical features to give meaning to the ideational content of what is spoken and written about. Therefore, certain lexical and grammatical choices realize the ideational meanings activated in their association with field. Examples of lexical and grammatical choices in field are characterized by content words that name subjects, objects, or events in the situational context - nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. and allow language users to talk or write about events, people, and entities. Similarly, the use of prepositions and adverbs allows language users to talk or write about circumstances related to “how,” “where,” “when,” and the use of conjunctions allows them to talk about logical relationships among clauses.

In Excerpt (1), field is an explanation about the formation of sedimentary rock from a science textbook. Some of these lexico-grammatical (vocabulary and grammar) choices render field as academic or formal as in (1) below, and thus contribute to the registers of written academic discourse.
The formation of sedimentary rocks is closely associated with water. One type forms when water carries soil, pebbles, and other particles to the ocean floor where these sediments become rock. The second method involves chemicals dissolved in water.

By evaporation and precipitation of substances like calcium carbonate, sedimentary rocks can form. (Morrison et al 1993, p.353)

Excerpt (2) involves a class discussion of third-grade children. Field is depicted as what children talk about in an attempt to define the characteristics of a student who is a good respondent in the classroom. The field (what the children talk about) focuses on how teachers decide upon whom to call. Mathew claims that sometimes teachers call on students who do not raise their hands in order to catch individuals who are not paying attention. On the other hand, in (2), the lexico-grammatical choices of nouns, adjectives, prepositions, verbs, etc., come together to create field in the form of spoken discourse or speech. Excerpt (2) is interactional or speech-like, and therefore contributes to the registers of speech or spoken discourse as illustrated below.

(2) Mathew: And um, like um sometime if, um, like you think that the teacher? um if, you raise your hand and she says “No” so she’ll pick on the peoples that don’t know it? So you raise your hand and she picks you and you go “Well, I think, I didn’t, um, well”

Boyd: I was just stretching.

Cara: Gosh.

Mathew: Yea.
Boyd: The other thing is, the teachers usually try to call on people that aren’t paying attention.

Cara: I know.

(Schleppegrell, 2004, pp. 51, 52)

As previously stated, register is the product of the relationship among three semantic phenomena - field, tenor, and mode, and register differences manifest themselves through different lexico-grammatical resources that language users choose based on the requirements of spoken discourse and written discourse. Thus, field is one of the three semantic phenomena of register that is used in the production of spoken and written discourse. Although field tells us what the participants are saying or writing in a particular situational context, it does not give us the complete meaning of the language.

Next, it is necessary to look at tenor, another of the three semantic phenomena producing register that is used in the realization of spoken and written discourse.

Tenor

Tenor represents the interpersonal component of the semantic system (Halliday, 1978). Thus, tenor is related to the social relationship between participants in communication, and it relates the power status, emotional relations, and the degree of familiarity between participants. For example, tenor is the category for realizing relationships such as parent/child, teacher/student, child/child, and customer/salesperson, as well casual encounters. In light of this definition, interpersonal relationships not only represent levels of social status, but they also represent various stances and positions of the participants as well as levels of emotion, such as attitudes and feelings (Schleppegrell,
By realizing these meaningful components, tenor determines the context of communication.

In addition, there are two levels of relationships in which tenor functions. The first is the relationship between a writer and the reader, and the second is the relationship between the listener and the speaker. Tenor realizes the first relationship when the writer injects his own attitudes and judgments into written communication and influences the stance of the readership. The second type reflects the direct relationship of participants in a dialogue or conversation that is between the listener and the speaker (Halliday, 1978; 1985).

Tenor is construed by particular lexical and grammatical choices giving meaning to interpersonal relationships between the participants in a situation. These lexico-grammatical features realize the interpersonal meanings. For example, mood is one kind of interpersonal relationship, which defines tenor. The following are three kinds of mood that reflect interpersonal meaning, but, as can be seen from the examples below, the use of mood varies in discourse depending on the informational goals that the speaker or writer intends to convey.

*Declarative mood: You are learning about grammar.*

*Interrogative mood: Are you learning about functional grammar?*

*Imperative mood: Learn about functional grammar!*

(Schleppegrell, 2004, p.58)

Other grammatical choices used to express tenor and interpersonal relationships, such as attitudes, are modality (e.g., can, will, should, would, could, may, might) as well as lexical choices (nouns, verbs, and adjectives). In addition, through particular lexico-
grammatical choices, tenor can convey judgments, evaluations, authority, and distance in relationships between the participants (Schleppegrell, 2004).

As with field, tenor is also reflected through different lexico-grammatical resources that represent either a spoken register or a written register. For example, in the academic register, tenor is realized by the declarative mood as the writer provides information to the reader or audience. Also, the use of the third person connotes distance and an objective perspective, and punctuation can construe intonation. A case in point is Excerpt (3) in which bold lettering, change of type, and an exclamation point are used for emphasis. Other resources for emphasizing information include modality, which expresses degrees of certainty, probability, and necessity such as through the use of the modals, “would” and “could.” Finally, attitudes of the writer are expressed through the use of lexical choices of verbs, adjectives, and nouns. For example, the writer states his position by using words as “although” introducing one clause and “if they exist” introducing another clause. Excerpt (3) is characteristic of the academic register:

(3) Many astronomers now believe that the radio sources inside quasars are objects known as black holes. The existence of black holes is more or less taken for granted by many astronomers, although no one has ever seen one. Black holes, if they exist, are in fact invisible!

A black hole, according to the theory, is the result of matter that has been super-compressed. For example, if the sun were compressed from its present diameter of 1,390,000 km down to a diameter of just 6 km, it would become a black hole. The gravitational attraction of such a
heavy object would be so great that nothing, not even light, could escape from it.

(Morrison et al., 1993, p. 444)

In contrast to academic register, tenor is reflected in the speech register through use of different kinds of mood, especially the interrogative and imperative. The participants share the information as they co-construct the text. Also, in the speech register, the raising and lowering of the voice construe intonation and pitch. In Excerpt (4), typical of informal dialogic interaction, the student inserts himself into the situation by using different moods (interrogative, imperative, and declarative), rhetorical questions, and the first person in response to an essay.

(4) How come he also believes that dissatisfaction is achieved by people not doing the things we hate or don’t want to do? Is he telling me that I should work in a cold or hot environment? Expose myself under the sun all day? or even expose myself to wind and rain. All these conditions inflict pain on the human body. The pain can endure but why would anyone choose to? I believe not!

(Schleppegrell, 2004, p.59)13

Mode

Register is constructed simultaneously with field, tenor and mode. Mode realizes the textual component of the semantic system (Halliday, 1978). Therefore, it is the component of register that is activated by the experience in the exchange of meaning between the speaker and the listener or between the writer and the reader (Halliday, 1978). This exchange of meaning not only reflects the textual component,

13 This is part of a student’s response to an essay by Wendell Berry (1981).
it also reflects the ideational (field) and interpersonal (tenor) components of language since mode is intricately related to field and tenor in the organization and structure of text. In other words, “mode determines the structure of the language and exists as the semiotic organization of information in the text in relation to the social activity (field) and roles within the situation (tenor)” (Halliday, 1978, p.64).

Halliday (1978) submits that language does not exist in isolation, but in relationship to a situation. Therefore, language is structured around the role that it plays in any situation, and meaning is given to language in relationship to its environment. For that reason, language is organized differently in different situations. Since there are various ways of organizing a text, mode is the most important variable for determining register; it responds to how language is communicated by determining whether it is spoken or written. This determination is made through the presentation and organization of language in the form of lexical and grammatical resources chosen by the speaker or writer to reflect register features that are typical of spoken or conversational discourse or register features characteristic of written academic discourse. As a result, the presentation of language, the medium (spoken or written), the rhetoric, the social action, and the interpersonal relationships of the participants come together to construe the expectations for the informality as well as the formality of language and therefore, the related lexical and grammatical choices.

In reality, texts are organized differently in the registers of spoken and written discourse. Thus, language in a school text is different from language in a conversation with a friend. For instance, in written academic discourse the tone and structure of the language is more formal. Also, there is greater lexical density, which means that clauses
are structured in ways that allow for more embeddings to make the textual delivery of ideational meaning more compact. On the other hand, in spoken discourse, the speakers build the text together as they interact, the tone is informal, and there is less lexical density. Through the use of organizational, structural, as well as lexico-grammatical resources, mode also conveys theme, information, and voice in both the spoken and written medium. In addition, it produces discourse that is expository, didactic, persuasive, and descriptive (Halliday, 1978). Based on the above definition, all the features of mode determine the organization, structure, and coherence of a text. In turn, a text is influenced by the structure of clauses. Therefore, mode is the most pertinent aspect of register that affects the structure of clauses in spoken and written discourse and will be the most crucial in this study, focusing on the challenges that ESD and Generation 1.5 students face in distinguishing between clause structure that reflects the register features of spoken discourse and reflects written academic discourse.

Summary

The concept of register refers to the configuration of lexical and grammatical features of language, characterizing particular uses of language in a variety of contexts, and with a variety of participants in both spoken and written discourse. Field, tenor, and mode are interdependent and work as a unit in conjunction with ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings in communicating the context of the situation and determining the register. By doing this, they constitute a conceptual framework for exchanging meaning in a social setting (Halliday, 1978). For example, in a social context, field, tenor, and mode work together to predict the text that is related to the speech register or the text related to the academic register since the notion of register is all about predicting
language for the context of the situation and its social use (Halliday, 1978). In other words, “in every English clause, we simultaneously construe some kind of experience, (field) enact the role relationship between speaker and listener or writer and reader (tenor), and structure texts so that they make coherent wholes (mode)” (Schleppegrell, 2004, p. 46). How this is accomplished depends on the field, tenor, mode, and the context of the situation.

Systemic functional linguistics supports the examination of lexical and grammatical choices that create clauses and affect register differences. These choices either reflect the register features of spoken discourse, typified by paratactic characteristics such as clause chaining, or the register features of written academic discourse, characterized by embedded clauses and lexical density instead of clause chaining. Therefore, clause structure is one of the predominant register features of written academic discourse and as it construes the three aspects of register - field, tenor, and mode - discussed above; it is most closely tied to mode. The issue of clause structures, as a register feature of written academic discourse, brings us to the lexical and grammatical resources of clause structures posited by systemic functional linguistics: nominalization, including grammatical metaphor and nominal group structure, and lexical density.

**Clause Structure**

**Nominalization**

Nominalization is the process of creating nouns from verbs and adjectives, and is closely related to the concept “grammatical metaphor,” which indicates the manner in which congruent expressions of the grammar of spoken or written academic discourse are
changed into incongruent or metaphorical expressions. Christie (2002) states that the term “metaphor” is used because the changing of verbs and adjectives to nouns (the process of nominalization) creates a grammatical metaphor by using the verbs and adjectives in atypical forms (as nouns). Christie also points out that linguists have agreed that the notion of “congruent” is the unmarked form people generally and commonly use to express experience; in contrast, the corresponding marked form “plays with” and “changes” the grammar so that it is “a form of metaphor” and thus, becomes incongruent (p. 47). In fact, when students begin academic writing, they first use the naturally unmarked form, which is the congruent form. This means that they use verbs and adjectives in their normal state instead of converting them into nouns, the incongruent form, by nominalizing them (i.e., nominalization) and creating a grammatical metaphor. As students develop academic language, they learn the incongruent form and nominalization and the grammatical metaphor.

In other words, Halliday (1994) states that a grammatical metaphor is an incongruent form in which different wording (not typical of informal spoken or conversational discourse) is used to produce the same meaning as the congruent form. For example, verbs such as “represent,” “prefer,” and “refer” become “representation,” “preference,” and “reference,” respectively, and adjectives such as abstract and poor become “abstraction” and “poverty.”

The following are examples of nominalization in context:

*The children did an excellent job when they participated in the program.*

(the congruent form) becomes:
The children’s participation in the program was excellent.

(incongruent form)

In a second example of nominalization, the adjective “scarce” becomes the noun “scarcity”:

Food was scarce in the desert, so there was a problem.

(congruent form) becomes:

The scarcity of food in the desert was a problem.

(incongruent form)

The logical question now becomes: What does nominalization have to do with clause structure in spoken and written discourse? Nominalizations (the results of verbs and adjectives becoming nominals or nouns) are used to create nominal groups. The element we call ‘thing’ is the semantic core of the nominal group. “Thing” may be a common noun, a proper noun, a personal pronoun, or a nominalization. We can then create nominal groups by adding pre- and post-modifiers such as prepositional phrases to the common noun, the proper noun, the personal pronoun, or the nominalization. In addition, nominal group structures are used in conjunction with embedded clauses14, and thus, package ideational content into dense and compact clauses (a register feature of written academic discourse) rather than clause chaining (a register feature of spoken discourse). The following is an example of the relationship among nominalization, nominal group structures, and clause structure (embedding):

The shock of the spectacle that occurred that day was unforgettable.

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14 Embedded clauses are adjectival clauses that are subordinated to the nominal group structure. They do not make “an independent contribution to the structure of the discourse” (Schleppegrell, 2004, p. 66).
The nominalization “The shock,” as well as the nominal group structure made up of the noun “shock” and the prepositional phrase “of the spectacle,” have allowed the introduction of an embedded clause (that occurred that day). This embedded clause acts as a post modifier for the nominal group structure (The shock of the spectacle). Without the nominalization and the nominal group structure, it would not have been possible to include the embedded clause and the verb group plus adjective “was unforgettable” into a single compact sentence, typical of written academic discourse.

**Nominal Group Structure**

Like nominalization, nominal group structure has been used to refer to the ways in which the “congruent expressions of grammar of speech or spoken discourse are converted into the “incongruent” or metaphorical expressions of grammar typical of written academic discourse” (Christie, 2002, p. 47). The congruent way in which we express experience in the English clause is through the verb phrase\(^{15}\), linked to agents or participants (that is, the nominal group) and where necessary, linked to a prepositional phrase in pre-modifier position or post-modifier position (that is, the nominal group structure). The general effect of using nominal group structures is that the writer is able to pack in a great deal of information; thus, it is this feature that accounts for the greater density of writing over a greater amount of speech (Christie, 2002). In other words, more information is being expressed, and thus, “the nominal group becomes the primary resource used by grammar for packing in lexical density” (Halliday, 1994, p.351).

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15 Verb phrase in generative grammar includes the main verb plus the helping or auxiliary verb plus its modifiers; the entire predicate in a sentence. It expresses action or state of being in a clause (Finegan, 1999)
For example, the more informal register of spoken discourse also has a congruent way to link: (1) “The teenagers (agent or participant, noun phrase\textsuperscript{16} or nominal group) attacked (verb phrase) the bank employees (agent; noun phrase or nominal group) with rifles (prepositional phrase) to another clause typical of the register of spoken or conversational discourse in a conjunctive relationship: and then removed the vaults” (Christie, 2002, p.47). In converting these two congruent clauses of conversational grammar into an incongruent, metaphorical expression typical of written discourse, we would write: (2) “The teenagers’ attack on the bank employees with rifles (nominalization of the verb “attack” and creation of a nominal group structure containing two prepositional phrases in post-modifier position to the noun “attack” (on the bank employees with rifles) led to (verb phrase) the removal of the vaults (nominalization of the verb “remove” and creation of the nominal group structure containing one prepositional phrase). Thus, in the register of written academic discourse (2), the two independent clauses in (1), expressed as we typically say in speech, have become one clause, by a process that (a) transforms the action of a clause (the teenagers attacked the bank employees) into a nominal group structure of academic writing (the teenagers’ attack on the bank employees), and (b) gets rid of the conjunctive relationship between the original two clauses (and then) by using the new verb phrase (led to) for “process.” In other words, nominalization and nominal group structures remove the explicit conjunctions and suppress personal agency in order to condense information in highly structured ways (Christie, 2002). Essentially, the outcome of nominalization and nominal

\textsuperscript{16} A noun phrase is a lexical category that consists of the noun or its substitute (pronoun) and all its pre-modifiers and post modifiers (Finegan, 1999).
group structures is to create lexically dense clauses, which are indispensable in written academic discourse.

*Lexical Density*

Both nominalization and nominal group structure foster lexical density in that another verb phrase in the form of an embedded clause can be added to example (2) described above (i.e., a “which” clause). This post-modifier embedded clause, describing the noun phrase or nominal group “the vaults” is introduced by a relative pronoun “which,” followed by the verb phrase to form an embedded clause “contained thousands of dollars given by various organizations for the victims of the hurricane.” The sentence then reads: *The teenagers’ attack on the bank employees led to the removal of the vaults which contained thousands of dollars given by various organizations for the victims of the hurricane.* This example shows that lexical density is another major characteristic of academic writing, resulting from nominalization and the creation of nominal group structure. Based on this example, it is clear that nominalization and nominal group structures are important because information is condensed into compact clauses. In other words, lexical density provides a dense package of information so that academic texts are able to condense information and explain abstract concepts in more concise ways through the interaction of clause and text structure (Gibbons, 1999). This is accomplished through the use of nominalization and nominal group structure (grammatical metaphor) which then enable the tackling of various written academic tasks (Schleppegrell & Colombi, 1997).
Summary

Thus far, three linguistic phenomena of clause structure that differentiate the register of spoken discourse from that of the written academic register have been addressed: nominalization, nominal group structures, and lexical density. According to systemic functional linguistics, lexical and grammatical structures construe meanings as the text is built (Halliday, 1978; 1985; 1994), and one of the primary lexico-grammatical structures is the choice of clause structure. As a result, the clauses that are chosen at the lexical and grammatical levels affect the organization of the sentences at the discourse level, and ultimately the register (Schleppegrell & Colombi, 1997). That means that each clause contains lexical and grammatical features and helps to create the meaning of the text (what was referred to earlier as field) and the relationships of the participants (referred to earlier as tenor) (Schleppegrell, 2004). As a result, the clause structure reveals the context of the situation through choices of clauses that reflect either the spoken register or the written academic register (what was referred to earlier as mode); therefore, knowledge of clause structure is integral to a student’s understanding of what is expected and required at school. In other words, a theory of systemic functional linguistics explains how the relative abstractness and condensation of information that characterizes the kinds of texts expected at school is realized at the clause level and ultimately, at the textual or discourse level.

Students are expected to use the features that are functional for academic discourse, so systemic functional linguistics is an approach that lets clauses be separated into manageable chunks in contrast with traditional grammar, which isolates grammatical features (Schleppegrell & Go, 2007). As a result, the differences between the spoken and
written registers can be examined through the use of clauses and clause combinations because different registers have different situations and different purposes requiring different clauses and clause combinations. For example, spoken discourse tends to have an emergent organizational style; the dialogic structure is emergent as speakers link multiple clauses together with conjunctions in clause-chaining strategies from one part of a large discourse to another (Colombi, 2002). On the other hand, academic writing including school-based texts tends to have a different internal clause structure. Not only is the clause structure a planned pattern, but there is also grammatical condensation through embedded clauses, nominalization, nominal group structures, and lexical density, making the information compact or condensed. Consequently, a focus on clause-structuring is a substantive feature distinguishing differences in register. As important as clause structuring is, many students enter college with difficulty distinguishing between the clauses that characterize either the speech or the written register; therefore, they have difficulty using clause structures that are characteristic of the written academic register. In fact, clause structure is fundamental to distinguishing register differences because it is at the clausal level that language users make choices that constitute academic writing.

In learning to write, students start by replicating clause structure that reflects their speech, so the closer the features in their speech are to the features in academic writing, the easier it is for them to transfer the clause structure of speech into academic writing. However, this presents a problem for the ESD and Generation 1.5 learner, whose speech patterns may not reflect Standard English. Even though oral language has a value as a language pattern, students need to be able go beyond and learn the academic writing styles needed as they progress in school. Limiting students to a dialogic, hortatory, and
interactional style that is typical of spoken discourse register features will not meet the
demands of academic writing. The goal is that as a student’s writing develops, it will
shift from the structure of clauses that reflects speech or spoken discourse (hypotactic and
paratactic) to the structure of clauses that reflects written academic discourse (main and
embedded clauses) thereby increasing lexical density. The following section is devoted
to different structures of clauses, as register features, which differentiate speech or
spoken discourse from written academic discourse.

Types of Clause Structures

There are four types of clauses that affect the register: main, paratactic,
hypotactic, and embedded (Colombi, 2002). Certain types of clauses are appropriate for
certain registers: main and embedded clauses are most indicative of a written academic
register, and paratactic and hypotactic are most indicative of a spoken register. This
analysis includes constituency, which is exemplified in embedded clauses, but missing in
hypotactic clauses. Constituency refers to the relationship between the main clause and
the subordinate clause in the grammatical structure. In other words, if a clause is a
constituent of a main clause, it is part of the nominal group structure and names or
identifies either the subject or the object (Schleppegrell, 2004).

Clauses typical of spoken discourse. There are two types of clauses that are
pervasive in speech or spoken discourse; they are paratactic and hypotactic. The
following examples are taken from community college student essays.

Paratactic clauses: The paratactic clause combines clauses of equal value and is
linked to a main clause with a coordinating conjunction. Students use paratactic clauses
in their speech reflecting an emergent conversational structure.
a) My mom always wanted somebody to graduate from a university, and I am the first one trying to reach that goal.

b) The Chinese believe in arranging marriages based upon your value and women got their feet fixed.

c) There is a fine line between relationships and some should not be crossed.

In addition, paratactic clauses include clauses with direct quotes after verbs of saying, thinking, and perceiving, which are considered to be paratactic.

d) He said, “I’m quitting.” (quote after the verb)

_Hypotactic clauses:_ The hypotactic clause is a type of subordinate clause and is dependent upon another clause to complete its meaning. In other words it exists in a logical dependency with another clause. It is not a constituent of the main clause, so it doesn’t function within another clause; rather it functions in addition to another clause by linking it through the use of a dependent word. A hypotactic clause begins with a dependent word or subordinating conjunction, such as _because, even though, if, or as._ Some nonrestrictive clauses and adverbial clauses may be considered to be hypotactic.

a) Education is important to me because once I finish I would not have financial problems.

b) When I graduate from a university, I could get a good job that pays me good without problem.
Clauses after verbs of saying, thinking, and perceiving are also considered hypotactic when being reported indirectly.

c)  *He said he was right. (hypotactic- indirect)*

Without experience in knowing what is required in academic discourse, students often transfer the paratactic and hypotactic syntactic structure to their writing by linking multiple clauses.

d)  *Getting a good job is not easy in America and to get a good job you need to have an education so you won’t struggle to make a living and you be able to reach your dream and you be able to support you family. (coordinating conjunction)*

*Clauses typical of written academic discourse.* Embedded clauses and main clauses dominate the organizational structure of written academic discourse. The following examples are also taken from students’ essays.

*Main clause:* A main clause is an independent clause or simple sentence; however, it is also a participant in a complex sentence. It is the first clause in a paratactic sentence and the independent clause in a hypotactic sentence.

a)  *My parents are a very important part of my life. (main clause)*

b)  *My parents are a very important part of my life, and I value them. (initial clause in parataxis)*

c)  *My parents are a very important part of my life although I never see them. (independent clause in hypotaxis)*
Other examples of main clauses are:

d) It is very interesting to go to an exotic place with different cultures and things.

e) Being on vacation is very enjoyable and great.

Embedded clauses: The embedded clause is also a subordinate clause, but as a constituent of a main clause, it functions within another clause as a modifier within the nominal group structure. Halliday (1994) states that embedded clauses qualify nouns and are considered restrictive clauses. For example, relative clauses, which play an adjectival role because they describe the head nouns (in the nominal group structure), are embedded after head nouns and offer more information about the head nouns.

However, sometimes these clauses are considered complex because as relative or adjectival clauses, they are constituents of a main clause (Colombi, 2002; Schleppegrell, 2007; Halliday, 1994). For example, an embedded clause can be introduced by a relative pronoun that may be understood as in example (a) or actually appear as in example (b).

Embedded clauses:

a) The good vacations were some of the most memorable ones I’ve had. (“that” is omitted)

b) Someone who does not have an education will struggle with minimum wage jobs. (who)

c) The type of behavior that can cause a friendship to end is jealousy.
Other complex embedded clauses that omit the relative pronoun:

d) Trustworthiness is a characteristic I like. ("that" is omitted)

e) She is the one I like best ("whom" is omitted)

It is important to remember that understanding clause structure as a register feature of academic writing, is important for teachers as well as students because an analysis of clauses, their features, and clause-combining strategies begins at the sentence level and can show the developmental paths of students as they develop academic discourse. A study done by Colombi (2002) showed that hypotactic clause-linking is considered less developed than the academic style of embedded clauses and the use of nominalization. By using the approach of systemic functional linguistics, Colombi (2002) analyzed clause structures in a longitudinal study of the academic writing of Hispanic students’ Spanish writing. The study began by identifying clauses as having finite verbs, verbs that have tense and agree with the subject in number and gender. Then each clause produced by the student was analyzed as paratactic, hypotactic, main, or embedded. The intent was to show how the clauses collectively helped the writer form the organization of the essay. The result depicted how each student’s writing developed over a nine-month period through nominalization and clause-structuring strategies, and how each student’s writing progressed from using clause structure characteristic of the register of spoken discourse, to clause structure that is indicative of the register of academic writing. The conclusion in Colombi’s study was that there were differences among the students in their progression toward a more academic register. In particular, findings indicated the importance of nominalization and clause-combining strategies in measuring academic
writing development, thereby, suggesting that a similar study would be beneficial for
ESD and Generation 1.5 students who are facing challenges with written academic
discourse.

*ESD and Generation 1.5 Writing Challenges*

*ESD Students*

ESD students speak a non-standard dialect of English not found within the
academy. In the United States, AAVE is the most widely spoken nonstandard dialect of
English (Finegan, 1999; Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2007). Although ESD students
have consistently struggled in school, it has only been recently that researchers have
realized that “second-language writing research, which examines ESL learners’ transfer
of speech registers into their academic discourse has been predicated on native
speaker/nonnative speaker or ESL learner dichotomy and has excluded speakers for
whom English is a second dialect. Thus, the general use of the term ESL obfuscates any
differences in the challenges that ESD students as well as Generation 1.5 students face in
acquiring written discourse” (Clachar, 2003, p. 272).

Using paratactic conjunctions, Clachar’s (2003) study examines whether speakers
of English-lexified Creoles (who are also ESDs) have different challenges associated
with the development of writing than those of the ESL speaker. The focus of the study
was to analyze the degree to which the conjunction and clause combinations
characteristic of speech were used in the academic writing of six ESD students and six
ESL students in a community college. Clachar’s research showed that ESD speakers use
more paratactic conjunctions in clause structure typical of oral discourse than ESL
speakers. Therefore, the ESD students’ challenges are different from those of ESL
students in acquiring the register features of written academic discourse. Clachar claims that at present, however, there are very few studies which focus on ESD students’ academic writing and the tendency of these students for whom English is a second dialect to transfer features of their spoken discourse to academic writing.

Most importantly, Clachar’s study is particularly relevant for the attention it draws to the challenges that other nonstandard dialect speakers, such as AAVE speakers, face in acquiring academic writing. AAVE occurs mainly in the oral mode, so speakers of this dialect also lack the experience of writing in different genres in their mother tongue. In addition, they have not been taught to distinguish between the features and functions characteristic of AAVE and the features and functions that are characteristic of Standard English. Furthermore, like other ESD speakers, AAVE speakers are affected by the semblance of their vocabulary to that of Standard English, as they are by the dissemblance of their grammatical system to that of Standard English. As a result, students who continuously have to navigate on a continuum between the language of school and the language of the home without having their attention drawn to the differences between the features of each, find it very challenging to acquire features that are appropriate for academic language when necessary (Heath, 1983).

On the other hand, for some students, speaking a dialect that is different from the language of school is not the problem; it is the stigma of the nonstandard dialect in society and the educational system that affects these ESD students, particularly African Americans (Baugh, 2002). “Linguistic barriers have been recognized as one of the largest hurdles confronting the typical African-American student and leading to academic failure” (Baugh, 2002, p. 181). Systemic functional linguistics is a bias-free approach to
dialectal differences by presenting an approach that is not only supportive of the home dialect, but also facilitates instruction in acquiring school-based English. In addition, systemic functional linguistics clarifies linguistic differences between speech and academic writing, thereby, helping students to create purposeful texts. Consequently, students are more likely to be open to learn new register features of academic writing if they see a value in it (Baugh, 2002).

**Generation 1.5 Students**

In contrast, Generation 1.5 students represent various backgrounds of English language acquisition, first languages, and cultures. In addition, their adaptation, acculturation, and identity issues vary which means that each travels a unique path (Roberge, 2009). However like ESD students, they have attended U.S. schools and have been educated in English, even though their individual experiences may have been different due to length of time in the U.S., socioeconomic background, quality of the school and teachers, and school and state support for programs (Harklau, 2003). Also, because of their familiarity with the language and the culture they, like ESD students, are not considered ESL learners. Clarifying distinctions among ESL students (not fluent in English), Generation 1.5, and ESD students is important for schools and universities. Valdes (1992) calls ESL students who are learners of English “incipient bilinguals” (p. 104) since they are learning to read and write English; whereas, ESD and Generation 1.5 students are called “functional bilinguals” since they are fluent in conversational English, but they still have problems with academic English (p. 104). For that reason, Generation 1.5 students are generally ear learners. They have learned English by listening and probably have good communicative skills, but they may lack the Standard and/or
academic English grammar forms for both speaking and writing which makes them vulnerable to acquiring dialect forms such as AAVE (Singhal, 2004). Because they have difficulty performing written academic language tasks, Generation 1.5 students have often been put into ESL or lower track English classes (Roberge, 2009).

One of the major challenges that is often undetected is that language minority students make inappropriate register choices because of their tendency to transfer lexical and grammatical features from the registers of oral discourse to written discourse (Schleppegrell, 1996). They may do this for several reasons: 1) their first language may not have a standardized orthography; 2) they may not be able to write in their first language; or 3) they are inexperienced in distinguishing between the characteristics and the functions of interpersonal, interactional, and textual form of academic English (what was referred to earlier as field, tenor, and mode of register). Or as Zwiers (2008) posits, students who struggle with academic texts do not have experience using that type of language at home, and therefore need explicit instruction of lexico-grammatical features in academic language. Therefore, “one of the most important research goals has been to identify the specific features of the registers that L2 students must master in order to produce appropriate academic written English in concert with developing methods that will minimize students’ tendencies to transfer registers that are more appropriate for oral discourse into written academic texts” (Clachar, 2003, p. 271). Consequently, we need to determine the kinds of writing challenges that ESD and Generation 1.5 students face as they move from the registers typical of spoken language to the registers that are typical of written discourse.
Since systemic functional linguistics adopts the position that written academic success for ESD and Generation 1.5 students begins with social experience (Halliday, 1994), both students and teachers need to understand the explicit features in academic language that are needed at school and needed for the active role of the language user. The distinctions between writing and oral discourse must be pointed out with respect to the lexical and grammatical features used to reflect the purpose, the participants, and the organization of the text. For instance, a written academic register requires certain lexico-grammatical features and the student’s awareness that these features facilitate the production of different writing tasks.

Furthermore, even though schools have standards for which they are accountable, most teachers are given little instruction in broadening their own knowledge of lexical and grammatical structures that define academic registers. This instruction would help both the students and the schools meet the required criteria; however, currently there is little focus on grammar and discourse structure in schools or teacher education programs (Schleppegrell, 2004).

Above all, the challenge is for teachers to value the language that students bring from home and at the same time teach them new ways of using language, show them how they can, and enable them to perform new and different tasks (Silva, 1997). Systemic functional linguistics recognizes students’ strengths and supports their academic development in making more advanced language choices and expanding the meaning potential. In addition, systemic functional linguistics does not judge another dialect or language, it merely points out the differences between the dialect and Standard Academic
English (SAE), as another dialect. For ESD as well as Generation 1.5 students, this means starting at the students’ level, giving meaning to what they have constructed, and expanding their language development to help them succeed.

**ESD and Generation 1.5: Home and School Literacy Practices**

Research has determined that one major problem for the gap between the literacy achievement of students from diverse linguistic backgrounds and those of the mainstream is the difference in the home language (Au, 1998; Heath, 1983). In fact, previous language experiences both at home and in school are the prevailing factors that affect the status of the student when s/he enters college. To support the study of linguistic challenges in the acquisition of college academic writing, particularly research on clause structure, the home reading practices of the participants in the study as well as their previous secondary reading and writing courses both need to be examined.

**Home Literacy Practices**

ESD and Generation 1.5 students seem to be ill prepared when they enter college, and the colleges appear to be ill prepared to receive them (Roberge, 2009). In public schools, K-12 students are required by federal mandate to respond to home language surveys indicating other languages spoken in the home; however, this is not the case for post-secondary students (Harklau & Siegal, 2009). Another problem is that educational (national and state) data about language minority students are kept in broad categories, which confounds African Americans with Haitian immigrants and Spaniards with Mexican farm workers (Harklau & Siegal, 2009). Finally, a third difficulty is that the

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17 For the purpose of this research on clause structure, a home language survey (see Appendix C) will be given to the participants to ascertain their home literacy practices.
low retention rates of language minority groups continue to make carrying out longitudinal studies difficult (Harklau & Siegal, 2009).

With that being said, there is a large amount of research that correlates home literacy practices with academic achievement even though it is often difficult to separate home literacy practices from SES (social economic status) (Britto, Brooks-Gunn, & Griffin, 2006). On the other hand, Teale (1986) stated that SES demographics are less significant than frequency of home literacy practices, social contexts for reading, and children’s decisions about what they are reading. For instance, studies such as Gauvain, Savage, & McCollum’s (2000) comparison of home reading practices and reading achievement of Hispanic and European American second graders found the frequency of the home reading practices was positively related to reading achievement even though there were variances attributed to use of language (Spanish or English), family income, maternal education, and gender. In another study of African American low-income families, Britto, Brooks-Gunn, & Griffin, (2006) found that mothers interacting and guiding their children through story telling provided the preschoolers with greater school preparedness and readiness than mothers who didn’t. According to a 2006 National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) study of pre-kindergarten (3-5 year olds) in 1993 and again in 2005, 84.8% of White children, 65.9% of Black children, and 58.2% of Hispanic children were read to in 1993 increasing to 91.9% for Whites, 78.5% for Blacks, and 71.8 for Hispanics in 2005. The study indicated that Hispanic children were more likely to be taught songs or music. Another NCES (2003) study examined the frequency of reading books and magazines in the home for adults 16-18 years and indicated that 53.7% of Whites, 42.3% of Blacks, and 27.4% of Hispanics read magazines every day,
while only 33.8% of Whites, 32.5% of Blacks, and 18.8% of Hispanics read books every day.

**Secondary Reading and Writing Courses**

Reading and writing abilities are criteria on which success or failure in college is determined (Harklau, 2001; Allison, 2009). Although the focus of this study is on the types of clause structure used by language minority students in producing the academic register, it will be helpful to look at the similarities and dissimilarities of the student participants with their secondary writing experiences (Valdes, 1992). A recent study by Allison (2007) examining the transition of high school students to college writing determined that secondary reading and writing experiences of generation 1.5 students were less connected to textbooks and more focused on high stakes tests. In addition, the thinking skills required at the college level were non-existent; instead, the focus was on teacher directed recognition and recall (Allison 2009). 18

**Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study are to examine the lexico-grammatical choices -in particular clause structure- made by linguistic minority students in producing written academic discourse required of them by the academy. Thus, using a systemic functional linguistics approach, this study will analyze the clause structure used by AAVE speakers in their writing and compare it with clause structures from the writings of Hispanic and Haitians as Generation 1.5 speakers to investigate the types of clauses chosen to produce written academic discourse. In particular, it will address the extent to which African Americans, as ESD speakers, who come from a dialect that does not have an

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18 For the purpose of this study, an inquiry into the quantity and quality of secondary reading and writing courses taken by the ESD and Generation 1.5 college participants will be examined.
orthography, have challenges with the unfamiliar registers of academic written discourse as reflected in their transfer of speech-typical clauses into their writing. In addition, an attempt will be made to address the extent to which Hispanics and Haitians, as Generation 1.5 students, who come from a first language experience where there is a standard orthography, have challenges with the transfer of speech-typical clauses into their writing. As previously stated, it is hypothesized that African Americans who are native speakers of AAVE are more likely to show a higher incidence of speech-typical clauses in their written academic discourse than their Generation 1.5 counterparts since AAVE occurs predominantly in the oral mode. Consequently, AAVE speakers come to school without any written frame of reference for their mother tongue, and they have not had the opportunity to become sensitive to the registers of academic texts (Baugh, 2002). It is through a systemic functional linguistics approach that we can analyze lexico-grammatical choices for crafting texts, show how meaning is created, present the options linked to meaning; all of which give the students some control over their academic success. In other words, “literacy research that incorporates a focus on language itself through a systemic functional linguistic perspective on grammar can recognize the role of language in literacy development and offer new ways of talking about language that can enrich teaching and learning” (Schleppegrell, 2007, p.127). For these reasons, findings from this study have the potential to help students who struggle with the linguistic skills of the academy and support their teachers who strive to help them acquire these skills.
CHAPTER III
Methodology

The registers of spoken English and written academic English have different lexical and grammatical features, reflecting the various contexts in which they are used. One of the major challenges facing students, such as ESD and Generation 1.5 populations, lies in the ability to distinguish between register features that characterize oral and written academic discourse since they have a tendency to transfer the register features of oral language into the register features of written academic language, or the language of school (Schleppegrell, 2004).

The focus of this study was to determine the extent that ESD (AAVE speakers) and Generation 1.5 (Haitian and Hispanic) students transferred clauses typical of spoken English to written academic discourse, as well as to investigate cross group differences. The study was predicated on the understanding that ESD students and Generation 1.5 students came from different linguistic backgrounds within and across groups; with differing experiences in their home language that could challenge the acquisition of the written academic register. In using SFL to analyze the types of clause structures produced in the writing samples of both groups of students, we are able to assess if one participant group had chosen clauses that reflected oral language in their written discourse more than the other participant group.

Although the students who participated in this study graduated from U.S. high schools and tested within the same range on the College Placement Test, Valdes (1992) stated that it was necessary to look at high school experiences and compare courses that were taken to understand why students arrived at college with limited writing skills. She
suggested asking such questions as, “When did they begin to write?” “What did they write?” and “How often did they write?” as well as “Were the students enrolled in ESL or basic/developmental classes at the secondary level?” These and other questions related to reading provided insight into participants’ academic writing proficiency. Therefore, for this study, I not only analyzed the kinds of clauses these students produced, but I looked at the students’ high school transcripts particularly the reading and writing courses to ascertain how similar or dissimilar their reading and writing experiences were to this point. In other words, this enabled me to see the students’ high school tracks and the number of remedial classes they experienced prior to enrollment in a community college developmental writing course.

Samples and Procedures

Research Setting

The setting for the research was a racially and ethnically diverse community college in which nearly half of all credit and college preparatory students were members of minority groups. The college had four campuses and was situated in a large county in the southeastern U.S., serving nearly 46,000 unduplicated\(^{19}\) students in both credit and non-credit courses (Florida Community College Fact Book, 2008). Data collection took place on the largest of the four campuses, which served 28,000 students; demographically, the larger student populations represented at this particular campus were White (45%), Black (25%) including African Americans and Haitians, and Hispanics (21%) (Florida Community College Fact Book, 2008).

\(^{19}\)“Unduplicated” means that the students have only been counted once even if they have attended classes on different campuses.
Participants

This community college required entering students to take a College Placement Test (CPT) unless they had an SAT verbal score above 440, an ACT-E score of 17 or higher, or could show proof of completion of college level work within the last two years. The CPT test had sections for English, math, and reading, and required a passing score of 83 or above. If the student failed in any or all of the three areas, s/he was required to take remedial classes before earning college credits in the area. Although the policy had been under review, at the time of the study, students who failed the CPT English sections, and who had graduated from a U.S. high school or who had a GED (Graduate Equivalency Diploma) were required to take Prep English (a remedial/developmental writing class); on the other hand, students whose first language was not English, and who graduated from a high school outside the U.S., were enrolled in an ESL class. According to the CPT results placing them in remedial classes, neither of these groups of students had the writing skills to deal with the rigors of college level freshman composition.

The participants who did not meet the required score for the CPT were placed in one of two “Prep English” classes: Prep I focused on writing paragraphs, and Prep II focused on writing essays. I analyzed the essays of students in Prep II, the higher level, for which an Exit Essay Exam was given at the culmination of the course. This exam consisted of writing a 5-paragraph in-class essay from a choice of three topics and submitting the essay using a college ID number in lieu of a name. The essays are evaluated by an anonymous group of English professors who use a rubric to grade the essay on a 1-12 point scale for which 6 represents a passing grade. In each evaluation, the professors focus on the structure of the sentence, paragraph, and essay, as well as on
use of the lexicon, grammar, and spelling, to determine if the student has met the 
demands of college-level English. My selection of Prep II English classes was based not 
only on the fact that these were the largest classes and provided a representative sample 
of the student groups under study, but also that students in these classes were required to 
write 5-paragraph essays, providing greater opportunity to examine clause structure.

Data Collection

Data collection began at the end of the Fall ’09 semester prior to the Exit Essay 
in order to have the classes at a similar point in their instruction. I gained permission 
from four professors teaching a total of seven classes, to attend their classes, describe the 
study, and present a prompt to write a 5-paragraph essay (see Appendices A & B). As 
the request was in line with daily assignments, the professors wanted all students to do 
the essays as a class writing assignment.

On the writing prompt, the students identified their ethnicity. If they checked one 
of the three groups under study, I approached them about participating in the study. Not 
only did they have to write the essay, but they also had to fill out a questionnaire about 
home literacy practices (see Appendix C) and an additional consent form allowing me to 
access their high school transcripts. In addition, African Americans had to consent to 
joining a focus group to determine if they were AAVE speakers. Students who consented 
to participate in the study excluded their name on their essay and self-identified only by 
birth date and ethnicity. In contrast, non-participants wrote their names on their essays 
and handed them directly to the professor while I collected the participants’ essays, made 
copies of them, and handed the originals back to the professors to be graded. Next, I 
proceeded to code the copies with the professors’ initials, times of classes, and students’
birth dates. In addition, the study participants put their name and birth date on a separate paper for the professor to reference in grading the essay after I returned the original. Both participants and non-participants had one hour to plan and write their essay.

After collecting data from seven classes, I did not have enough participants for the African American and Haitian samples. As a result, I presented the study to my two Prep II classes and proceeded to do what I had done in other classes. All students were given the writing prompt and students who self–identified as one of the three ethnolinguistic groups under study were asked to participate. It was emphasized that participation was voluntary and would not affect their grade in any way. By adding my two classes, I was able to increase my samples. All students selected for the samples graduated from U.S. high schools, but were limited by their educational experience and consequently, failed to perform well on the college entry level tests (Blanton, 1999).

After the data had been collected, the Haitian sample consisted of exactly 20 students, with 30 Hispanics, and 23 African Americans. The goal was to examine 45 essays, fifteen (essays) from African Americans (specifically AAVE speakers), 15 from Hispanics (Generation 1.5 speakers), and 15 from Haitians (Generation 1.5 speakers). In order to reach this goal for the Haitian sample, I compiled a list of each student’s birthday (not year) beginning with January 1, and I randomly eliminated every fifth date until there were fifteen students in the sample. Next, I made a list of birthdays for the Hispanic sample and randomly eliminated every fifth birth date until there were 15 in the sample. In two instances, students had the same birth date, so I coded them 1 and 2. At that point the Haitian and Hispanic samples were ready to be analyzed. These students were considered Generation 1.5; they spoke English fluently and were likely to be more literate
in English than their home language; however, their writing was below college level, and so they were placed in prep classes.

Since the African American students did not pass the CPT, it was hypothesized that the dialectal interference from the influence of AAVE, pervasive in the African-American culture, was a possible reason for their difficulty in acquiring academic English (Ball, 1992). Therefore, it was important to determine that the students in the ESD sample were AAVE speakers since not all African Americans used the vernacular. This was done through audiotaped focus groups. If the students were not AAVE speakers, they did not speak English as a second dialect (ESD) and could not be included in the African American ESD sample. Of the 23 students who identified as African American, four did not attend the focus group. Of the nineteen who attended focus groups, one student did not have enough utterances to determine adequate use of AAVE, and the other three did not use AAVE features in more than 60% of their utterances. (Appendix D). Thus, I did not have to random sample because of attrition and students’ failures to qualify as AAVE speakers. The African American sample automatically and conveniently resulted in 15 students.

African American Vernacular English. “AAVE is a logical and systematic variety of English characterized by certain linguistic features” (Ball, 1992, pp.502). In particular, there are four salient phonological variables that are characteristic of AAVE and present problems in the acquisition of SE (see Appendix D adapted from Lester, 2008): 1) the omission of the R and L (r-lessness and l-lessness) in front of consonants or at the ends of words as in fort = fot or guard = god and help = hep or told = toe; 2) the reduction of consonant clusters at the ends of words to a single sound as in passed = 
pass, meant = men, or fast = fas; 3) change of interdental consonants to labiodentals after a vowel as in bath = baf or mouth = mouf and monophthongization of diphthongs\textsuperscript{20} as in boil = ball; 4) the “habitual be” and sometimes “bees” is used to express continuous or repeated action as in she is cooking (SE) = she be cookin (AAVE) (Rickford, 1999). The exceptions are that it is not used in the cases of negation (“be not” cannot become “ben’t”), tag questions (cannot say “be he?,” or use auxiliary inversion (“be he doing that ?”). Since I was analyzing utterances that I defined as groups of words having finite verbs and not the pronunciation of individual words (as in Lester, 2008), the structure of the grammar used by AAVE speakers needed to be recognized, so, I also referenced Rickford’s (1999) list of salient grammatical features (see Appendix E).

\textit{Focus Groups.} I recorded the focus groups either in classrooms or in a study room on the third floor of the campus library. Although the goal was to meet in the library and have four students in a group to encourage informality and a conversational atmosphere, it was difficult to arrange times that could accommodate everyone. As a result, many times the professors dismissed classes early and gave me the last 20 minutes to hold the focus group in the classroom. Because of this, the size of the groups varied. Within the groups, I kept track of the students by linking their birth date on the writing sample with the interviewee; additionally, duplicate birthdays were coded (i.e., 1, 2, 3). Next, I assigned a letter (i.e., A, B, C, etc.) to each person and logged it as the person took a turn in the conversation. I also drew a diagram of each group using a letter to show where each person sat. The questions were open-ended and general enough to elicit opinions about topics that were of interest to the students. For example, students were asked if they thought that African Americans had made important historical contributions to the

\textsuperscript{20} Monophthongization is the changing of a diphthong (oy, oi) to a simple vowel sound (monothong).
music industry in the United States and why (Baugh, 2002). Another question asked students their opinions about celebrities and the influence they have, and a third question asked whether job satisfaction was more important than high salary and fringe benefits. All these questions had follow-up questions that kept the dialogue moving. It was important to have all students involved in the conversation in order to have a representative sample of each student’s speech. The focus groups lasted approximately 15-20 minutes after which I transcribed them. In analyzing the transcripts, I determined if the African-American students were AAVE speakers based on their usage of the four specific phonological features of AAVE (Appendix D) as well as particular salient grammatical structures (Rickford, 1999; Appendix E). If each speaker used AAVE features in at least 60% of his/her speech, the student was considered an AAVE speaker (Lester, 2008). After the transcription of the audiotapes, 15 AAVE speakers were identified.

Writing prompt. Although there are few studies that actually address the effect of the writing prompt on L2 (second language) writing, some studies have found that writing on different topics and the wording of those topics contribute to the use of divergent features in the text (Hinkle, 2009). For instance, writing a topic about a student’s home country or reflecting another culture may result in interference from their L1 (Silva, Leki, & Carson, 1997). Research has reported that different writing prompts reflected significant changes in use of features in the texts of L2 students (Hinkle, 2002; Reid, 1992). For example, Hinkle’s (2002) study showed that both the writing prompt and the culture of the students affected the use of modals in their L2 writing. Also,
Hamp-Lyons and Mathias, (1994) found that culturally bound writing topics negatively affected the scores of L2 writers on standardized tests.

With this in mind, it was important to devise a writing prompt that balanced the topic and its wording so that it was relevant to first year community-college students without being limited to personal experiences or beliefs which could elicit culturally dependent language (Hinkle, 2009). Hinkle suggested a writing prompt that was worded to reflect knowledge as well as opinion, such as writing about sports or entertainment figures, fashion, digital technology, music, and videos. Most students had opinions about these things and even some second-hand factual knowledge. The writing prompt that was used for this study was chosen for the balance Hinkle suggested, with the intention of giving all the students equal access to a response that was meaningful but not culturally grounded. The prompt asked for the students to write an (expository) essay about a famous sports or television personality for whom they would like to see a street named. They were to describe the street and give reasons for their choice. (see Appendix B).

Coding of Data

I collected the questionnaires and writing samples from the three participant groups, and I analyzed clause combinations inherent in each of the texts for the number of main clauses and embedded clauses indicative of academic writing and hypotactic and paratactic clauses reflecting oral discourse. Each clause consisting of a finite verb was marked in the margin as an M-main; E-embedded; H-hypotactic, or P-paratactic clause. The examination of the clause structure in the writing samples provided information about the dependency of the writer on her/his oral language to create academic written texts. In addition, at the completion of my evaluation, I had an inter-rater reader check
every fifth essay for fidelity and accuracy. The reliability rate was 98.7% with 5 differences out of a total of 377 checks.

Instrumentation

Data Analysis

After collecting the data, I created an SPSS database. Each participant received a unique identifier and the percentage of main clauses, embedded clauses, hypotactic clauses, and paratactic clauses were entered into the database. Also, the ethnolinguistic group in which each participant was classified was entered. It was important, as well, to determine if the main clauses were used in simple sentences or in complex sentences, with hypotactic or paratactic clauses. In complex sentences, the main clause is the dominant clause in the hypotactic sentence and in the first clause in the paratactic sentence (see Chapter II). The large number of main clauses might lead readers to assume that they all represent academic writing when in fact the main clauses may be participants in complex sentences with hypotactic and paratactic clauses. Only simple main clauses or main clauses with embedded sentences account for academic writing.

The group means and standard deviations for each of the clauses was calculated and presented along with information on the other variables that were collected from the questionnaire (Appendix C) and previous high school reading and writing experiences. Subsequently, the differences among the three ethnolinguistic groups and the use of each of the four types of clauses was examined using the analysis of variance (ANOVA) technique after controlling for other variables. The other variables controlled for in ANOVA were determined based on results from the descriptive statistics of the information collected in the questionnaire. Prior to conducting ANOVA analyses, the
data was examined to ensure that the assumptions of ANOVA were met. These assumptions were that the dependent variable was normally distributed, and there was homogeneity of variance (e.g., the variance of the dependent variable was equal across all groups).

The ANOVA analysis approach used an F-statistic, which was a ratio of between-group variance over within-group variance (or error) to examine differences between groups (Keppel & Wickens, 2004). The significance level or \( p \)-value associated with the F-statistic was reported. For the purpose of this analysis, a \( p \)-value less than .05 was considered statistically significant. In addition to examining the significance level, the partial-eta squared measure of effect size was reported. In this analysis, partial-eta squared values of .01 were considered small; .09, medium, and .25, large.

When between-group differences were statistically significant, post-hoc tests were conducted to determine which groups were significantly different. The effect size provided information on how different the groups were. To find the effect sizes based on means, the following Cohen’s \( d \) formula was used: 
\[
d = \frac{M_2 - M_1}{s_p^2},
\]
where \( M_2 \) represents the mean for group 2, \( M_1 \) represents the mean for group 1, and \( s_p^2 \) represents the pooled variance. Cohen’s \( d \) effect sizes less than 0.20 indicate a small effect, between 0.20 and 0.50 indicate a medium effect, and greater than 0.80 indicates a large effect. The intent was to compare the types of clauses used by African American as ESD students and Hispanics and Haitians as Generation 1.5 students. By using SPSS software and ANOVA analyses, additional information, such as contrasting the writing skills of Hispanics and Haitians, was also collected. An examination of the clauses used in the
students’ written samples provided an understanding of the extent to which the students depended on their oral language, as well as the amount of experience or lack thereof that they had with academic writing and thus, their knowledge of the different lexical and grammatical resources in Standard English that distinguished oral discourse from written academic discourse.
CHAPTER IV

Results of Study

The findings demonstrated the degree to which the ESD and Generation 1.5 groups in particular were challenged in academic writing as well as the extent to which the three ethnolinguistic groups differed with respect to their tendency to draw on register features (in particular, clause structure) of spoken discourse in written academic discourse. The analysis of each student’s writing performance included evaluation of essays, questionnaires about home literacy experience, and high school course enrollment.

Data Findings

Questionnaire Data

The descriptive statistics for the questionnaire responses are displayed in Table 2. The sample for each of the three groups was equal with 15 people in each group (African American, Haitian, and Hispanic). There were more females (64%) than males (29%) in the sample. Most of the students were between the ages of 18 and 21 (80%); the mean age was 21.04 (SD = 5.26).

Thirteen respondents (29%) had lived in a country outside of the US: six students had lived in Haiti, three in the Dominican Republic, two in Cuba, and one in Spain. Nine of these respondents had been born outside of the U.S., but they had lived in the U.S. between 4 and 16 years with a mean of 10.33 (SD = 3.5). Of the respondents, 58% reported that their primary language was English, 22% Spanish, and 18% Haitian Creole. Of the respondents 22% reported that Spanish was spoken in their home, and 29% reported that Haitian Creole was spoken in their home. Note that all of the
respondents who reported Spanish was spoken in their home also reported that Spanish was the primary language used in their home. Of the 13 respondents who reported Haitian Creole was spoken in their home, 8 reported that this was the primary language used in their home. Eleven of the respondents (24%) reported that they had taken ESL classes. One student had taken ESL classes in high school, and the other ten students took ESL at the elementary level. This low number is not surprising since the students had already been identified as Generation 1.5 and not ESL.

The level of education of the mother was reported as 16% did not complete high school, 44% had a high school degree, and 20% had a college degree. The level of education of the father was reported as 16% did not complete high school, 44% had a high school degree, and 9% had a college degree.

Most of the respondents had graduated from a US high school (91%), while 9% had received a GED. Seventy percent of the respondents had taken at least one semester of intensive reading in high school, while 8% had taken at least one semester of standard reading. This information was not available for respondents who completed a GED. Most of the respondents (91%) had been enrolled in community college for one or two semesters.

Sixty-four percent of respondents reported that someone had read to them when they were young. Eighty-two percent reported that they currently read for pleasure.
Table 2

*Questionnaire Responses (N = 45)*

<table>
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<th>Variable</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
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<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Less than high school</td>
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<td>Father’s highest degree</td>
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<td>Less than high school</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>4</td>
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Note: Items where the number of respondents does not add up to 45 had missing responses.
Table 2 (Cont’d)

*Questionnaire Responses (N = 45)*

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<tr>
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<td>Semester’s enrolled in community college</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 4</td>
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<td>Did someone read to you when you were young?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you read for pleasure?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
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</table>

Note: Items where the number of respondents does not add up to 45 had missing responses.
High school enrollment records

The 45 participants in the study received their diplomas from a variety of places: thirty-one students attended 13 high schools in the county, five received GED’s, three graduated from high schools outside the county (2 outside the state), three graduated from charter schools, and one received a degree from a correspondence school. Transcripts were not available for two of the students. Of the 31 students who graduated from high schools in the county, two were enrolled in vocational programs, and three had graduated more than 10 years ago. For these reasons, generalizations about the high schools students attended could not be made.

After examining high school course enrollment, one common factor was that 78% of the students had been enrolled in reading classes in high school. Seventy percent of the student participants took at least two semesters of intensive reading in high school. Intensive reading is a remedial course for students who score a level 1 or 2 on the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) as well as other progress monitoring assessments (Florida Department of Education, 2009). In addition, 8% had taken at least one semester of standard reading (non-remedial). However, high school course enrollment records were not available for the 9% of the students who received a GED. An interesting note was that four of the students (1 Hispanic and 3 African American students) had been in Honors English for at least two years of high school before graduating. Honors English is considered to be an advanced course with a weighted Grade Point Average. The state of Florida requires students to earn four high school credits in English (Florida Department of Education 2009).
Clause analysis

According to SFL and Halliday’s (1994) analysis of clause structure, both hypotactic and paratactic clauses reflect oral discourse while main and embedded clauses reflect written academic discourse. In the analysis of clauses from student essays, the research questions specifically ask: 1) To what extent do African-Americans as ESD students transfer clause structures typical of the registers of spoken or conversational discourse into written academic discourse? (2) To what extent do Haitians and Hispanics as Generation 1.5 students transfer clause structure typical of the registers of spoken or conversational discourse into written academic discourse? (3) Do AAVE-speaking students as ESD’s show a higher frequency of clauses typical of speech than their Haitian and Hispanic Generation 1.5 counterparts? The descriptive statistics for the types of clauses used by African American AAVE speakers and students from a Haitian Creole background and a Hispanic Spanish language background is displayed in Table 3, as well as the mean percent of hypotactic, paratactic, main, and embedded clauses for each group and gender within and across groups.

Mean Percentage of Clauses

The mean percent of hypotactic, paratactic, main, and embedded clauses for each group is displayed by gender in Table 3.

Examples of Clause Usage

Referencing the results displayed in Table 3, the following information was determined about clause usage:

Hypotactic. The Haitian group had the highest mean percent of hypotactic clauses (22.64, SD = 9.78), followed by the Hispanic group (20.80, SD = 9.98), and the African
American (20.75, $SD = 10.94$). The overall group means for hypotactic clauses were not very different from the overall mean. Looking at gender, Hispanic males had the highest percentage of hypotactic clauses (29.53, $SD = 10.07$), followed by the Haitian males (20.89, $SD = 9.84$), and the African American males (14.71, $SD = 12.72$). There was not as much group difference within the female group; however, the mean percentage of hypotactic clauses for the Hispanics (17.62, $SD = 8.21$) was considerably lower than that of the African Americans (24.78, $SD = 7.91$) and the Haitians (23.81, $SD = 10.16$), who had similar means. Within the African American and Haitian groups, the females (24.78, $SD = 7.91$ and 23.81, $SD = 10.16$) had a higher mean percent of hypotactic clauses than the males (14.71, $SD = 12.72$ and 20.89, $SD = 9.84$), while within the Hispanic group males (29.53, $SD = 10.07$) had a higher percent of hypotactic clauses than the females (17.62, $SD = 8.21$).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Haitian</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypotactic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14.71 (12.72)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.89 (9.84)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24.78 (7.91)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23.81 (10.16)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20.75 (10.94)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.64 (9.78)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paratactic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18.18 (7.15)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23.12 (7.34)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17.30 (6.11)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.34 (6.58)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17.66 (6.31)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21.45 (8.58)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>59.43 (13.46)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>44.62 (13.38)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45.06 (9.04)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43.42 (13.75)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50.81 (12.83)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>43.90 (13.13)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embedded</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7.68 (4.36)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.37 (3.80)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12.86 (6.69)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.43 (8.79)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10.79 (6.26)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.01 (7.05)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Tables 4, 5, 7, 8, & 9 examples of clause usage have been taken verbatim from student essays. There is at least one example from each essay. For each sentence example, clauses are identified thereby indicating the students’ choices for clause structure in academic writing.

Table 4

*Hypotactic Clauses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Haitian</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. a) When he finished college</td>
<td>hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) he didn’t play in college</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) because his skills and basketball I. Q. was too great</td>
<td>hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. a) While my brothers would be in one corner wrestling</td>
<td>hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) I would be talking to my mom on the phone</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) while she was at work</td>
<td>hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) while she was at break</td>
<td>hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. a) If all pet owners knew him</td>
<td>hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) they would also think</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) (that) he should be honored too</td>
<td>hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. a) I believe</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) that they rub off on each other</td>
<td>hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) when it comes to caring about people and the community</td>
<td>hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>African American</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. a) We all must see</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) even though she’s retiring as a talk show host</td>
<td>hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) (that) she’s not retiring from her dedication and commitment to the world</td>
<td>hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. a) If there is a street to be named after anyone</td>
<td>hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) it should be her</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Paratactic.** The Haitian group also had the highest mean percent of paratactic clauses (21.45, \(SD = 8.58\)), followed by the African American group (17.66, \(SD = 6.31\)), and the Hispanic group (17.14, \(SD = 6.83\)). The means of the African American group and the Hispanic group were very similar. Haitian males had a slightly higher mean (23.12, \(SD = 7.34\)) than the African American males (18.18, \(SD = 7.15\)) and the Hispanic males (17.62, \(SD = 2.81\)); the latter two had similar means. The same pattern appeared for the females where the Haitians had a slightly higher mean (20.34, \(SD = 6.58\)) than the African Americans (17.30, \(SD = 6.11\)) and the Hispanics (16.97, \(SD = 7.92\)) who had similar means. Within all three groups, the males and females had similar means. Table 5 gives examples of paratactic clauses.

The African American group had the highest mean percent of main clauses (50.81, \(SD = 12.83\)), followed by the Hispanic group (43.10, \(SD = 11.75\)) and the Haitian group (43.90, \(SD = 13.13\)). There were bigger differences in the means on this clause type, but the standard deviations were also larger suggesting more spread out scores within the groups. Note that the Haitian group had the lowest mean here whereas in the clause types discussed above, they had the highest. Regarding gender, African American males had the highest mean (59.43, \(SD = 13.46\)), followed by the Haitian males (44.62, \(SD = 13.38\)), and the Hispanic males (41.88, \(SD = 6.48\)). A different pattern is seen for the females where the Hispanics have the highest mean (51.73, \(SD = 12.35\)), followed by the African Americans (45.06, \(SD = 9.04\)), and the Haitians (43.43, \(SD = 13.75\)). The differences between the groups within the females are not nearly as large as between the different groups within the males. Within the African American group, the males (59.43, \(SD = 13.4\)) had a much higher mean percent of main clauses than the females (45.06, \(SD = 9.04\)).
= 9.04); within the Haitian group, the means for the males (44.62, SD = 13.38) and females (43.42, SD = 13.75) were very similar, and within the Hispanic group the females (51.73, SD = 12.35) had a higher percent of main clauses than the males (41.88, SD = 6.48).

Table 5

*Paratactic Clauses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Haitian</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. a) People tries to be like him</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) but they can never be like him</td>
<td>paratactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. a) I would still go down Congress in Riviera</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) and see the high ways</td>
<td>paratactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) and remembered the changes and the things</td>
<td>paratactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. a) He helped give teens inspiration</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) has unique clothes and shoes created</td>
<td>paratactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) and always had a spot on the teams</td>
<td>paratactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. a) Her son was in jail</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) and she always believed in him</td>
<td>paratactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) and went to visit him every week</td>
<td>paratactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>African American</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. a) She feeds the hungry</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) house the homeless</td>
<td>paratactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) and give to the less fortunate</td>
<td>paratactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. a) Jordan has lead one team to the NBA Final 8</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) and has won most of them</td>
<td>paratactic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main clauses are either simple or complex clauses. As part of the analysis, the clauses were divided into two groups; simple and complex (Colombi, 2002). The simple clause was the independent clause; the complex clause could have a main clause and a subordinate, (hypotactic, paratactic, or embedded) clause (see Chapter II). This accounted for the large number of main clauses in the data, which might lead readers to assume that it indicated academic writing since main clauses are considered to be examples of academic writing along with embedded clauses (see Chapter II). Table 6 presents the mean percentage of main clauses that are simple and complex. Since each main clause was either simple or complex, the percentage of simple and percentage of complex clauses totaled for each group equals 100 percent. Tables 7 and 8 give examples of simple and complex main clauses from student essays. This is for informative purposes and is not directly related to the research questions.
Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Mean Percentage of Simple and Complex Main Clauses by Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Haitian</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>43.00 (22.61)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.00 (17.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28.77 (10.06)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>38.48 (20.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34.46 (17.24)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31.49 (20.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>57.00 (22.91)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>79.00 (17.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>71.23 (10.06)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>61.52 (20.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65.54 (17.24)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68.51 (20.79)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

*Main Clauses in Simple Sentences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Haitian</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. a) She spend most of her time helping her community.</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. a) Mr. Mourning made his mark in South Florida by creating foundations and charities for children.</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>African American</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. a) President Obama is more than just a president to me.</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8

*Main Clauses in Complex Sentences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As Dominant Clause with Hypotactic Clause</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Haitian</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. a) Martin Luther King said</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) that he had a dream.</td>
<td>hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. a) She also counsels people</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) who come on her show with personal issues to help them out.</td>
<td>embedded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>African American</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. a) He’s has a part time job</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) so he’s stay out of trouble.</td>
<td>paratactic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Hispanic group had the highest mean percent of embedded clauses (12.96, $SD = 7.00$), followed by the Haitian group (12.01, $SD = 7.05$), and the African American group (10.79, $SD = 6.26$). The differences in the means of these groups were not very big.

The Haitian males had the highest mean (11.37, $SD = 3.80$), followed by the Hispanic males (10.97, $SD = 3.09$), and African American males (7.68, $SD = 4.36$); these differences were not too great. The Hispanic females had the highest mean (13.69, $SD = 7.97$), followed by African American females (12.86, $SD = 6.69$), and Haitians females (12.43, $SD = 8.79$); these differences were not too great. Within all three groups, the females had higher means for embedded clauses than the males. Table 9 shows examples of embedded clauses.

Table 9

*Embedded Clauses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Haitian</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. a) I’m here to tell you about a person</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) that deserves such an honor of having a street sign in their</td>
<td>embedded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. a) The amount of power and money</td>
<td>main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) that she has given back to the community</td>
<td>embedded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) is amazing</td>
<td>main cont’d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Hispanic* |             |
| 1. a) I would like for her to be honored by having the street | main |
| b) that we live on | embedded |
| c) named after her | main cont’d |
| 2. a) There are very many people, famous and otherwise | main |
| b) who have had a street, a road, or even interstates named after | embedded |

*African American* |             |
| 1. a) He has a great family | main |
| b) that he loves so much | embedded |
| 2. a) I appreciate the message | main |
| b) (that) he is sending | embedded |
Table 10 shows examples of clause chaining, which is indicative of parataxis and hypotaxis and characteristic of transferring clauses from the speech register.

Table 10

*Examples from Student Essays of Clause Chaining Reflective of Oral Discourse*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haitian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>While there are many famous figures hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>who deserves to be recognized in many ways embedded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Barack Obama is one main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>who deserves to have a street named after him embedded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>because he has made history becoming the first Black president hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>many historic presidents have had streets named after them and paratactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g)</td>
<td>because he has set a path for the African Americans of tomorrow hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>I would be cool to have George Lopez as a street name main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>beside the people hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>that live there embedded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>is different hypotactic cont’d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>because I live right by the train tracks hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>and all you see is Hispanic and Black cross it every day paratactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Just as Jada Pinkett Smith has taken us somewhere in her career down a path hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>that has been so exciting hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>I know main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>(that) there’s a lot of people hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>that would be just as excited embedded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g)</td>
<td>as I am to see a street hypotactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h)</td>
<td>(that is) name Jada Pinkett Smith embedded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Analysis of Variance Results**

A Levene’s test of homogeneity was conducted for each of the clause types and the results are presented in Table 11. For each type, the null hypothesis of equal variances was accepted. In addition, bar graphs of the data for each of the clauses showed that the distributions followed a normal curve. Therefore, for each ANOVA examining the separate clause types, the significance level was set at 0.05.

Table 11  
**Results of Levene’s Test of Homogeneity for Each Clause Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause Type</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypotactic</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paratactic</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embedded</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 presents the results of separate two-way ANOVAs conducted on each of the clause types. The group variable (ethnicity) was used as a predictor variable, along with gender. There were no differences based on group, gender, or the interaction of group and gender for the paratactic clauses and embedded clauses; instead, the differences were noted in hypotactic and main clauses.

The interaction of group and gender was significant for hypotactic clauses, \( F = 4.33, \) \( p = .020. \) This means that the effect of group on the mean percentage of hypotactic clauses was dependent on gender. The effect size of the interaction was 0.18 suggesting that 18% of the variation in mean hypotactic clauses can be explained by the interaction of group and gender; this is a moderate effect size.
To further examine this interaction, the simple effects of group for males and females were examined separately using the MS error term from the full model. The results from this analysis are displayed in Table 13. While the $F$-test for both the males and females was not statistically significant, the $F$-test for the male group approaches significance, $F = 2.86, p = .069$. The effect size of this simple effect is 0.13 suggesting that 13% of the variation in males mean hypotactic clauses can be explained by group. Pairwise comparisons of the different groups demonstrated that the mean difference between Hispanics and African Americans males approached statistical significance (14.82, $SE = 6.40, p = .059$); while the differences between Hispanic and Haitian males (8.64, $SE = 7.16, p = .249$) and Haitian and African American males (6.18, $SE = 6.40, p = .352$) did not.

In addition, Cohen’s $d$ effect sizes were computed for each pair of groups which represents the distance between the group means in standard deviation units. Effect sizes less than 0.20 indicate a small effect, between 0.20 and 0.50 indicate a medium effect, and greater than 0.80 indicate a large effect. The Cohen’s $d$ for the Hispanic and African American males comparison is 1.26 which can be interpreted as 1.26 standard deviation units separate the means of these groups. The Cohen’s $d$ for the Hispanic and Haitian males is 0.87, and for the Haitian and African American males it is 0.54. The Cohen’s $d$ for the Hispanic and African American females is 0.89, for the Hispanic and Haitian females is 0.69, and for the Haitian and African American females is 0.11.

Another way to analyze this interaction is to examine differences within the groups based on gender. The results from the analysis are displayed in Table 14. The $F$-test for the African American group approaches significance, $F = 3.96, p = .053$
suggesting that within the African American group there are differences based on gender; the effect size of this simple effect is 0.09 suggesting that 9% of the variation in African American mean hypotactic clauses can be explained by gender use. The $F$-test for the Hispanic group was statistically significant, $F = 4.51, p = .040$ suggesting that within the Hispanic group, there are differences based on gender. The $F$-test for the Haitian group was not statistically significant, $F = 0.33, p = .569$ suggesting that within the Haitian group, there are not differences based on gender.

In addition, Cohen’s $d$ effect sizes for gender were computed for each pair which represents the distance between the group means in standard deviation units. The Cohen’s $d$ estimate for the African American group was 1.03 suggesting that gender has a large effect, and the means for males and females within the African American group are separated by 1.03 standard deviation units. The Cohen’s $d$ estimate for the Hispanic group was 1.38, and the Cohen’s $d$ estimate for the Haitian group was 0.29.

The interaction of group and gender was also significant for main clauses, $F = 3.33, p = .046$. This means that the effect of group on the mean percentage of main clauses was dependent on gender. The effect size of the interaction was 0.15 suggesting that 15% of the variation in mean main clauses can be explained by the interaction of group and gender; this is a moderate effect size.

To further examine this interaction, the simple effects of group for males and females were examined separately using the MS error term from the full model. The results from this analysis are displayed in Table 13. The $F$-test for the male group was statistically significant, $F = 3.35, p = .045$ suggesting that within the males, there are differences based on the group. The $F$-test for the female group was not statistically
significant, $F = 1.37, p = .266$ suggesting that within the females there are no differences based on the group. Pairwise comparisons of the different groups demonstrated that the mean difference between African American and Hispanic males was statistically significant (17.55, $SE = 7.86, p = .044, d = 1.66$), and the difference between African American and Haitian males approached statistical significance (14.81, $SE = 7.03, p = .055, d = 1.10$) while the difference between Haitian and Hispanic males was not statistically significant (2.74, $SE = 7.86, p = .733, d = 0.26$). Table 3 displays the means for each of these groups.

In addition, Cohen’s $d$ effect sizes were computed for each pair which represents the distance between the group means in standard deviation units. The Cohen’s $d$ for the Hispanic and African American males comparison is 1.66 which can be interpreted as 1.66 standard deviation units separate the means of these groups. The Cohen’s $d$ for the Hispanic and Haitian males is 0.26, and for the Haitian and African American males it is 1.10. The Cohen’s $d$ for the Hispanic and African American females is 0.61, for the Hispanic and Haitian females is 0.64, and for the Haitian and African American females is 0.14.

Another way to analyze this interaction is to examine differences within group based on gender. The results from the analysis are displayed in Table 14. The $F$-test for the African American group was statistically significant, $F = 5.16, p = .028$ suggesting that within the African American group, there are differences in main clauses based on the gender. The $F$-statistics for the Haitian, $F = 0.04, p = .842$, and Hispanic, $F = 1.97, p = .168$ were not statistically significant suggesting no significant differences based on gender within these groups. The Cohen’s $d$ estimate ($d = 1.34$) based on the mean
difference (14.37) suggests that gender has a large effect and that the mean of males and females within the African American group are separated by 1.34 standard deviation units.

In addition, Cohen’s $d$ effect sizes for gender were computed for each pair representing the distance between the group means in standard deviation units. The Cohen’s $d$ estimate for the African American groups was 1.34 suggesting that gender has a large effect and that the mean of males and females within the African American group are separated by 1.34 standard deviation units. The Cohen’s $d$ estimate for the Hispanic group was 0.90, and the Cohen’s $d$ estimate for the Haitian group was 0.09.

Table 12

*Results of ANOVA for Each Clause Type*

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>partial eta squared</th>
<th>power</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>.906</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group x Gender</td>
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<td>399.16</td>
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<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.72</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group x Gender</td>
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<td>.920</td>
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<td>.617</td>
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<td>Group x Gender</td>
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</table>

* $p < .05$
Table 13

Results of Tests of Simple Effects of Gender on Group for Significant Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>partial eta squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td><em>Males</em></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
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<td>154.24</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><em>Males</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Group</td>
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<td>197.34</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>.266</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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</table>

Table 14

Results of Tests of Simple Effects of Group on Gender for Significant Interactions

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<th>F</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>365.40</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>1.03</td>
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<td><strong>Main Clauses</strong></td>
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<td><em>African American</em></td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<td>743.40</td>
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<td>.028</td>
<td>1.34</td>
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<td><em>Haitian</em></td>
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<td><em>Hispanic</em></td>
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<td>284.05</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>.168</td>
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CHAPTER V
Conclusions and Implications

Discussion of findings

Motivated not only by the increasing number of linguistic minority students in community colleges who are not prepared for college-level English, this study was also driven by the lack of significant progress in the last four decades in educating these students. (Smitherman, 2004; Roberge, 2009). Today, the multicultural and linguistic minority population is growing, and we still have not bridged the achievement gap between these ethnolinguistic speakers and their mainstream counterparts in accessing the required texts of written academic English.

To better understand the writing levels or structure of the students, this study used systemic functional linguistics (SFL) as an analytical framework to examine the types of clauses produced by African American speakers of AAVE as ESD students and Haitian and Hispanic Generation 1.5 (G1.5) community college students. SFL is a theory of language (see Chapter II) that shows how language constructs meaning through the use of lexico-grammatical choices. In that way, different choices create different meanings according to the situation; this results in the register (Halliday, 1994). Therefore, students who are not familiar with the lexico-grammatical choices that comprise the written academic register have a tendency to transfer language with which they are familiar, the speech register, to their academic writing.

The purpose of this study was to examine the essays of three ethnolinguistic groups of community college students who were enrolled in remedial English classes to see if the types of clauses they transferred to academic writing were affected by their
linguistic backgrounds. The hypothesis stated that African Americans as ESD students coming from a linguistic background without an orthography used more hypotactic and paratactic clauses reflective of speech than main and embedded clauses reflective of academic writing in their writing. In the study, choices made by African American AAVE speakers were compared with Haitian and Hispanic Generation 1.5 students, who came from linguistic backgrounds that had written orthographies, though Haitian Creole may not have been the formal orthography of study by most Haitians (French has been the language of instruction in most Haitian schools). Based on this analysis, it was determined that all three ethnolinguistic groups made similar lexico-grammatical choices by using more hypotactic and paratactic clauses that reflected speech. Therefore, the results indicated that the three groups had similar challenges in their acquisition of written discourse. The findings also suggested that the type of linguistic background (AAVE, Haitian Creole, or Spanish) was not a factor, but that having a linguistic background other than Standard Academic English influenced the use of speech-like clauses. Another possible factor may be socio-economic status since academic success has been correlated with socio-economic status, as well as segregated ethnic groups (Labov, 1972).

In a similar study, Clachar (2004) found that community college students who were speakers of Caribbean Creole, which does not have a formal orthography, transferred more speech-like clauses to academic writing than ESL students, who came from backgrounds that had orthographies. A possible explanation for the differences between the results of the two studies may be explained by an ESL student having more literacy experiences with a standard or formal first language (L1) than a G1.5 student.
Thus, the ESL student could transfer his knowledge of language in the L1 to written academic discourse (Cummins, 1979). The results of this study also suggest that the lack of formal literacy instruction in a home language/dialect may have contributed to the similarity of clause choices for both groups (Lee & Suarez, 2009; Bunch, 2009). Literacy proficiency in the first language (speaking, reading, writing) helps to access the literacy skills in the second language (Cummins, 1979). In other words, if Generation 1.5 students had little or no experience in reading in their home literacy experiences, it made their experience similar to African American AAVE speakers, whose dialect has no orthography and consequently no relationship to a reading experience. So, unlike native speakers of Standard English, ESD and Generation 1.5 students may not have the advantage of transferring skills from their home language; as a result, they begin their academic experience lacking the background and proficiency that other students have (Scarcella, 2002; Heath, 1983).

Since good reading skills transfer to language development, I questioned students about home literacy experiences (see Chapter IV). The findings from self-reported home literacy questionnaires supported the results of this study’s clause analysis by showing a lack of quantity and quality in reading at home in any language. However, the limitations of using self-reported data are described in the literature (Northrop, 1997; Gay, Mills, Airasian, 2006). For example, in this study a major drawback was that some questions were not answered. To supplement literacy background information, I wanted to understand the study population’s high school literacy experiences since the burden of success in college is typically grounded in what happens at the secondary level (Harklau, 2001). Thus, a review of high school course enrollment supported the data from the
questionnaires by showing that reading was a problem with 78% of the students enrolled in at least one semester of remedial reading class. No other remedial classes were indicated in the records.

As reported previously, the means for types of clause usage were similar for all three groups, but Haitians used slightly more hypotactic and paratactic clauses than the other two groups, African Americans used more main clauses, and Hispanics had the highest number of embedded clauses. Also, there were significant differences between the groups among males in the use of hypotactic and main clauses while no significant interaction between groups were found with the females. In contrast, no significant interaction in gender and/or group was found in the use of paratactic and embedded clauses.

The data also show that males and females in each of the three ethnolinguistic groups used hypotactic and paratactic clauses typical of speech. For example, for hypotactic clauses females had a higher mean than males in the African American group, females and males were about the same in the Haitian group, and males had a higher mean than females in the Hispanic group. With regard to paratactic clauses, females and males had similar means in both the African American group and the Hispanic groups, and Haitian males had only a slightly higher mean than females using paratactic clauses.

Conversely, males and females used main and embedded clauses typical of written academic discourse differently. For instance, with regard to main clauses, males had a higher mean in the African American group, females and males were about the same in the Haitian group, and females had a higher mean in the Hispanic group. With embedded clauses, females in both the African American and Hispanic groups had higher
means than males while the males and females in the Haitian sample had similar means.
The results indicated that females in the African American group were not consistent in using both main and embedded clauses which reflected written academic discourse; on the other hand, females in the Hispanic group were consistent in using more main and embedded clauses. Haitian females and males both had similar means in their use of clause types (see Table 3).

Previous literature has shown that females in general are more likely to use clauses which represent academic language (Price & Graves, 1980; Berlinger & Fuller, 1992). In this study females overall used more embedded clauses than males, but males used a slightly higher number of main clauses. In contrast, the means for speech-like clauses (hypotactic and paratactic) were similar for males and females. As a result, no generalizations could be made about gender in the use of the speech-like hypotactic/paratactic clauses versus the more prestigious use of the academic main/embedded clauses because the groups differed according to ethnolinguistic background.

Another consideration regarding the similarity of the findings concerns the participation of students in today’s pop culture. This phenomenon has meant the appropriation of AAVE features in the language of today’s youth to have social acceptance; therefore, the oral language of the Generation 1.5 students and the African American students, as well as students from other cultural and linguistic backgrounds, has in many ways converged (Sweetland, 2002). It is a result of oral language playing an important role in the students’ socialization since social practices affect the type of language that develops in different social contexts (Achugar & Colombi, 2008).
Implications of study

There were several implications. First, every college student who does not pass the College Placement Test should fill out a home literacy questionnaire to inform the teacher or administrator about his or her language and reading background. If there is another language/dialect spoken at home, the degree of literacy in that language must be known to better serve the student. With particular regard to G1.5 students, teachers need to inquire about a home language since they are often fooled by the oral English proficiency of these students. The fact that Generation 1.5 students are characteristically orally fluent in English often sets high expectations for ability in other areas. In a study about generic reading assessments being ineffective for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, Avalos (2003) stated that oral proficiency in the L2 did not presuppose reading ability in the L2.

Also, the findings make the point that African American speakers of AAVE need to be given as much consideration in how they acquire language needed for the academic register as speakers from other linguistic backgrounds since they manifest similar choices of clause usage. Using SFL to analyze lexico-grammatical choices gives AAVE the linguistic respect that it deserves in the classroom (Smitherman, 2004). SFL does not judge the value of other speech forms; instead, it presents a contrast of language choice with the expected register (Bloor & Bloor, 2004). Therefore, the results indicate that AAVE should be respected as a “second language” with AAVE speakers receiving linguistic support during instruction while acquiring standard English in classrooms (Smitherman, 2004).
Furthermore, the results implied that students needed knowledge of the specific lexico-grammatical features appropriate for academic texts, such as nominalization or the grammatical metaphor and lexical density, which indicated some progression toward written academic discourse (see Chapter II). Delpit (1988) said that low-SES and minority students suffer from using a natural writing process because it does not focus on the formal features of academic writing and denies information to students who do not have the same access to language outside of school as mainstream students do. Explicit instruction about the grammatical features is fundamental to understanding the types of clauses requisite for constructing academic writing, as advocated by Zwiers (2008; 2009).

With regard to the implementation of the study, the writing prompt elicited many thoughtful essays, but a few students in each of the classes voiced frustration with the topic. Although the topic was carefully chosen because it was thought not to be culture-coded, there was an experiential void. Some students could not relate to naming a street or conceive that they could have that opportunity. There was also frustration at receiving a “different” topic. Students are used to receiving familiar topics with which they and their professors are comfortable, such as describing “A Dream Vacation” or “A Memorable Event”. It was apparent that the students needed practice writing outside the proverbial “box.” To allay their fears, I gave some background information about how streets were named, and it appeared to help; however, in retrospect, a more familiar topic for the essay prompt may have produced different sentence structures.
Conclusion

Even with the expansion of knowledge and educational research over the past thirty years, there is still low achievement among African American, Haitian, and Hispanic students, as well as other minority language speakers (Bailey, 2000). With the growth of the multilingual and multicultural population, the problem keeps growing. From the time of the King vs. Ann Arbor decision in 1979, which centered on the lack of achievement for African American children, the gap still exists (Smitherman, 2004). Moreover until recently, Generation 1.5 students have been generally overlooked in academic achievement conversation, and much of the research has either ignored Haitians, or combined Haitians and African Americans as Blacks or African-Americans even though the two groups come from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds (Harklau & Siegal, 2009). Moreover, most of the previous research on language proficiency has been concerned with oral proficiency, with the exception of few studies showing the potential of analyzing clause structure to gauge writing ability (Chiswick, 2009). For example, a few studies also looked at clause structure in a comparative analysis as it related to discourse organization (cf. Schleppegrell & Colombi, 1997; Clachar, 2004). Another, examined clause usage in a longitudinal study as an indicator of a student’s writing progress (cf. Colombi, 2002). Overall, this research has shown that having a linguistic background other than the Standard Academic English affects dialect speakers with regard to clause usage in writing, as much as speakers who have a different home language. In fact, both the ESD and Generation 1.5 groups transferred more clauses that reflected speech by using more hypotactic and paratactic clauses in the essays than main and embedded clauses.
Although the hypothesis for the study (AAVE speakers would transfer speech patterns in their writing more than G 1.5 students) was not proven, much information was gleaned that supports further investigation into the area of analyzing clause structure to teach academic writing, to assess development of a student’s acquisition of written academic discourse, to support understanding that dialect speakers, particularly AAVE speakers, have the same struggles as students from another language background, and to recognize the G1.5 student as having specific register needs.

From the initial classification by Rumbaut and Ima, (1988) of Generation 1.5 students as young immigrants who came here with their families, Rumbaut (2009) has expanded to include immigrants from the U. S. territories; “parachute kids” who are sent here to live with extended family and attend U. S. schools; native-born non-native speakers from linguistically different communities; transnationals, who have migrated in and out of the U. S.; and speakers of “other Englishes” from international English-medium schools. Now, Rumbaut (2009) has expanded the terminology to include designations such as 1.75 for students who came before age 6, and 2.00 for students who were born in the U.S. to immigrant parents, and 2.5 for students who were born in the U.S. and had only one immigrant parent. The term, Generation 1.5 needs to be universally defined, so it can be more helpful in promoting research and educational goals of this large group of students. The lack of definitive terminology emphasizes enormity of the problem and how far we are from a solution to assist children from diverse linguistic backgrounds in bridging the achievement gap.

In fact, many of the problems faced by students in acquiring written academic discourse have resulted from the dearth of the research for English-speaking students who
come from a different home language or dialect, and our society’s inability to accept
dialect speakers as “English as a second language” learners in school contexts. Teachers
have been confounded by these orally fluent English speakers and thus unaware of their
linguistic backgrounds, possibly contributing to reasons for academic achievement gaps,
and in often failure in academic settings. Previously, researchers had mostly centered on
students who had become accomplished writers in their first language (Dyson &
Freedman, 1991). This was not helpful for Generation1.5 and ESD, particularly AAVE-
speaking students. Although they are not considered ESL students within K-12 school
contexts, much of the research reveals that they too have linguistic struggles in accessing
the academic register. In 1989, Valdes reviewed studies about Hispanic writers and
determined that researchers had not assessed writing ability in the students’ first language
or oral ability in the second. This meant that students of differing abilities were grouped
together. In 1992, Valdes was still concerned with the lack of adequate criteria for
assessing the oral language proficiency of ESL students. Her contention was that many
times the date of arrival in the US or the language spoken at home was the major
determining factor for an ESL qualification. She believes that there is a need to know
more about literacy in the home language and in the oral language of the second language
in order to form conclusions about the relationship between oral and written language.
For example, Cummins’s (1979) research supports the idea that language abilities in the
first language transfer to a second language, but says that there is a linguistic threshold
that must be met in the first language in order for this to occur. Although Mohan and Lo
(1985) were not convinced that this “linguistic threshold” took place, they appear to have
been in the minority.
Furthermore, there is an urgent need for more research to address the increasing number of language minority students who want to go to college, but who are not prepared, especially in the area of academic writing. Language minority students often enter college, especially community college, which has an “open door” policy, encountering educational demands for which they are not prepared (Bunch, 2009). As of now, the community colleges are the road to higher education for a majority of language minority students, but those who attend community college will not be in a position to transfer to a four year college if their transition into community college doesn’t come with sufficient academic preparation (Bunch, 2009). The burden of remediation should not only be on the community colleges, but also on the K-12 institutions. For example, Bunch (2009) states that there is not enough remediation going on in secondary education to meet the needs of the AAVE speaker and the Generation 1.5 student.

Using SFL supports analysis and foci on specific strengths and weaknesses which will address, improve, and expand a student’s writing in different texts (Schleppegrell & Go, 2007). It also supports a means to show a student’s progress and adequately measure writing proficiency, which may help in future policy decisions (Colombi, 2002; Wiley & de Klerk, 2009). With this approach, teachers can explicitly point out the requisite register to all language minorities who struggle with academic language and not devalue students’ linguistic backgrounds. At the same time the organizational structure of SFL uses grammar features, such as conjunctions, pronouns, nominal group structures, nominalization-grammatical metaphor, and lexical density, and their purposes lend themselves to a natural order of explicit instruction of academic language features. Since students need to learn to respond to the required writing assignments, they can be
shown how all of these features can be used to express different meanings and create more efficient clauses (Schleppegrell & Go, 2007). In this way, students are given the opportunity to get specific feedback that is directly related to the assignment, see the structure they are expected to write at school, and acquire academic writing that is functional for different writing tasks (Schleppegrell & Go, 2007).

**Limitations of the study**

There were limitations within this study that need to be acknowledged and addressed. One limitation was the small sample size. As a result of the small sample size, there was an issue with statistical power, and I could not examine other covariates that may have been of interest, such as examining childhood reading/help or examining if a student was ever in ESOL. Another limitation, as previously mentioned, was the self-reported data from the questionnaire. First, I would refine the questions in an attempt to better determine the degree of literacy in the home language of G1.5 students. Then, in a future study, I would try to obtain that information using the questionnaire as a protocol in an interview or audio-taped interview where I could probe for more information.

All in all, I believe this study was valuable for showing that AAVE speakers as ESD students and Generation 1.5 students need as much linguistic support with literacy instruction as L2 students when acquiring Standard English particularly as it relates to academic writing.
REFERENCES


Professors:

Please hand out this writing prompt to all students and ask the students to respond to the prompt in a 5-paragraph essay. Ask students to use the paper that has been provided, answer the questions at the top of the page, and write the essay on every other line. I, the researcher, will be identifying students by their birth date; students should not include their names.

After all the essays have been completed, I will collect them.

Thank you for your participation.
APPENDIX B

Date of birth_____

Identify yourself as ___ Caucasian, ___ African American, ___ Afro-Caribbean, ___ Asian, ___ Hispanic, ___ Native American, ___ Other

Writing Prompt

Please write a five-paragraph expository essay about a famous sports figure or television personality for whom you would like to see a street named. Describe the street and state your reasons why the person you have chosen deserves such an honor.
APPENDIX C

(Questionnaire adapted from Levi (2004)

1. Date of birth _____________

2. Identify yourself as ____ Caucasian, ____ African American, _____Hispanic
   _____ Afro-Caribbean, _____ Asian, , _____ Native American, _____ Other

3. Sex ___ male ___ female

4. Age____

5. Place of birth______________________

6. If your place of birth is outside the U.S., write how many years you have lived in
   the U.S.?_____

7. Have you lived in any other countries outside of the U.S.?
   Yes____   No____
   If so, where? ______________________

8. How many semesters have you been enrolled in community college?_____

9. What year did you complete your high school degree?____________

10. Check the space that applies to your high school experience.
    ____ graduated from U.S. high school
    ____ graduated from a high school in another country
    ____ received GED in U.S. in English
    ____ received GED in another language
    ____ graduated from college outside of U.S.
    ____ attended college in another country

11. What language is spoken in your home ___________________
12. Do you speak another language other than English?_______
   If so, what is that language(s)______________
   Which language did you learn first?___________
   What was your age when you learned the other language?
   English ____ other language___

13. Please check the appropriate boxes below.
   Where did you learn your other language?  Where did you learn English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Other language</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AT HOME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT SCHOOL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT WORK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FROM FRIENDS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THROUGH MOVIES/TELEVISION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN ANOTHER COUNTRY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN THE US</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER PLACE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Did you study any other languages in school besides English?_______
   If so, what languages?______________
   How many years?______________

15. Were you ever in an English as a Second Language (ESL) or English for
    Academic Purposes (EAP) class? _____ If so, in what grades?___________

16. In what language have most of your classes been taught?
   in elementary school?__________  in high school?______________
17. What language is primarily spoken in your home?___________________________

18. Please check the appropriate boxes.

In which language do you speak with the following people:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always in other language</th>
<th>Sometimes in other language</th>
<th>Equally in other language &amp; English</th>
<th>More English than other language</th>
<th>Always in English</th>
<th>Does not apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers/Sisters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Relatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping in stores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. In which language do you do the following?

Please check the appropriate boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>In English</th>
<th>Other language</th>
<th>Both English and Other language</th>
<th>Mostly English</th>
<th>Mostly other language</th>
<th>Does not apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read newspaper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to Music/CD’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop in stores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play sports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk on phone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to radio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read to others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. How many years of schooling did your mother have?  
   elementary? ________
   middle school? ________ high school? ________
   college? ________

21. How many years of schooling did your father have?  
   elementary? ________
   middle school? ________ high school? ________
   college? ________

22. Did someone read to you when you were young?  yes ________ no ________
23. In what language did someone read to you? 

How many times a month did someone read to you?

Check appropriate box below for times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0/month</th>
<th>1-2/month</th>
<th>3-4/month</th>
<th>5+/month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. Do you read on your own for pleasure? 

25. In what language do you read for pleasure? 

How many times a month do you read?

Check the appropriate box below for times?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0/month</th>
<th>1-2/month</th>
<th>3-4/month</th>
<th>5+/month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
26. What were the names of some of the magazines, newspapers, and books that were shared with you or you read?_________________  ________________
    ________________

27. Did someone help you daily with your homework?

    ____ mother
    ____ father
    ____ sister/ brother
    ____ grandparents
    ____ other

28. In what language did someone help you with homework?____________________________

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire.
### APPENDIX D

**Criteria for identifying speakers of AAVE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic Utterances</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>r-lessness</strong></td>
<td>Examples: guard = god, court = caught, sore = saw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>l-lessness</strong></td>
<td>Examples: help = hep, toll = toe, fault = fought</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simplification/weakening of consonants and consonant clusters</strong></td>
<td>Examples: past = pass, meant = men, hold = hole, seat = seed = see</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manner of articulation of certain consonants and vowels</strong></td>
<td>Examples: breath = brea, mouth = mouf, bath = baf, find = found = fond, boil = ball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Habitual be</strong></td>
<td>Examples: When June come, I be outta school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E
Linguistic Features of African American Vernacular English
(adapted from Rickford, 1999)

Phonology:

Consonants

1. The **voiceless interdental fricative** [θ] in word- initial position in Standard English such as the initial sound in “thin” is realized as a voiceless dental stop [t] in **word initial position** in AAVE.
   
   Example: “thin” (SE)
   Example: “tin” (AAVE)

2. The **voiced interdental fricative** [ð] in word- initial position in Standard English such as the initial sound in “they” is realized as a voiced dental stop [d] in word initial position in AAVE,

   Example: “they” (SE)
   Example: “dey” (AAVE)

3. The **voiced interdental fricative in the word- medial position** [ð] in Standard English is pronounced “v” in AAVE.

   Example: “brother” (SE)
   Example: “brovah” (AAVE)
4. Also in AAVE, the voiceless interdental fricative [\(\theta\)]

   **in word-medial position** may be pronounced “f’ in AAVE.

   Example: “nothing” (SE)
   Example: “nofin” (AAVE)

5. The voiceless interdental fricative [\(\theta\)] **in word-final position** in Standard English such as the final sound in “bath” is realized as a voiceless labiodental fricative [f] in word-final position in AAVE.

   Example: “bath” (SE)
   Example: “baf” (AAVE)

6. **Consonant clusters in word-final position** such as “st” in ‘test’

   often delete the [t] in AAVE if the next word begins with a consonant but not as often if the next word begins with a vowel.

   Example: “fast runner” (SE)
   Example: “fas runner” (AAVE)
   Example: “He’s a fast operator” (SE & AAVE)

7. Also, in AAVE there is a reduction of Standard English clusters in **word-final position with the voiced dental stop [d]**

   Example: “hand” (SE)
   Example: “han” (AAVE)
8. Similarly, the voiced dental stop [t] in word final position in S English such as in the word “most” is absent in AAVE

Example: “most” (SE)

Example “mos” (AAVE)

9. In AAVE, there is a reduction in the pronunciation of the final single consonant after a vowel.

Example: “man”, “cat” (SE)

Example: “ma”, “ca” (AAVE)

10. There is a reduction or deletion of “l” after a vowel in AAVE

Example: “help”, (SE)

Example: “he’p” (AAVE)

11. In addition, the r” that is pronounced in Standard English after vowels, “o” and “u” is reduced or deleted in AAVE.

Example: “door”, “four”, “sister” (SE)

Example: “douh”, “fouh”, “sistuh” (AAVE)

12. Particularly when, “r” comes after a vowel in word-final position, it is reduced before words beginning with consonants

Example: “four pigs” (SE)
Example: “fouh eggs” (AAVE),

or when a vowel follows “r” in the same word, there is reduction.

Example: “story”, “Carol” (SE)

Example: “st’ry”, Ca’ol” (AAVE)

13. There is reduction of word-initial “d” or “g” for tense auxiliaries in AAVE.

Example: “I don’t know”, “I’m gonna do it” (SE)

Example: “ah ‘on know”, “ah’m ‘a do it” (AAVE)

14. **Transposition of two adjoining consonants** is characteristic of AAVE.

Example: “ask” (SE)

Example: “aks” (AAVE)

15. In AAVE, the **voiced fricatives [v] and [z]** become voiced stops [d] and [z] when they are in medial position before a nasal sound.

Example: “isn’t” (SE)

Example: “idn’t” (AAVE)

**Vowels and Dipthongs**

1. In AAVE, **dipthongs** “oy” and “ay” are likely to be reduced to monothongs.

Example: oy =“boy”, ay = “I” (SE)

Example: oy= “boah”, ay= “ah” (AAVE)
2. **Merger of sounds** [ɛ] and [i] before nasals in AAVE makes “pin” sound like “pen”

**Stress**

1. In AAVE, **stress** is on the first syllable as in “PO’ lice” and “HO’ tel” whereas in Standard English the stress is on the last syllable.

**Morphology**

*“S” as a suffix*

1. In Standard English, the possessive is marked by an “s”.
   
   In AAVE, there is no “s” ending for **possession**.
   
   Example: “my daddy’s car” (SE)
   
   Example: my daddy car (AAVE).

2. In Standard English, the “s/es” forms the plural. However, in AAVE, the plural “s” is often added to words that form the plural irregularly;

   Example: “children” becomes “childrens” in AAVE.
   
   Example: “men” becomes “mens” in AAVE.

   often “s/es” is not added to form the plural in AAVE.

   Example: “two toys” (SE)
   
   Example: “two boy” (AAVE)

3. Also, in AAVE, present tense verbs are uninflected in the **third-person singular**. Thus, “s” which appears in the third person singular in Standard
English is omitted in AAVE.

Example: “She writes letters” (SE).

Example: “She write letters” (AAVE)

4. In addition, in AAVE, “don’t” is used instead of the SE “doesn’t” and “have” (AAVE) instead of “has” (SE).

Example: “It doesn’t matter” (SE)

Example: “It don’t matter”(AAVE)

Example: “He has money” (SE)

Example: “He have money” (AAVE)

Past tense markers

1. Due to the reduction of standard English consonant clusters, the voiceless dental stop [t] in word-final position in the Standard English is not pronounced in AAVE.

Example: “passed” (SE)

Example: “pass” (AAVE)

2. The voiced dental stop [d] in word-final position in Standard English is also reduced and not pronounced in AAVE.

Example: “rubbed” (SE)

Example: “rub” (AAVE)

3. However, when “ed’ is a past tense morphological ending and follows ‘t’ or “d’, it is a pronounced as a separate sound.
Other verb endings

1. In AAVE, realization of “ng” as “n” results in verb ending in “ing” in Standard English is reduced to “in” in AAVE.

   Example: She’s working every day (SE)
   Example: She workin every day (AAVE)

2. Also, in AAVE “ing” may sound like “ang” and “ink” may be realized as “ank”

   Example: “thing” (SE)
   Example: “thang” (AAVE)

Syntax

1. **Copula deletion** is a feature of AAVE that omits the verb “to be” such as “is” and “are”. It is comparable to use of the present tense of the verb “to be” in Standard English in a contracted form.

   Example: That’s my house (SE)
   Example: That my house (AAVE)

2. The “habitual be” and sometime “bees” is used in AAVE to express continuous or repeated action. It is equivalent to a verb in Standard English expressing continuous action.

   Example: She is cooking (SE).
   Example: She be cooking (AAVE).
   Example: She bees cookin (AAVE)
Often, it is used with auxiliary “do” in questions, negations, or tags.

Example: “Do she be cookin?” (AAVE)

Example: “She don’t be cookin, do she? (AAVE)

3. In AAVE, the **invariant habitual be** is also used to express the future “will be” in SE.

   Example: “He will be there” (SE)

   Example: “He be there” (AAVE)

4. AAVE has the use of “**steady**” after the **invariant be and a progressive** verb to show consistent actions.

   Example: “He’s always looking at the car.”(SE)

   Example: “He be steady lookin at the car.”(AAVE)

5. In AAVE, the **unstressed been** is used instead of the present perfect progressive tense “has been speaking” used in Standard English. It can occur with time adverbials.

   Example: “Since last night, he has been speaking with her.” (SE).

   Example: “Since last night, he been speakin with her.” (AAVE)

6. In contrast, the **stressed been** is used in AAVE to mark remotely that the action began in the past and is still going on. It is also equivalent to the present perfect tenses in Standard English “has been”
Example: “She has been gone a long long time (and still is).” (SE)
Example: “She bin gone.” (AAVE).

7. In AAVE, “**done**” is used to show a completed action. Thus, “**done**” is used as an auxiliary instead of using the auxiliary “to have”, which is used in English

   Example: “I already finished it” (AAVE)
   Example: “I done finished it” (AAVE)

8. The use of “**be done**” in AAVE is similar to the future/conditional perfect in Standard English.

   Example: “He will have finished the car” (SE).
   Example: “He be done had the car” (AAVE).

9. In AAVE, “**had**” is often used with a past tense verb to express the simple past.

   Example: “After, she went home.” (SE).
   Example: “After, she had went home.” (AAVE)

10. To show **negation**, AAVE speakers may use “ain’t instead of “haven’t” or “didn’t”, which are used in Standard English. There is also use of the “double-negative”.

   Example: “I haven’t seen him.” (SE)
Example: “I ain’t seen him.” (AAVE).
Example: “I ain’t seen no man.” (double-negative-AAVE).

11. The “existential it” notes the existence of something in AAVE.
   It is comparable to using “there is” or “there are” in Standard English.
   Example: “Mary is smart, and there’s nothing too good for her.” (SE).
   Example: “Mary is smart and it’s nothing too good for her.” (AAVE).

12. There is use of singular third person “is” and “was” in AAVE in place
    of plural third person “are” and “were” in SE.
    Example: “They are hungry.”, “They were here.” (SE)
    Example: “They is hungry.”, “They was here.” (AAVE)

13. There is a use of appositive pronouns in AAVE, which are omitted in SE.
    Example: “That man told me.” (SE)
    Example: “That man, he told me.” (AAVE)

Questions

14. In AAVE, the auxiliary, which is inverted in SE questions, is omitted
    in yes-no questions. There is reliance on intonation to convey a question.
    Example: Did Mary leave? (SE)
    Example: Mary leave?
15. In **direct questions** in Standard English, the auxiliary or main verb is inverted with the subject. In AAVE, there is no inversion of subject-verb, but a rising intonation of the voice to suggest a question.

Example: Mary, where did you go? (direct, Standard English).

Example: Mary, where you go? (direct, AAVE, with intonation & omission of “do”).

Example: I asked Mary where she went? (indirect, Standard English).

Example: I asked Jane where she did go? (indirect, AAVE)

(Rickford, 1999)