Spring 2019

Stylistic imitation as an English-teaching technique: pre-service teachers’ responses to training and practice

Min Yi Liang
Eastern Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: https://dc.ewu.edu/theses

Part of the Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons, Curriculum and Instruction Commons, Educational Methods Commons, and the Rhetoric and Composition Commons

Recommended Citation
https://dc.ewu.edu/theses/572

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research and Creative Works at EWU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in EWU Masters Thesis Collection by an authorized administrator of EWU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jotto@ewu.edu.
Stylistic Imitation as an English-Teaching Technique:
Pre-Service Teachers’ Responses to Training and Practice

A Thesis
Presented To
Eastern Washington University
Cheney, Washington

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree
Master of Arts: English
With an Emphasis in
Teaching English as a Second Language

By
Min Yi Liang
Spring 2019
THESIS
of
Min Yi Liang
Approved by

__________________________________________________________
LaVona L. Reeves, Ph. D.
Professor of English
Chair, Graduate Study Committee

DATE _______________________

__________________________________________________________
Tracey McHenry, Ph. D.
Associate Professor of English
Member, Graduate Study Committee

DATE _______________________

__________________________________________________________
Mary Parker, M. A.
Instructor, Asia University America Program
Member, Graduate Study Committee

DATE _______________________
Abstract

This action research case study project examines stylistic imitation as an English-Teaching technique and includes (1) a review of literature about the history of stylistic imitation and current college composition practice, (2) an analysis of the close imitation journals which were written by senior English majors and minors by following the model paragraph from Katharine Anne Porter’s “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall” (1965), and (3) writers’ comments and reflections on doing stylistic imitation. Stanley Fish (2005) argued: “[s]tudents can’t write clean English sentences because they are not being taught what sentences are” (as cited in Stodola, 2013, p. 57). Lacking knowledge and practice, international students who enroll in colleges in the United States are not familiar with the American writing patterns. For this reason, the author argues that stylistic imitation can be a pedagogical method for learners, not only English language learners but also native English-speaking students. Writing the freestyle journals and close imitation journals, the 14 participants who were pre-service English teachers expressed their own and their families’ voices through the stories they wrote. By analyzing and interpreting the journals, the author explains how and why stylistic imitation can be used in classroom.
Acknowledgments

I would like to take this chance to express my thanks to many teachers who have taught me and contributed to my education, especially in the United States. My sincere gratitude goes to Mr. Vince Eberly, who was my English teacher in Central Valley High School. Mr. Eberly not only helped me with my English but also supported me in many ways: he taught me many useful English lessons, such as the Jane Schaffer Paragraph; he helped me to revise many papers that were not even from his class; he encouraged me to become a teacher. Mr. Eberly is more than a teacher to me—he is like a father who was guided and helped me through struggles. In addition, I want to thank Dr. Gina Petrie, my professor in the English as a Second Language (ESL) minor program, who helped me to improve my writing skills with weekly writing tasks and conferences. During the conferences, she patiently explained all the errors I made and analyzed my common errors. I appreciate all of her time and help.

Furthermore, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my professor and my thesis director, Dr. LaVona Reeves, who provided me teaching opportunities in her classes as an intern which also helped me to improve my English skills and teaching skills. During the conferences between drafts of essays and the thesis meetings, Dr. Reeves always patiently helped me to edit my writings. This thesis would never have been possible without her time, help, and patience. The same as Mr. Eberly, Dr. Reeves influenced me a lot. I am so fortunate to have her as my professor, internship supervisor, and thesis chair in the TESL Master’s Program. I would be remiss if I did not also thank Dr. Tracey McHenry, who always encouraged me and complimented my writing which helped me to gain confidence. I also would like to thank Mary Parker, my third committee member, for her time as a committee member and her guidance when I was volunteering in her AUAP classes over the years.
# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................. iii
Acknowledgments ................................................................................................... iv
Chapter 1 ............................................................................................................... 1
Chapter 2 ............................................................................................................. 12
Chapter 3 ............................................................................................................. 31
Chapter 4 ............................................................................................................. 39
Chapter 5 ............................................................................................................. 65
Chapter 6 ............................................................................................................. 74
References .......................................................................................................... 82
Vita ....................................................................................................................... 90

## List of Tables

Table 1. List of the Subjects of the Freestyle Journals by Participants
Table 2. Syntax Structure of the Original Model
Table 3. List of the First Sentence of Close Imitation and Its Subject by the Participants
Table 4. Summary of Students’ Comments on Stylistic Imitation

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Brush and Ink
Figure 2. Penmanship Book for Chinese
Figure 3. Example of My Handwriting in Lines
Figure 4. Penmanship Book for English
Figure 5. Different Position While Students Were Writing
Figure 6. Stylistic Imitation Prompt Page 1 (Reeves, 2019)
Figure 7. Stylistic Imitation Prompt Page 2 (Reeves, 2019)
Figure 8. Stylistic Imitation Prompt Page 3 (Reeves, 2019)
Figure 9. Process of Controlled Composition to Free Composition

## Appendixes

Appendix A. Consent Form
Chapter 1

Introduction

English Education in China and the United States

I have been an English language learner (ELL) since I was in fourth grade in elementary school in Taishan, China. Like other Chinese children, I was required to study English as well as Chinese literature and mathematics from early elementary school—some, like my younger sister, starting English in first grade. After I graduated from middle school and knew that I was immigrating to the United States with my sister and my mother, I went to study at an English language institute to improve my English skills, especially speaking and listening. At the beginning when I started to learn English, I did not have any goals related to foreign language learning. At the time, all I wanted was to memorize the vocabulary and its meaning in Chinese for passing all the English tests in the public schools. Speaking and listening were not as important to me as knowing how to spell the words and how to write some short sentences. However, by necessity, my motivation increased when I knew that I was moving to the United States. My primary goal was now to be able to communicate with people in the United States because I would soon have to speak English and understand what people were saying to me. After twelve years of living in the United States, I feel that my speaking and listening skills have improved; however, I still struggle with writing.

In the United States, starting in the 9th Grade, I have always wanted to improve my writing skills, but I did not receive much writing instruction or have much writing experience in China, where we wrote maybe a sentence here or there in English. We were never asked to write an essay in English, but in Chinese we did write lots of original
paragraphs. That all changed, however, when I learned the Jane Schaffer Paragraph which was taught by my high school English teacher, Vince Eberly, the teacher of English Language Development (ELD) at Central Valley High School, Spokane Valley, Washington. This is a fairly standard model of a short paragraph structure in the United States:

1. Topic sentence (TS)
2. Concrete detail (CD)
3. Commentary (CM)
4. Commentary (CM)
5. Concluding sentence (CS)

Jane Schaffer used color coding for each kind of sentence and for supporting detail. She also introduced the longer paragraph format:

1. Topic sentence (TS)
2. Concrete detail (CD)
3. Commentary (CM)
4. Commentary (CM)
5. Concrete detail (CD)
6. Commentary (CM)
7. Commentary (CM)
8. Concluding sentence (CS)

(Eberly handout, 2008; Wiley, 2000)

In “The Popularity of Formulaic Writing (and Why We Need to Resist)”, Mark Wiley (2000) stated that “[t]he fundamental goal of the Schaffer curriculum guide is obviously
to teach students how to write an essay” (p. 63). Mastering this paragraph structure helped me to understand Western writing patterns and to pass all of the required composition courses with high grades in high school and college.

After entering the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) Master of Arts in English Program, I realized that I still needed to improve my English writing even more. During these two years as a graduate student, I have worked hard on vocabulary and grammar, interning in two grammar classes with my mentor, Dr. Reeves, who introduced stylistic imitation to both graduate and undergraduate students. Practicing stylistic imitation in these classes, I not only learned rules of grammar but also practiced styles of writing. Therefore, the Jane Schaffer Paragraph and stylistic imitation have helped me considerably on my path to becoming a very competent writer, and I hope my experience as a writer will become my strength when I teach.

Moreover, my greatest strength as a teacher of English as a Second or Foreign language is my own experience as an ELL. It is often said that experience is the best teacher. For example, I have learned and practiced many forms of writing—poems, journals, essays, simulated letters, research papers, literacy narratives, and peer reviews. In my case, the Jane Schaffer Paragraph was the best way for me to understand a standard American writing pattern. Wiley (2000) argued:

> We writing teachers must recognize that writing contexts vary, writing tasks vary, and our students, in order to grow and succeed as writers, must gradually develop a repertoire of strategies for identifying and then handling the differences each situation presents. Based on his extensive research working with struggling writers in grades five through twelve, James Collins argues that, when writing is taught as a formula, teachers are providing students only ‘declarative knowledge’ about writing. Declarative knowledge is information about writing—'facts,' if we can call them that—that teachers dispense to students: essays have introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions; body paragraphs have topic sentences and supporting details; and so on. (p. 66)
Wiley continued by further breaking down and defining types of knowledge:

But students also need two other kinds of knowledge: procedural and conditional. Procedural knowledge answers the question of how to accomplish a given task, and conditional knowledge answers the question of when to make a particular choice. When applied to writing, all three kinds of knowledge are necessary. (p. 66)

In addition, Collins (1998) distinguished two kinds of knowledge writers need to succeed:

Declarative knowledge provides an awareness of content; procedural knowledge provides ways of remembering, obtaining, and constructing information to achieve communicative purposes; and conditional knowledge tells the writer what conditions call for selecting among options such as syntax, wording, tone, and register. In this formulation, writing strategies consist of both a set of controls (procedures) for accomplishing an end and a clear, intentional sense of when and how to use the controls (conditions). (53) (as cited in Wiley, 2000, p. 66)

To use the Jane Schaffer Paragraph as a starting step and to expand essays in order to create one’s writing style are skills that I have learned from my experience, and these will also help students who struggle with writing.

When talking about language teachers, there are different experiences and different perspectives among Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) and the Non-Native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) in English Language Teaching (ELT) (Aslan & Thompson, 2017; Ellis, 2016). Even today, when we know that NNESTs bring rich experiences as language learners and professional teachers, some still believe the native speaker fallacy which is “the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker” (Ellis, 2016, p. 604). Some argue that NNESTs are not the ideal teachers because of their “poorer oral skills and lack of knowledge about English language cultures” (Aslan & Thompson, 2017, p. 280); however, TESOL has a strong position statement on the matter:
For decades there has been a long-standing fallacy in the field of English language teaching that native English speakers are the preferred teachers because they are perceived to speak ‘unaccented’ English, understand and use idiomatic expressions fluently, and completely navigate the culture of at least one English-dominant society, and thus they will make better English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers than nonnative English speakers. As a result, nonnative English-speaking educators have found themselves often implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, discriminated against in hiring practices or in receiving working assignments in the field of teaching ESL or EFL (TESOL, 2019).

TESOL had tried to level the playing field for all language teachers and has asked NNESTs to take leadership roles:

However, as English language learners, nonnative English-speaking educators bring a uniquely valuable perspective to the ESL/EFL classroom, and so can closely identify with the cross-cultural and language learning experience that their students are experiencing. Research has shown that students do not have a clear preference for either native English-speaking educators or nonnative English-speaking educators, demonstrating that, in general, students do not buy into the ‘native speaker fallacy.’ (TESOL.org, 2019)

In fact, TESOL acknowledges possible benefits of not speaking English as a first language:

In many cases the nonnative English-speaking educator may also be an immigrant to an English-language-dominant country, and thus had to master both a second language and a second culture. These personal experiences may be similar to those of their students, and thus the nonnative English-speaking educator can serve as a powerful role model for students. (TESOL.org, 2019)

At the same time, our professional organization cautions against the binary:

The distinction between native and nonnative speakers of English presents an oversimplified, either/or classification system that does not actually describe the range of possibilities in a world where English has become a global language. More important, however, the use of the labels ‘native speaker’ and ‘nonnative speaker’ in hiring criteria is misleading, as this labeling minimizes the formal education, linguistic expertise, teaching experience, and professional preparation of teachers. All educators should be evaluated within the same criteria. Nonnative English-speaking educators should not be singled out because of their native language. (TESOL.org, 2019)

The same position statement raises the issue of discriminatory hiring practices:
TESOL strongly opposes discrimination against nonnative English speakers in the field of English language teaching. Rather, English language proficiency, teaching experience, and professionalism should be assessed along on a continuum of professional preparation. All English language educators should be proficient in English regardless of their native languages, but English language proficiency should be viewed as only one criterion in evaluating a teacher’s professionalism. Teaching skills, teaching experience, and professional preparation should be given as much weight as language proficiency. (TESOL.org, 2019)

I agree that the native language teachers have better fluency and pronunciation than some non-native teachers. However, the non-native language teachers have a learning experience of this language that the native teachers do not have. The native teachers without experience in learning a foreign language do not really understand the difficulties of learning a language. For me, I have been learning English for many years, and I have many different learning experiences with English, which will become my strength as an English teacher.

At first, with my Chinese accent, I did not want to teach English to students, and I did not think I was good enough to be an ESL teacher. After volunteering many hours at the Asia University America Program (AUAP), I found that I like to help other ELLs. Even though I still have my Chinese accent and am still working at perfecting my English, these challenges cannot stop me from helping others. In addition, I have interned in English 112, English 459, and English 564—Composition for Multi-Lingual Students, Grammar for Teachers, and Pedagogical Grammar and Composition, respectively. During the whole time I was interning in these different classes, I saw myself as having grown, not only with my grammar but also with my writing as I tutored both native and non-native speakers. Through my efforts to help them improve, I was more and more motivated to become an English teacher. My confidence increased when my master
teacher told me that I had a better understanding of grammar than most of the Americans in her three classes.

**Statement of the Problem**

In 2019, Dr. Reeves, Nouf Alkhidhr from Gonzaga, and I gave a workshop on the topic of stylistic imitation at the Spokane Regional ESL Conference. Our abstract follows:

Stanley Fish argued that ‘students can’t write clean English sentences because they are not being taught what sentences are’ (Stodola, 2013, p. 57) or what ‘good’ paragraphs look like. The O.E.D. defines style as ‘[t]he manner of expression characteristic of a particular writer… a writer’s mode of expression considered in regard to cleanness, effectiveness, beauty, and the like’ (cited in Stodola, p. 58). Noguchi further defines style as ‘[a]n author’s choice and arrangement of words, sentence structures, and ideas as well as less definable characteristics such as rhythm and euphony’ (in Stodola, p. 59). As ESL teachers and creative writers ourselves, we demonstrate how to do innovative stylistic imitation, and we model differentiated instruction by level, age, and purpose. By teaching reading and writing together, we offer our original materials as examples of what this kind of imitation is and how to use excerpts from Shel Silverstein & J. K. Rowling for younger writers & Katherine Anne Porter & Lakota memoirist, Delphine Redshirt, for higher level writers. This simple and highly teachable technique bridges grammar and content instruction. The emphasis on style is not ornamental, but practical and rhetorical—it provides writers tools for crafting sentences and paragraphs that appeal to particular audiences of their choosing. We provide examples of our own writing and our students’ writing to show how writers vary their ways of using models as heuristics or places to find ideas for writing both creative and academic pieces. We move from close to free imitation so that writers have no need to concern themselves with issues of plagiarism. Participants will also experience stylistic imitation and share their writing if they wish. We provide materials they can adapt for their own students. (Reeves, Liang, & Alkhidhr, 2019).

The workshop was packed, and we had to turn some teachers away due to lack of seating.

In fact, we were very surprised at how many people attended.

Like me, many international students who enroll in college in the United States are not familiar with the American writing patterns. Because of their lack of understanding and practice, these students struggle in many classes which include writing
assignments. As a future English instructor, I am concerned about English Language Learners (ELLs), not only completing those required writing assignments but also understanding American writing patterns.

Based on my own experience as a second language writer, I argue in this thesis that stylistic imitation can be a pedagogical method for learners; it is not only for ELLs but also for native English-speaking students—both gifted and struggling native writers. Therefore, the purpose of this research project was to

1. review the literature on imitation in the ancient time and the past few decades and controlled composition;
2. conduct action research through a case study of 14 pre-service English teachers, including English majors, English as a Second Language undergraduate majors, and various English minors who would be teaching English alongside their major.
3. introduce and practice stylistic imitation with novice teachers; and
4. examine the use and benefits of stylistic imitation as pedagogy.

**Research Questions**

To achieve the purpose of the present study, I aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is style?
2. What is stylistic imitation?
3. How does stylistic imitation help students express themselves following a model paragraph written by an established American writer?
4. How do the students respond to doing stylistic imitation in a senior level Grammar for Teachers class?
Researcher’s Assumptions

For qualitative research, our international professional organization, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), asks researchers to disclose their assumptions about their research questions, subjects’ backgrounds, learning arrangements, and other aspects of the project that might influence the researcher’s interpretation of results. Before collecting and analyzing the data, I had made the following assumptions.

1. Learners will be able to write the freestyle journal with the content and the spirit that were created by Dr. Reeves’ model of the freestyle journal.
2. Learners will be able to follow Katherine Anne Porter’s model and Dr. Reeves’ model of stylistic imitation of the syntactic structure.
3. Learners will be able to tell their stories through the formulaic syntactic structure.

Research Methods

qualitative research.

Sharan Merriam and Robin Grenier (2019) define qualitative research as seeking understanding of “how people understand and experience their world at a particular point in time and in a particular context” (p. 4). I have been interested in helping students to understand some specific American writing patterns and improve their writing skills. The present study incorporates action research and case study methods in order to answer the research questions.

action research.

Lin Norton (2019) defines action research as a reflection on some issue in pedagogy in order to solve the problem through actions that will be taken by the
instructor based on the results of the project (p. 1). For this thesis, I am seeking an answer about using stylistic imitation as pedagogy for helping students understand certain American writing patterns and improve writing skills at the sentence and paragraph levels. This action research took place in the Grammar for Teachers course in winter quarter of 2019 with 14 of 25 students giving consent (Appendix A) to include their stylistic imitations in this thesis.

**case study.**

In TESOL, we define this method in this way for our purposes:

case study research [is] aimed at understanding a bounded phenomenon by examining in depth, and in a holistic manner, one or more particular instances of the phenomenon. Case study research in TESOL and second language acquisition (SLA) has its origins in psychology and linguistics…, with a focus on the development of L2 syntax, morphology, phonology, and so on, as analyzed by an ostensibly objective researcher. (TESOL.org, 2019)

In the present study, the instructor and researcher introduced the phenomenon of stylistic imitation to tell students’ stories from their own lives:

More recently, TESOL case studies have adopted the more subjective and interpretive stance typical of case studies in education and other fields (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996; Johnson, 1992; Stake, 1994, 1995), with less emphasis on the acquisition of discrete linguistic elements and more emphasis on such issues as learners' and teachers' identities, skill development and its consequences for learners, teachers' professional development experiences, and the implementation of language policies in programs and countries. Both approaches are legitimate but require sufficient detail and contextualization. (TESOL.org, 2019)

TESOL case studies often ask pre-service teachers to reflect on their own lives while practicing daily writing to increase fluency and reflect on their own lives while considering options for teaching their future students. In the present case study, 14 pre-service English teachers were introduced to and practiced stylistic imitation. They were then asked to reflect on their own experience with stylistic imitation.
Overview of the Thesis by Chapter

This thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter 2 is a review of literature about (1) the history of imitation since the Greek classical period, (2) current and relevant college composition practices, (3) controlled composition, and (4) imitation as pedagogy. Chapter 3 is the researcher’s literacy narrative. Chapter 4 includes (1) research methods, (2) collection and presentation of journals and stylistic imitation from undergraduate students from Grammar for Teachers, (3) the content and syntactic analysis of the stylistic imitation they did, and (4) a summary of the findings. Chapter 5 is a brief discussion of findings from the freestyle journals and stylistic imitation journals, students’ comments on stylistic imitation, the researcher’s stylistic imitation, and the researcher’s reflection on stylistic imitation. Chapter 6 is the conclusion including implications of the findings for using stylistic imitation as pedagogy, discussion of the research questions, re-visitation of assumptions, limitations of the present study, recommendations for future research, and final reflections on the project.
Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Chapter 2 is meant to provide readers with a brief history of imitation, current college composition practices, concepts of controlled composition, and views of imitation pedagogy.

The History of Imitation

Imitation, “copying the writing of others for the improvement of one’s own skill” (Gorrell, 1981, p. 313), is not new as a technique; it was one of the methods that was used as common practice to teach rhetoric in Greco-Roman schools and throughout the Middle Ages (Cassell, 2014; Clark, 1951; Farmer & Arrington, 1993; Gesit, 2005; Gorrell, 1981; Muckelbauer, 2003; Shields, 2007; Sullivan, 1989). During the Greco-Roman world, imitation “was used by such writers as Plato, Aristotle, and Plutarch with a number of different meanings. It might mean, for instance, imitation of men in action, imitation of ideal truth, imitation of appearances, true or false, in a phenomenal world” (Clark, 1951, p. 11). In Aristotle’s view, “… humans are different from the beasts in that they are imitative creatures who learn their earliest lessons through imitation” (Sullivan, 1989, p. 11). In this case, Aristotle considered all the meanings of imitation and emphasized that imitation was an action that followed the right path and made the right decision for the previous experiencers.

In Chapter 4 of his Poetics, he did mention that man is the most imitative of all creatures, that he learns at first by imitation, and that he takes a natural delight in the contemplation of works of imitation. Moreover, as McKeon has reminded us, Aristotle frequently made the distinction in his other words between sciences, which are acquired by learning; virtues, which are acquired by habits; and arts, which are acquired by practice. (Corbett, 1971, p. 243)
The delight came from analyzing and learning through imitation while gaining a deeper understanding of others’ works.

Isocrates, another Greek rhetorician “whose principle of training by imitation Cicero advocated” (Fantham, 1978, p. 102), also demonstrated imitation as a learning method. In 1944, Jaeger reminded readers that in *Antidosis*, Isocrates included some of his speeches which “were meant to be models in which his pupils could study the precepts of his art” (as cited in Sullivan, 1989, p. 12). By demonstrating his works, Isocrates helped other people to learn his style through imitating. With respect to Isocrates’ idea of imitation, the teacher is a model for students to imitate. Furthermore, in *Panegyricus*, Isocrates suggested “that study of oratory as well as the other arts would make the greatest advance if we should admire and honour… those who are the most finished craftsmen in each” (as cited in Sullivan, 1989, p. 12). Accordingly, Isocrates acknowledged that imitating and studying the works from teachers and orators could help oneself to improve in all different aspects. In other words, Isocrates valued imitation as a beneficial learning method.

Furthermore, Cicero was a great example of Isocrates’ idea of imitation—learning from someone who was admired and honored. Cicero admitted that he had “composed his De Oratore ‘in the Aristotelian manner’” and “expressed in writing’ the rhetorical theories of Isocrates, and Aristotle’ (as cited in Clark, 1951, p. 11). Aristotle and Isocrates are well-known rhetoricians from the ancient Greek. Their works have been influencing and making many contributions to today’s education. Cicero chose to imitate their style, not only because they are famous but also because “…he adopts the best from previous writer on rhetoric” (Clark, 1951, p. 11). As discussed, Isocrates suggested
imitating someone who was admired and honored, and he created many works for his students and others to imitate—Cicero was one of them who learned through Isocrates’ work.

Cicero was not the only one who advocated for imitation. Quintilian was another Roman rhetorician who stood for the imitation which “in much greater depth” in his 12-book rhetoric, *Institutio Oratoria* (Vandenberg, 2011). Kathleen Vandenberg (2011) interpreted, *Institutio Oratoria* “stresses the orator’s ability to lead, to influence, and to dominate a rhetorical situation through verbal art” (p. 114). Moreover, Vandenberg indicated that Quintilian took imitation as one of his teaching methods with the other four categories: Precept, Composition exercises, Declamation, and Sequencing (p. 114). In addition, Quintilian, in his *Institutio Oratoria*, commented that “rules of style, while part of the student's theoretical knowledge, are not in themselves sufficient to give him oratorical power… practice without the models supplied by reading will be like a ship drifting aimlessly without a steersman” (as cited in Sullivan, 1989, p. 12). Students need models to follow; from these models, they will learn what to do, how to do, and what the right path is. With the study of Quintilian’s book, Elaine Fantham (1978) revived interest in using models: “Quintilian is directing his students to the classical authors as models for oratory, and so he emphasized in particular the genres, the authors, and the aspects of those authors which are suited for imitation” (p. 103). In other words, for best results of learning through imitation, the most important feature is to choose a suitable model.

Although imitation was used during the ancient period, it has been fading away over time. Piaget, a Swiss psychologist who is best known for cognitive development, had brought up imitation again (Geist, 2004). Aristotle expressed that “imitation is
instinctual” (as cited in Sullivan, 1989, p. 11) which Piaget argued that “[t]he child learns to imitate” (as cited in Gorrell, 1987, p. 54):

Piaget describes a ‘tendency’ to imitate that is transmitted through heredity and assists acquired ‘techniques’ that make learning possible (5). With use, imitated forms become internalized, incorporated into cognitive structures. By the act of imitating, the learner interiorized the model, causing the formation of images (77). The image, or interiorized imitation, then ‘acquired as life of its own’ (75), so that the person who imitates is ‘often unaware that he is doing so’ (75). (Gorrell, 1987, p. 54)

Vygotsky, a Soviet psychologist who is known for the “zone of proximal development”, also argued that “imitation is indispensable in a child’s mental development” (Sadaki & Takeuchi, 2010, p. 71). Piaget and Vygotsky both claimed that imitation was not an ability that humans were born with; imitation was a process that is learned from following models. It was not only an action of one but also an image of one’s life, like the imitation that is defined by Plato, Aristotle, and Plutarch.

In 1996, María Jesús Martínez Alfaro also wrote that “[i]f Aristotle holds that we learn through imitating others and that our instinct to enjoy works of imitation is an inborn instinct, both Cicero and Quintilian will emphasize later on the imitation is not only a means of forging one’s discourse but also a consciously intertextual practice that contributes to the definition of the individual” (p. 269)—Cicero and Quintilian used actions to prove their point. They both imitated classical rhetoricians to compose their works—Cicero imitated Aristotle and Isocrates (Clark, 1951, p. 11) and Quintilian imitated Cicero (Vandenberg, 2011, p. 114). However, Cicero and Quintilian did not lose their styles and beliefs in the imitation: they contributed as individuals who influenced the education of youth.

In the recent decades, the practice of imitation was not as common as it was in the Greek-Roman time—Farmer (2001) said that imitation was “...disappeared from serious
consideration as a viable practice in writing instruction” (as cited in Shields, 2007, p. 57). However, Scott Shields (2007) cited that there are numbers of scholars in rhetoric and composition who recognized imitation as a teaching tool for writing. Vivian Zamel (1976) writes:

Kaplan (1967), pointing out the effect that cultural differences have upon the nature of rhetoric, suggests the study and imitation of paragraphs. Pincas (1964) creates a multiple substitution technique that involves habituation in the use of certain styles. Arapoff (1969) concentrates on the importance of discovering, comparing and imitating stylistic differences. Carr (1967) stresses the importance of reading, studying and analyzing the organization and logical arrangement of passages, and Green (1967) reiterates the practice needed in specific varieties of written language. (p. 69)

In addition, Gorrell (1981) required students to copy the model exactly in controlled compositions to help them to improve their writing skills and confidence. Ken Davis (1984) gathered eight articles to present the benefits for improving students’ writings through imitation. Susan Kemper (1986) examined the syntactic processing abilities in the elderly and young adults by imitating complex sentences. Uwe Geist (2004) used a five-step method that helped students to analyze an existing text and use it as a model to imitate. Akihiko Sasaki and Osamu Takeuchi (2010) conducted a study of Non-Native English Speaking (NNES) students to imitate Native English Speaking (NES) students in email interaction. Haiwen Mo (2012) put imitation into practice in order to integrate reading with writing. April Brannon (2012) used imitation to teach poetry. From the ancient times to the present day, many scholars were using imitation as a teaching or learning method, and they observed and experienced the benefits of using imitation. Therefore, many concluded that imitation should be used as a pedagogical technique (Brannon, 2012; Butler, 2011; Cassell, 2014; Geist, 2004; Gorrell, 1987; Rohman, 1965; Shields, 2007; Snow, 1997; Stodola, 2013; Zamel, 1976).
Current College Composition Practices

English composition courses are required in Western university education. With the design of the program and curriculum, students are developing and improving their writing skills in Standard American English (SAE) (Horner & Trimbur, 2002). Maryruth Bracy (1971) argues that college composition courses were designed primarily around literary texts:

Most either rely solely on literature analysis or teach the theoretical aspects of improved writing with the emphasis on exposition. While there is often mention of the other styles—narration, description, and argumentation—the material for development within the course is straight exposition. (p. 240)

No matter whether the composition courses are for either analyzing literature or teaching the different styles of writing, they require writing skills to complete them and earn credit. Therefore, writing skills become one of the most important factors that bring successful in a college composition course.

However, English Language Learners (ELLs) who enroll in the college English composition courses “recognize academic writing ability as an area of weakness” (Joyce & Lundberg, 2013, p. 2) because they lack knowledge about the American writing patterns and the different writing rules from other countries. Robert Kaplan (1966) emphasized that writing patterns are different among cultures, and the ELLs “who have mastered syntactic structures have still demonstrated inability to compose adequate themes, term papers, theses, and dissertations” (p. 3). To make it clear, writing is shaped by one’s native language and culture. Languages are not universal; each language has its unique set of grammar rules. Although some languages are similar, they are still different in many ways. For example, some people say that English and Spanish are similar. In fact, the grammar rules are different in these two languages. In this case, an ELL whose
first language (L1) is Spanish will struggle with sentence structures which are distinctly different than English syntactic structures.

Furthermore, when students write essays in a language other than their L1, the essays would always be returned with comments, like “‘The material is all here, but it seems somehow out of focus,’ or ‘Lacks organization,’ or ‘Lacks cohesion’” (as listed in Kaplan, 1966, p. 3). Being literate in L1, the ELLs have writing skills and ability to produce any essays. However, with the lack of knowledge of the American writing patterns, they are not doing as well as the students who speak English as a native language. The cause of this is not only not knowing about the writing pattern but also not having many opportunities to learn and practice writing in SAE. Consequently, the ELLs need help to develop their writing skills in the standard American composition (Bracy, 1971; Horner & Trimbur, 2002; Joyce and Lundberg, 2013; Kaplan, 1966).

**Controlled Composition**

When it comes to the topic of helping ELLs in composition, most of the scholars suggest that teaching controlled composition will help to meet students’ needs (Bracy, 1971; Gorrell, 1981; Paulstion, 1972). Composition can be separated as free composition and controlled composition. As what Bracy (1971) noted, free composition is the “euphoric stage where the student has mastered sufficient language skills and organization to be able to handle the writing of a chosen topic when given only a specific amount of time and a definite length” (p. 239). By contrast, controlled composition is to guide students to produce writing in specific formats or styles. Free composition and controlled composition are not totally different from each other; they still share some common traits, such as giving a certain amount of time or requiring a certain length. The
only difference in these two compositions is students are provided rules or templates for controlled composition when free composition is on students themselves. According to Kaplan (1966), the ELLs had less smoothness to produce writings in other than L1 due to the differences in writing patterns. In this case, the free composition is difficult for the ELLs to master. Therefore, controlled composition is suggested as a technique in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) (Gorrell, 1981).

Controlled composition benefits ELLs in many ways. As Donna Gorrell (1981) stated, controlled composition is “used to promote (1) improved student writing, including increased fluency, error control, and sense of essay structure; and (2) greater student self-confidence and motivation to further improve writing” (p. 308). In this article, Gorrell (1981) explained how she used controlled composition in a classroom. For Gorrell, the first step in controlled composition was exact copying of sentences with grammar lessons embedded, such as the change of article, singular-plural, and first-third person. Working through sentences and paragraphs, students will understand and acquire the American writing patterns. As the last step, Gorrell had students rewrite by combining the sentences and paragraphs. Doing these steps “not only introduces basic writers to sentence combining but also strengthens their independent writing” (Gorrell, 1981, p. 311). Hence, controlled composition can empower ELLs to become better writers and lead them to the free composition. Christina Paulston (1972) also pointed out that although recognizing of students’ need of English, such as pronunciation and grammar, there was no recognition of composition. As Slager (1966) indicated, “‘composing—writing beyond the sentence level—must be guided or controlled’” (as cited in Paulston, 1972, p. 37). No matter how good the students’ English is, with the lack
of understanding and practice of American writing patterns, ELLs may struggle to compose in the American style because they default back to rules from their L1. Thus, she concludes that controlled composition should be used in college composition.

Controlled composition is not common in current college composition practices. In other words, students are using free composition for any essays. When ELLs enroll in such composition courses, they do not know what to do and how to start an essay because most of them have never experienced American writing for academic purposes (Gorrell, 1987). All they have are the knowledge and understanding from their L1 which will result in what Kaplan discussed—lack of focus points on papers. “Controlled composition rests on the assumption that as students practice correct writing, making certain assigned manipulative and transformational changes, they will acquire greater proficiency in using English in its standard written form” (Gorrell, 1981, p. 309). Having controlled composition as a teaching technique, the ELLs will begin to see the American writing pattern differences in order to adjust their writing patterns from L1 to English.

Composition goes far beyond just writing sentences; it requires paragraphs, such as introduction, body paragraph, and conclusion. It is difficult to have students switch their writing patterns from one to another due to cultural differences. Controlled compositions provide opportunity for students to practice American writing patterns that help them to understand and acquire the style. “[C]ontrolled composition requires student writers to employ what they already know about language but frequently fail to practice” (Gorrell, 1981, p. 308). What Gorrell meant by this is students have knowledge of composition in their L1 and have been learning English, so they are able to compose in L1’s writing pattern with English but not the American writing patterns because of lack
of chances to practice. A study by Poulston (1971) indicated that “[u]sing techniques of controlled composition makes it possible to teach one thing at a time while focusing the student’s conscious attention on the critical features of the language patterns, two established principles in learning theory. It gives the student maximum opportunity for practice in writing correct paragraphs, thereby learning through instrumental conditioning by immediate reinforcement of the right response” (p. 37). Alex Mitchell and Kevin McGee (2011) investigated a pattern language for writing short fiction. After examining the pattern languages that they created, although there were several questions that arose, Mitchell and McGee still observed that “using patterns to help people to write in a particular style is a promising approach” (p. 159) for writing fiction. This approach is helping students not only to write in a particular style but also to learn the writing pattern.

Throughout his long career, Kaplan strongly believed that writing patterns reflected one’s culture. With a purpose of acquiring writing pattern in a target language (TL), students need to be informed with the correct writing pattern and practice to understand. Teaching can be either explicitly or implicitly. Teaching students the steps of American writing patterns—introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion—is one of the explicit ways. To make it implicit, teachers can have students to do the controlled composition in American writing patterns. When students are doing this, they will sense the writing pattern and be able to transfer their L1 pattern to English. In addition, this implicit learning way has more benefits than acquiring a writing pattern.

Controlled composition helps students not only to acquire the standard American written pattern but also to improve their English, such as grammar (Bracy, 1971; Gorrell,
1981; Paulston, 1972). Working with the correct grammar writings, student will get to improve their English proficiency and vocabulary. Gorrell (1981) discussed that,

[i]t (controlled composition) can be used effectively to deal with errors in tense markers, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, spelling, pronoun case and agreement, and sentence formation and boundary markers. It is particularly useful for students using standard written English as a second dialect or as a second language, and for students whose biggest writing problem is lack of attention written forms. (p. 308)

Grammar is one of the important aspects while learning a foreign language. In an effort to master a language, grammar is needed. Controlled composition uses correct grammar writings; learning through this, students will apperceive the grammar without the explicit lessons. As what Gorrell (1981) stated, “[c]ontrolled composition is used with or without grammar instruction. Like sentence combining, it assumes a previous knowledge of language structure and forms, attained either through direct instruction or informal acquisition” (p. 311). As it mentioned, Gorrell had used controlled composition to help students to improve their writing skills. From theory to practice, Gorrell advocated and demonstrated controlled composition was one way to help ELLs to master in writing.

Unlike the free composition which students can work on their own with a given essay theme, some may think that controlled composition takes away students’ freedom of writing. However, free composition is for students who have mastered writing skills in the American writing patterns and be able to handle the writing on their own. ELLs are lack of the knowledge and understanding of the American writing patterns which makes them struggle. Additionally, controlled composition is through a way of manipulating sentences to build into a paragraph. Students may see themselves working with coping sentences topic after topic; what they do not realize is they deal with grammar, vocabulary, and style (Bracy, 1971). Working with controlled composition, students
absorb grammar, learn vocabulary, and improve their English proficiency without consciousness of traditional lesson learning.

As a conclusion, Bracy (1971) reported that “... the value of teaching controlled writing as a beginning in the acquisition of writing skills is undisputed and while the methods are well-defined and materials plentiful, there is a dearth in materials, rationale, and methodology for the teacher interested only in the improvement of free composition” (p. 239). Controlled composition is a significant method to help ELLs to acquire the American writing patterns, and imitation is one of controlled composition methods that has a long history in the field of education (Clark, 1951; Corbett, 1971; Fantham, 1978; Geist, 2004; Gorrell, 1981; Gorrell, 1987; Martínez Alfaro, 1996; Sasaki & Takeuchi, 2010; Sullivan, 1989; Vandenberg, 2011).

The Views of Imitation Pedagogy

The concept of imitation, or in Latin imitatio, comes from the term mimesis which is Aristotelian concept during the Classical period (Godgar, 2001). According to numbers of scholars, imitation is defined as a learning method that copy the writings from others’ as models (Butler, 2011; Gorrell, 1981; Stodola, 2013; Vandenberg, 2011). In the ancient time, the value of imitation was “to improve structure and style in oratory, history, poetry, and preaching” (Clark, 1951, p. 13) by following some models. Today, imitation remains the same value and add more meanings with the focus on rhetoric and composition. For instance, Marion Crowhurst (1983) did a study of sentence combining and sentence imitation as instructional strategies. Crowhurst concluded that sentence imitation would increase the syntactic fluency “without the detrimental effects” (p. 65). From this statement, it implies that imitation can be used as pedagogy.
In the recent years, Wang Lin (2017) proposed sentence imitation as a method when Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in primary school level. In the article, Lin presented that most students in the primary schools in China were not able to write a complete composition individually, even in the higher grade. In these composition classes, some teachers liked to use sentences from textbooks as models for students to imitate, but they might not provide clear explanation which led students to frustration. During the class period, students were able to do the sentence imitation under teacher’s help, but when they do it on their own, many students had great amount of errors, such as mistakes of spelling, structure or grammar (Lin, 2017). Lin argued that sentence imitation could be used in primary school level if “the teacher can effectively make full use of the three features (copying-fidelity, fecundity, and longevity) of strong memes and consciously lead students to find out, to sum up and to make full use of strong sentence memes, students’ writing ability as well as observation ability and inductive ability must be greatly improved” (Lin, 2017, p. 14).

In Lin’s case, imitation was used to acquire English, the TL. One of the ways to learn a new language is to transfer knowledge from L1 in order to understand the TL. As Rod Ellis (1994) quoted that,

> [t]ransfer is the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired (1989: 27). (p. 301)

When the languages are similar, students can positive transfer from L1 to TL; oppositely, negative transfer will occur if the two languages are different (Ellis, 1994). Because of the negative transfer, Zamel (1976) stated that “[t]he imitation of various styles and organization patterns may be helpful for students who are still coping with the acquisition of language” (p. 70). When talking about the difficulties of learning languages, it
mentions not only the pronunciation of the languages but also the differences of the grammars. In order to reduce the transferring of L1 and TL negatively, imitation is one of the strategies that can help.

Furthermore, Sasaki and Takeuchi (2010) shared the same idea with Zamel and said that, “...imitation helps learners expand their knowledge of the target language and extend their linguistic development” (p. 79). Studies of imitation pedagogy have indicated that there are many benefits of using imitation as a teaching technique, such as to improve grammar, to develop vocabulary, to internalize style, and to comfort students.

First, imitation can help students to improve their grammar (Farmer & Arrington, 1993; “Imitation,” 2012; Sasaki & Takeuchi, 2010; Snow, 1997; Zamel, 1976). Grammar is one of the important features when learning a language, and “[i]mitation, building on the instructional techniques of grammar, involves a close analysis of texts” (“Imitation,” 2012, para. 9). In this same article, it also indicated that “[i]mitation as a strategy of writing emerges from the instructional practice of grammar and rhet” (para. 14). Once again, teaching can be either explicitly or implicitly; it can also apply to teaching grammar. Ellis (1994) had mentioned some scholars, such as Krashen, pointed out that “the subconscious process of “picking up” a language through exposure and the latter to the conscious process of studying it” (p. 14). By gathering all the information, students who imitate can learn grammar under subconscious. On the other hand, if students are not “picking up” the grammar through imitation, the teachers can teach grammar with the imitation as tool.

Second, imitation can help students to develop vocabulary (Davis, 1984; Gorrell, 1987; Minock, 1995; Snow, 1997; Sullivan, 1989). When students are imitating, they will
notice “how other writers phrase sentences, choose vocabulary within those sentences, shape paragraphs” in order to learn not only grammar but also vocabulary (Gorrell, 1987, p. 54). Additionally, Cicero, in his *De Oratore*, claimed that imitation could help to build vocabulary (as cited in Sullivan, 1989, p. 13). However, Sasaki and Takeuchi (2010) revealed that imitation did not always help students to build vocabulary. Sasaki and Takeuchi had a group of Japanese students to interact with NES students through email. During the interaction, students were imitating words from the NES students. What Sasaki and Takeuchi noticed was the development of vocabulary was affected by the frequency of the words accrued. Although the study result did not show the learning of vocabulary, to imitation texts from different area can still help students to explore different genres of words. Further, the repetition of the vocabulary can be done for the gaining and recognizing the words that students are not frequently used.

Third, imitation can help students to internalize style (Brooks, 1973; Butler, 2011; Corbett, 1977; D’Angelo, 1973; Davis, 1984; Farmer & Arrington, 1993; Gorrell, 1981; Gorrell, 1987; Mitchell & McGee, 2011; Sasaki & Takeuchi, 2010; Shield, 2007; Snow, 1997; Stodola, 2013). Dale Sullivan (1989) discussed that students have freedom to choose the words and the subjects when they are following the style of the model they choose (p. 13). In the learning process, “[t]hey develop a sense of the idiom of written style, and when they write they produce a similar idiom, utilizing similar ways of putting words and phrases and sentences together” (Gorrell, 1987, p. 54). Moreover, Frank Farmer and Phillip Arrington (1993) supported that by emphasizing that style could be taught by imitation (p. 15). Phyllis Brooks (1971) also expressed that “[s]uccessful writer, whether sincerely or not, often make the statement that they learned to write by
copying other writers” (p. 162). Successful writer can be defined in many different meanings, and one of the definitions can be valued that readers like the style of the writer. Similarly, with the value of imitation in the ancient time, imitating to improve style, students can develop their own style by imitating others. Frank D’Angelo (1973) defined imitation was to make “possible the conditions that will facilitate the free choice of alternate modes of expression for the writer” (p. 283).

Last but not least, imitation can help students to be confident and comfortable to compose (Brooks, 1973; Snow, 1997; Zamel, 1976). Brooks (1973) had said that by imitation, “there is a change that by building up his own sentences on this model he will gain the confidence to experiment further with the arcane skill he has proved he can handle” (p. 163). As it mentioned, with the lack of the knowledge of American writing patterns, the ELLs will get many comments on their paper that indicate their weakness, and this indication may cause the loss of confidence and lead to the discomfort. Hence, Edward P.J. Corbett and Robert J. Connors encouraged students to “imitate sentence patterns ‘to achieve an awareness of sentence variety’ and ‘increase their syntactical resources,’ which in turn will help them gain greater ‘confidence in their writing abilities’” (as cited in Snow, 1997, p. 48).

Some instructors may object to introducing stylistic imitation to students because having students imitate others’ writing is denying students’ creativity or critical thinking (Brannon, 2012). However, if students are not comfortable, they will not be able to compose anything, not even create or think critically. In this case, while imitating a particular paragraph, students may enhance their writing ability and may gain confidence. Imitation is not the only way of composing, but it is a way to help students during the
process. Janine Rider (1990) argued that imitating would cause students to lose their voices:

> By allowing a student his own voice first, we allow creativity and imagination, and we expand the possibilities of our language and our ways of knowing. We promote not just imitation, but fresh and honest thought. (p. 184)

By this, it appears that Rider objects mostly to following a whole composition as a model, while the present is a mere imitation of the syntactic structure of one paragraph.

Imitation is suggested use in composition courses, especially in TESL. When not familiar or no knowledge of writing patterns, students struggle to write. Rider (1990) also provided the Students’ Right to Their Own Language (SRTOL) resolution to support her argument and suggested that “…before we use this tool (imitation) to help our students enter new communities, we should be sure they have discovered and learned to use the language to speak their own minds” (p. 182). Those unfamiliar with learning a foreign language may agree Rider’s view of imitation, but there are numbers of studies that shows the successful usage of imitation in classrooms, such as Geist (2004), Gorrell (1981), and Lin (2017). Michael Joyce and Anita Lundberg (2013) quoted a student who shared the experiences of copying to learn. This student had said that to use imitation to learn English because the lack of English foundation— “… he was able to take the lessons that he noticed and absorbed from his copying, and he was able to apply it to all sorts of writing…. His writing is even better than some of the successful graduates of ELPP (English Language Preparatory Program)” (Student experience section, para. 3 - 6).

Some may consider that imitation is plagiarism. However, to make it clear that, imitation is one of methods to help students to improve writing; it is not plagiarism (Clark, 1951; Geist, 2004; Goldgar, 2001; Minock, 1995). D’Angelo (1931) clarified that “[I]literary and rhetorical imitation must be carefully distinguished, not only form fair use
of borrowing, but from unfair use of plagiarism” (as cited in Clark, 1951, p. 12).

Practicing English with imitation, students copy sentences in order to learn the pattern of writing, grammar, vocabulary, and style. The students borrow the existed texts as “fair use”, but they are not meant to steal from others. Similarly, Cicero and Quintilian had told that they imitated the classical rhetoricians to compose their books, and they never deny they had done the borrowing. Geist (2004) expressed that “[w]hen writing, we all steal—we cite, we parody, we imitate—and in our postmodern times these practices have become a more crucial part of our culture” (p. 171). In other words, writing is based on one’s understanding and belief which may come from memories of reading texts or hearing conversations. Mary Minock (1995) argued that,

we are motivated to imitate in order to match the textual features of what we hear and read in order to further dialogue, dialogue that is always held within a discrete particular context and a context that itself incorporates a range of almost limitless paratextual features. (P. 495)

What is matter to imitation as not a plagiarism is “personal integrity” (p. 15) as what Bertrand Goldgar (2001) concluded that after discussing imitation and plagiarism through some former scholars’ works.

Gordon Rohman (1965) devised “ways that students might imitate the principle of Pre-Writing”—as what Rohman defined, it is “the stage of discovery in the writing process when a person assimilates his ‘subject’ to himself” (p. 106)—so he “employed three means chiefly: (1) the keeping of a journal, (2) the practice of some principles derived from the religious Meditation, and (3) the use of the analogy” (p. 109). After the process of writing, students found themselves that they were capable to see things differently. As what Rohman expressed, “the major reasons we teach persons to write: the renewed sense of self, the renewed vision of things” (p. 112). “... [F]ree composition
must be based on knowledge of the options available to the writer—and this knowledge comes only from Imitation” (Murphy, 1990, as cited at Shields, 2007, p. 57). To get to the stage of free composition, students need the imitation as learning tool to build the abilities.
Chapter 3
Researcher’s Literacy Narrative
Learning to Write in Chinese

“Sit up! Head up!” I always heard this when I was little. Sit up and head up are the basic sitting position for writing in Chinese. To have a good writing posture, teachers and family require students to sit straight—the back is straight, and the head is also straight. In addition, having a good sitting position for writing can help students to write nicely. According to the teacher in my elementary school, in Chinese culture, people think that to have a nice handwriting is important; handwriting can reflect the person’s personality. If a person likes to write small, that means this person have a good concentration and circumspection. If a person likes to write roundly, this person is kind and sensible. However, if a person’s handwriting is sloppy, it means this person is irresponsible. Therefore, Chinese people require students to start practice writing at a young age in order to have a nice handwriting.

I still remember when my mother told me about my uncle’s story. Uncle had practiced writing once, writing on the papers himself and correcting the handwriting just himself to change. Uncle used to be having sloppy handwriting. When my uncle was about ten years old, his family—father, mother, and sisters—always complained about his unreadable writing. Again and again, he would be hoping to change his handwriting and to show other people that he could write nicely too. That changed a boy. Writing very nicely on the old newspapers when spending time with friends was another thing. He gave up his play time to practice his handwriting. Every day after school, Uncle would take out a brush (Figure 1), ink, and old newspaper to practice writing. At that time, his
father, my grandpa, could not buy nice white paper for his son to practice writing. However, he collected old newspapers from neighbors, so that uncle could use them to practice writing on. Grandpa would be looking for better penmanship—nice, legible handwriting in Uncle’s papers. Practicing writing changed a boy. Staying up all night with tired eyes and tired arms and tired hands and hardly ever giving up on one. With much practice, Uncle had changed his handwriting. Now, everyone commented on his very nice handwriting.

![Figure 1: Brush and Ink](image)

My uncle’s story reminded me of my story of practicing writing. I still remember that when I was in either second or third grade in China, every student had a penmanship book. This book was for learning and practicing writing Chinese characters. Every page in the book was like a seven by eight table, and the first column listed the characters that needed to be learned and practiced. Each page had eight characters, and the characters were the red-orange color with arrows and numbers that showed the steps of writing this
character. On the right-hand side of the character, there were six empty boxes to practice writing (Figure 2).

![Penmanship Book](image)

Figure 2: Penmanship Book

To improve our writing of new characters, my teacher required us to trace over the sample characters. Following the arrows and numbers to feel the flow of the pen helped me to learn how to write the Chinese characters. Every day after I got home from school, I would take out the penmanship book and sit at my table with a straight back and a level chin to start practicing writing characters. This is my earliest memory of learning Chinese characters and practicing writing.
When I was in fourth grade, the penmanship book was no long required. Knowing more Chinese characters and understanding how to write them, the students discovered the homework book had become lines instead of boxes. The lines gave more freedom to write; the characters could be bigger or smaller. However, it destroyed my handwriting. At the beginning of a sentence, I would write as I was writing in the box, but the characters were getting smaller and smaller (Figure 3).

![Figure 3: Example of My Handwriting in Lines](image)

When there were one or two characters left, I did not like to start to write them on the next line. So I would squeeze the last few words at the end. After my uncle saw my writing, he asked me to rewrite the whole line. At the same time, he would say, “You need to think about how much space you need between character and character. Do not squeeze all the words together.” Since then, I always make sure of the space I need for characters before I write.

To practice writing is difficult, especially writing nicely. To have nice handwriting, it takes time to practice. It is not a one-day process; it takes hours and hours,
days and days to improve the skill. My uncle’s story of practicing writing has encouraged me to improve my handwriting in Chinese. Even though I still do not have good handwriting, I always remember what my uncle taught me—make sure of having enough space between characters. There is also another lesson that is embedded in my brain which is the sit-up-head-up rule. I learned this rule for writing at a very young age, but it has influenced me throughout my life. Nice handwriting requires practice, and good posture can help learners reach this goal.

Chinese language acquisition and literacy have shaped how I learn other languages, how I write other languages, and how I practice writing other languages. In this case, Chinese language learning experience influenced my English learning. I started to learn English in fourth grade. Although Chinese and English are different, Chinese language has Pinyin that are similar to the English alphabet which also makes writing English easier. Further, for this reason, as in Chinese penmanship, there is a practice book for writing English. However, these penmanship books are different; the Chinese penmanship book is boxes, and the one for English is created by lines. I have explored the boundaries of these two languages. It is not only how the two languages look different in writing, but also how the two languages mean the same thing with different writings. For example, when people who can read Chinese and English see the word “猴子” and “monkey”, they can refer to the same animal. Based on this reason, for better processing of language-shift, the teacher required us to write the Chinese translation under the English words (Figure 4) in order to know the meaning of words to learn and practice writing English.
For practicing writing the alphabet, we needed to write a letter on each line several times until we reached the end of each line. The teacher did not ask us to write a certain amount, but I made myself to write ten times on each line. At the beginning, I did not notice that different letters were not taking the same amount of space. For example, when writing a lower case “m”, I found enough space for ten of the “m’s”, but there was not enough space for ten of the big “M”—the upper case. When getting to the end of the lines, I was squeezing in the “M’s”, so that they could fit on the lines. As a result, the size of the “M” at the end was different than the “M” at the beginning. At the time, I remembered what my uncle told me about writing Chinese—make sure the space between characters is even. I applied this rule to my English writing. I erased the whole line of “M’s” and rewrote them all the same size. This time ten “M’s” fit on one line. Unlike learning and practicing writing Chinese characters, I did not get much help when I was learning English in China because no one in my home could speak English. However, what helped me the most in learning to write English was a combination of the story of my uncle practicing handwriting and my own experience practicing writing characters and applying the spacing rule. Even though I do not have perfect handwriting...
for either Chinese or English, I will continue to work on my writing, so that other people will praise my handwriting.

As time goes by, the sit-up-head-up rule is no longer as strict as it was in China twenty years ago. Students are no longer forced to have a perfect position when they are writing. I still remember when I was in the first grade in Taishan, and the teacher would walk around the classroom to adjust students’ posture while they were writing. If she saw students leaning down on their desks while writing, she would pull the students’ shoulders back until they sat up straight. In more recent years, however, since the one-child policy was initiated, I hear that Chinese teachers no longer adjust students’ writing position or enforce so many rules or administer corporal punishment. In the United States, writing posture is different. I have seen many different positions such as leaning on the table with the head lowered or sitting sideways at the table (Figure 5)—both of these writing postures below used to be forbidden in China.

![Figure 5: Different Position While Students Were Writing](image)

In China, having proper writing posture is meant to improve not only the person’s handwriting but also the person’s character. We also believe that illegible handwriting
reflects an undisciplined mind or other negative characteristics, such as laziness. However, this idea cannot be applied as strictly to the American culture because I have seen many different styles of handwriting here, but this does not necessarily reflect one’s personality. For example, one of my friend’s handwriting not very neat, but he is a responsible person. Whatever I asked him to do, he will always finish.

My literacy stories of learning how to write in Chinese and English are examples of liminal passages between different worlds. To acquire languages, we need to be able to read, write, speak and listen. Without literacy, it will limit our ability to express our ideas, feelings, and stories. My literacy story of learning and practicing writing Chinese and English is a window into different cultures. For the Chinese culture, having nice handwriting is important. Students are required to have good posture to write, and that was true in the United States in the 19th century; however, it is different in the American culture these days. From writing Chinese characters to writing English words, my thinking has changed from a person who has to follow the rules to a person who has more freedom of expression. However, my early literacy experience has shaped how I am today. Without my literacy experience from learning and practicing writing the Chinese characters, I do not think I would have become who I am.
Chapter 4

Research Methods, Data Collection, and Analysis of Findings

Chapter 4 includes (1) research methods, (2) collection and presentation of journals and stylistic imitation from undergraduate students from Grammar for Teachers, (3) the content and grammar analysis of the stylistic imitation, and (4) a summary of the findings.

Research Methods

qualitative research.

This thesis is qualitative research of pre-service teachers. In Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis by Sharan Merriam and Robin Grenier (2019), the authors explained that,

[q]ualitative researchers are interested in knowing how people understand and experience their world at a particular point in time and in a particular context. Exploring how individuals experience and interact with their social world, and the meaning it has for them, is based on an interpretive (or constructivist) perspective embedded in qualitative approach. (p. 4)

This present study is exploring the use of stylistic imitation in a classroom, and the participants are pre-service teachers who practice the technique as students. Furthermore, this qualitative research is seeking the meaning of stylistic imitation for these participants.

Additionally, Merriam and Grenier (2019) discussed three key characteristics for qualitative research designs. The first characteristic was “researchers strive to understand the meaning people have constructed about their world and their experiences” (p. 4). This study is delving the participants’ experience of practicing the stylistic imitation. The second characteristic was “the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis” (p. 5). A qualitative research is established by researcher's interest of
understanding a phenomena or seeking for an answer. The researcher, the major construct part in a study, have to be the primary to start the project. The third characteristic was “the process is inductive” (p. 6). Unlike the quantitative research which focus on numbers, qualitative research explores deeply of participants in order to convey what is learned.

**action research.**

This thesis is an action research. In *Action research in teaching and learning: a practical guide to conducting pedagogical research in universities*, Lin Norton (2019) defined that “[p]edagogical action research involves using a reflective lens through which to look at some pedagogical issue or problem and methodically working out a series of steps to take action to deal with that issue” (p. 1). As it mentioned in Chapter 2, many ELL students have the lack of knowledge of American writing patterns which is problematic when they enroll in the college composition courses. This action research is taking a step to solve the problem with stylistic imitation as a pedagogical technique. Furthermore, “the fundamental purpose of pedagogical action research is to systematically investigate our own teaching/learning facilitation practice with the dual aim of modifying practice and contributing to theoretical knowledge” (Norton, 2019, p. 1). Stylistic imitation is not used as frequent as it was in the ancient time when many scholars imitated others’ styles. To have this action research of stylistic imitation as one of the qualitative research methods is to examine its benefits in classroom in order to reintroduce it to education. Although this action research was practiced by NEST students, it will also benefit to NNEST students.
This thesis is a case study. In Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), case study research focuses on “the development of L2 syntax, morphology, phonology, and so on, as analyzed by an ostensibly objective researcher” (TESOL.org, 2019). Although the data are collected in an English class and the participants are native English speakers, numbers of them are major in either English education or Teaching English as a Second Language. Moreover, these participant are pre-service teacher who can provide the comments on both perspectives teacher’s view and student’s view. “In TESOL, a case typically refers to a person, either a learner or a teacher” (TESOL.org, 2019), and the participants in this present study are fitted for both categories. With more emphasis on “skill development and its consequences for learners, teachers’ professional development experiences” (TESOL.org, 2019), case study is the best well-defined qualitative research method for this method. The participants also consist the skill and professional development experiences.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Data was collected from 14 students enrolled in Dr. Reeves’ English 459 class, Grammar for Teachers. As part of the course assignment, students practiced the stylistic imitation and submitted their paragraphs following the syntax of the model paragraph. In addition, seven out of the 14 students who signed the IRB consent forms wrote a reflective essay with comments about the challenges and benefits of stylistic imitation.

**the prompt.**

Figures 6, 7, and 8 are the different parts of the prompt for stylistic imitation of “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall” (Katharine Anne Porter, 1965, pp. 80 - 89) as
modeled by the professor, Dr. LaVona Reeves, who created the materials. Figure 6, Stylistic Imitation Prompt Page 1, is part I of the in-class activity which includes the model of the “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall”, freestyle journal, and the model of freestyle that is written by Dr. Reeves. Figure 7, Stylistic Imitation Prompt Page 2, is the part II and III of the activity which includes the syntactic analysis, the close imitation model that is written by Dr. Reeves about her mother, and the syntax of Porter’s paragraph with blank spots. Figure 8, Stylistic Imitation Prompt Page 3, is the part IV and V of the activity which includes the free imitation and reflective journal that response to stylistic imitation.
Learning Objectives
Students will be able to

1. Identify syntactic structures—gerunds, participial phrases, and

Your own paragraph will be typed and placed in your portfolio.

The Jilting of Granny Weatherall     By Katherine Anne Porter     (1930)

She had fenced in a hundred acres once, digging the post holes herself and clamping the wires with just a negro boy to help. That changed a woman. John would be looking for a young woman with a peaked Spanish comb in her hair and the painted fan. Digging post holes changed a woman. Riding country roads in the winter when women had their babies was another thing. [Her accomplishments were] sitting up at night with sick horses and sick negroes and sick children and hardly ever losing one. John, [she] hardly ever lost one of them!....

Part 1. Description—freestyle (Prewriting activity)
Journal 8.2. Think about a person you used to know (or still know) and write a journal entry giving examples of why this person might not recognize you today, how you have changed, what you have accomplished—something you are proud of that he/she would never know about you based on your past life. 100 words in five minutes. We want to see, hear, and touch this person. What was the smell associated with him or her? Is there a taste associated with this person? For example, since my mother worked in a chocolate factory, I associate the taste of milk chocolate peanut butter crunch with my mother—and of course, her clothes and hair always smelled like chocolate.

Model of Freestyle
A high school dropout, my mother worked in factories most of her adult life—making watches, chocolate, and bombs. She wore white uniforms that she hung out on a clothesline on the plains where she and my father raised five children and cared for Mother’s grandfather until he died at nearly 100. I can still see those white uniforms drying in the breeze on the lines—from a distance looking like snow geese on wing. Having run away from home at 16, she made her way to San Francisco, where she immediately got a job as a server in a Chinese restaurant—where their specialty was something she called “bird’s nest soup.” Because she looked older than 16, it seems that no one asked her for identification and hired her on the spot, so she saved her money to have a large tattoo of a rose on her left arm near her heart. In the center of the rose, was the word, Mother—a tribute to her grandmother who had raised her when her own teen mom abandoned her. In those days, women did not get tattoos, so all her life she wore a large three-by-five bandage over it so that it did not show through her white uniforms. All of her life, Mother told me how fortunate she was to be left behind when her teen mom disappeared for twelve years. It was her good fortune to have been loved and raised by a good woman who scrimped and saved so that Mother would have food and clothes and books to read when times were hard for everyone. (269 words)
LaVona Reeves, 2017 (revised 2019)
Part II. Syntactic Analysis

Then follow the steps in the stylistic imitation exercise on verbals: participles and gerunds. Underline gerunds once and participial phrases twice. There are 5 gerunds (nouns) and 2 participial phrases (adjectives) and one present participle in a verb phrase—circle that one.

Label the italicized paragraph in Part I.

Model

She had fenced in a hundred acres once, digging the post holes herself and clamping the wires with just a negro boy to help. That changed a woman. John would be looking for a young woman with a peaked Spanish comb in her hair and the painted fan. Digging post holes changed a woman. Riding country roads in the winter when women had their babies was another thing. [Her accomplishments were] sitting up at night with sick horses and sick negroes and sick children and hardly ever losing one. John, [she] hardly ever lost one of them!....

Part III. Close Imitation.

Write a mirror image of Porter’s paragraph.

The Jilting of Granny Weatherall

Mother

Mother had built Halitzer bombs once, putting in the timing devices herself and packing the crates with just women to help. That changed a woman. Grandpa would be looking for a country girl with long, chestnut braids in her hair and starry eyes. Making bombs changed a woman. Operating forklifts in wartime when jobs were scarce and money was tight was another thing. [Her accomplishments were] staying up all night with tired women and tired children and tired elders and hardly ever giving up on one. Grandpa, [she] hardly ever gave up on one of them! L. Reeves

Your Mirror Image of the syntax of Porter’s Paragraph

_______ had __________________________ once, ________________ in the ____________ herself and ____________ing the __________ with just _________ to _________. That changed a ____________. _________ would be looking for a ____________ ____________ with a ____________ ____________ ____________ in her _________ and the ____________ ____________. ____________ ____________ ____________ in the ____________ when ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________ 
[_________ accomplishments were] __________ting up _________ with ____________ ____________ ____________ and ____________ and hardly ever __________ one. _________, [she] hardly ever __________ one of them!

Figure 7. Stylistic Imitation Prompt Page 2 (Reeves, 2019)
Part IV. Free Imitation from the spirit of the piece (Underline the parts you put in from above). Add to the original to make it tell more about the person and situation. 

_Mother_ had built Halitzer bombs once, putting in the timing devices herself and packing the crates with just _women_ to help. That changed a _woman_. _Grandpa_ would be looking for a _country_ girl with long, chestnut braids in _her_ hair and _starry_ eyes. He would be hoping to find his grandchild at the factory and to tell her in person that her mother had died that afternoon. He had prepared to speak to her as he would a child, to explain that her mother was ready to go home, tired of suffering, and sure to be greeted by elders who had gone before. _But making bombs changed a woman_. Operating forklifts in wartime when jobs were scarce and money was tight was another thing. Staying up all night with _tired_ women and _tired_ children and _tired_ elders and hardly ever giving up on one—changed a girl into a woman. Grandpa, [she] hardly ever gave up on one of them! And she never gave up on her mother, who lay dying in a hospital bed surrounded by praying nuns and devoted nurses. Even that day she was planning to go straight to the hospital at dawn when she finished the night shift and was exhausted herself. She had planned her route home through the blizzard. _LaVona Reeves, 2010, revised 2018_

Part V. Reflective Journal—Response to Stylistic Imitation as a Writer and an English Teacher

1. Write a paragraph about the benefits and challenges of stylistic imitation you experienced in this activity. Be specific about both. Use specific words and/or expressions from your own paragraph.

2. Indicate if, how, and when you might use stylistic imitation to teach composition in your own classroom.
Data Analysis

**freestyle journals.**

This section introduces seven out of the 14 participants’ freestyle journals. These unedited freestyle journals were regular in-class journals which were written in five minutes and submitted in the electronic final portfolio. The freestyle journals from the other seven participants were not found in the electronic final portfolio, so the researcher and thesis advisor/professor decided to include only the seven that had full data sets in the freestyle. She included 14 in the close imitation section and seven of the reflection essays that were submitted. The researcher will briefly comment on each journal based on the content and spirit from the model. The model of the freestyle journal by Dr. Reeves described her mother, what her mother had struggled with, and how her mother affected her in life. Students were not required to write about a parent, but some did.

Table 1. List of the Subjects of the Freestyle Journals by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyle</td>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xander</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 students’ freestyle journals.

Ashley’s freestyle journal.

My Mom grew up in spokane, but she moved constantly from place to place. Born to a young couple, Mom was forced to grow up fast after her parents divorced. Going back and forth between houses my mother started to seek the
attention she craved. This manifested in rebellious behavior at home and school. All she wanted was for someone to notice, but all she got was dismissed from Teacher’s. They would tell her she was stupid and that's why she was failing. But it was the system that was failing her. Years went by and she met a boy. Senior year and she was pregnant with a boy. Being the strong woman she is this did not stop her from graduating. Four more years and now Mom had a new baby girl. Mom raised two kids had two jobs and went to college. She instilled into her children that education is the most important thing to get. She never let her kids see the struggles that were going on. Instead she encouraged them to reach their full potential and be successful. To this day mom encourages her children wishes that they are happy and do not have to struggle like she did.

researcher’s commentary on Ashley.

Like the model freestyle journal written by Dr. Reeves, Ashley wrote about her mother. When Ashley’s mother was in school, she was called “stupid” by her teachers because she was failing. Although Ashley’s mother raised two children and had two jobs while she was going to college, she never gave up. Ashley wrote about what her mother had been struggling with during the time she went to school and the time she had children. Ashley also talked about how her mother encourage her and her brother to pursue successful and happy lives. This journal matched the spirit of the model journal that talked about Ashley’s mother and Dr. Reeves’ mother were born to a young parent and had rebellious behaviors, such as “run away from home at 16” or “pregnant with a boy” at senior year.

Brenda’s freestyle journal.

My mother was born and grew up in the Philippines. She walked a mile to school and back with younger siblings every weekday to attend school in a little schoolhouse. In the afternoons she’d work in the rice fields and at night she’d do laundry by hand in a wooden basin. As an adult, she would go on to attend university in the capital city of Manila, Philippines and begin writing an American soldier who would later become my father. During my childhood, she often made food using banana leaves—some sort of sticky rice mixture she’d cook and unpeel because the taste and aroma reminded her of her home in Antique. She worked an array of jobs, starting at Micron until she was laid off and later at Western Electronics, soldering. After my little sister was born, she donned a waitress uniform and worked at Golden Corral as a server in Idaho. She often
came home smelling of fried food and mashed potatoes, the scent ingrained in her red shirts and black slacks. I often associate the taste of warm food—particularly seafood with my mother, as it was a shared favorite in our household growing up. Her hair was almost always up in a bun though in her later years she began to cut it. She often spoke of a time before I was born, a time she felt certain I would never understand. The one thing I’ve accomplished that my mother wouldn’t know based on my past life is the fact that I’ve written over 1000 words a day in the past ten years for fun and because I love writing. My mother has only seen me reading or considers my time typing away to be me playing video games when in fact, I’ve been writing all along. Writing is my biggest accomplishment because it’s the one thing I’ve been doing since I was five that I’ve always fallen back on. Though my mother isn’t much of a reader or a writer, she’s supported my reading habits over the years and unknowingly fueled my writing for years to come.

researcher’s commentary on Brenda.

Like the model and Ashley’s freestyle journal, Brenda wrote about her mother who needed to walk a mile to school when she was child, made food with banana leaves which reminded her of early life, and worked in the Golden Corral which made her clothes smell like food on the buffet. Brenda also wrote that her mother supported her reading habits. Like the model, this journal started from her mother’s early life to present day and matched the spirit of the model that talked about the smell on her clothes like Dr. Reeves’ mother’s clothes smelled like chocolate because she worked in a chocolate factory.

Grace’s freestyle journal.

Born in forty-four, Ruth faced life head-on! Losing her dad and recovering from bed ridden childhood illness only made her strong. Mom didn’t allow the teasing of the neighborhood kids to cause her to hide inside. Defying and ignoring them she kept right on tap dancing, even though never becoming a professional dancer, but it wasn’t about fame; just fun! Often telling her six kids, “do what you like, do what interest you, don’t let anyone tell you, that you can’t.” Twice she moved thousands of miles from home, twice with six kids in tow. Following the smell of Arden’s Red Door, dadd’s favorite, you could find her painting snow white and the seven dwarfs in the back yard or building a playhouse with an attached slide. If it sounded like fun she’d be the one to instigate it, song writer, dancer, singer, councilor, poet, and gardener, she would smile if we tried our hand at one. Ruth was a full-time mother, yet even her title and poor health couldn’t stop her from doing what she loved. Out of her struggles came family heirlooms and
memories, like over the top holiday dinners with a room for all the kids’ friends. The work she did was never realized till she was gone, still Ruth loved the work, she faced it head-on!

*researcher’s commentary on Grace.*

The same as the model, Ashley, and Brenda’s freestyle journals, Grace also wrote about her mother and what her mother had been teaching her from her mother’s own experiences. Teasing by neighborhood kids did not upset Grace’s mother, and she still kept on tap dancing. This journal also matched the spirit of the model journal that talked about telling their children how they early lives were and what they had learned from lives.

*Kyle’s freestyle journal.*

Walking the streets of Mexico City looking for an affordable breakfast, I saw her. Small, quiet, and unassuming, the woman sold fresh fruit from a simple cart on wheels. The scent of freshly peeled and sliced papayas and watermelon surrounded her one-woman business. Colors of pink, red, orange, yellow, and purple fought for the eyes’ attention and the stomach’s desire. Speaking no English, she graciously displayed her natural bounty and gave me a sample of grapes in a cream sauce. The juicy crisp mixed with the cool tanginess of the sauce was a perfectly orchestrated match. I decided to buy watermelon mixed with papaya. As I watched the woman scoop my fruit into a plastic clamshell, she topped it with honey and granola. Such a decadent, yet natural breakfast. I spent a total of twenty pesos (ten for my breakfast and ten for the vendor). As I ate nature’s creation, I began to think of how wonderful something can be in its simplicity. I won’t forget that breakfast or that woman. Going to the grocery store just does not compare to what I experienced. When I see “fresh” mangoes and papayas that are jarred and canned, it makes me cringe. The fruit lady would never treat her product like that.

*researcher’s commentary on Kyle.*

Although Kyle did not write about his mother, he wrote about a woman he met during his visit in Mexico City. The fruits that this woman sold caught Kyle’s attention and made him buy breakfast. Not speaking English did not stop this woman for having Kyle taste the fruit, and this action changed Kyle and helped him remember the lady over
time. This journal focused on how this woman affected him and matched the spirit of the model on the detail of information from the lady and Dr. Reeves’ mother.

*Margaret’s freestyle journal.*

My Grandmother has gone through a lot. She has beaten cancer five times. The first time she got cancer she was in her mid-thirties. At this point in time she already had three children, my Dad (Michael), and my Auntes Tonya and Dawn. Having been pregnant three times already, she thought she was pregnant again, but it turned out she had a tumor the size of a cantaloupe in her uterus. This was when she beat cancer for the first time. The next time she had cancer was in her forties, this time it was in her lungs. She beat cancer for the second time. The third time it was breast cancer. Then it was colon cancer. And then she got cancer for the fifth time, this time in her breasts. My grandmother went up against cancer five times and beat it. Cancer changes a woman, but it didn’t stop my Grandmother from being a grandmother. She tried her best to teach my how to crochet and to bead, and how to fry Kruschiki as she told me stories of my ancestors. I can not think of a more resilient yet gentle woman. While her children went to work she would watch after us grand-babies, even though her bones ached and the chemo made her sick. I don’t remember the cancer as a child because she didn’t show it. She’d just sit there in her chair, wearing beaded moccasins, with a pair of crochet needles on her lap and scold us for being too loud. If I had known she was so sick, I would have been quieter back then. I remember the first time I knew she had cancer. We were going over to my Auntie Tonya’s house and it wasn’t on Sunday (Sundays were for our weekly family dinners). My Dad had brought over his electric razor and we cut her hair. After it was all cut, she went to feel her scalp and my Dad removed the beanie from his head to show that he shaved off his hair too. I remember they felt each other’s hair, or lack of it, and they laughed. I also remember her hair growing back in really curly, like mine.

*researcher’s commentary on Margaret.*

Margaret wrote about her paternal grandmother who had fought cancer five times. Having cancer did not affect the love from grandmother to granddaughter. Margaret’s grandmother had taught how to her crochet, bead, and make Kruschiki, even when her grandmother was suffering. Margaret talked about what her grandmother struggled with and what she learned from her grandmother which were matching the content and the spirit of the model on the life lesson as Dr. Reeves heard from her mother.
Nick’s freestyle journal.

My mother has smoked meth before. I can’t judge, the stories she has told me of her mother, I thank the Lord my mother turned out the way she did. She has never gotten into much detail. I don’t think I care to know anyway. Thinking about how it affected her, I remember everything happens for a reason. She wouldn’t be the person she is today if she hadn’t smoked meth. I can’t remember for sure, but I would assume that she smoked with Sal. Sal is my biological father. He still smokes meth to this day. My wife and I recently had him up from California to stay with us, back in November, for his birthday weekend. I am 22 right now, and I had not seen him since I was in fourth grade. I know it meant the world to him to see me, but all it left me with was pity for him. I can still see how it affects him, and how it has permanently affected him. His mind has taken a toll from it. I can see how the years of drug use have beaten him down. He read a book to my daughter, who was a couple of months from being two. I could tell that he was having a little trouble reading the children’s book to her, but I could also see how much it meant for him to have the opportunity to read it to her. I pity him because of the love I have for him. Even though I barely know him, I know that without him, I wouldn’t be alive. I can tell that his heart is good, but he has just been dealt a rough hand. His father died when he was a kid in a drive by shooting. He told me while he was visiting, that he saw the autopsy photos of his dead father. I don’t think he ever recovered. He has been using drugs since he was a kid. They were only kids when I was born. My mother was only 16 years old when I was born, and Sal was only a couple years older. My mother cleaned her act up. She had a lot of support from family. Sal wasn’t too lucky. I have heard stories that he could be kind of abusive at time when they were younger. I tend to avoid hearing those stories. I don’t care to hear them. I am not upset that he was never really apart of my life. I would not be where I am today if thing did not happen the way they did. My mother never used meth again. The story was different for Sal. When he visited me, I told him, “I could tell you how much I want you to stop, but the truth is, in the end it is your decision to.” He told me that he knew and that he wanted to. But we both knew that it isn’t just that easy.

researcher’s commentary on Nick.

Like the model, Ashley, Brenda, Grace’s freestyle journals, Nick wrote about his mother who had smoked meth before and his father was still smoking. This had changed the lives of these two people. By comparing the stories of his mother and father, Nick had learned from them. This journal matched the spirit of the model journal that the life lesson learned from their parents.
Xander’s freestyle journal.

It has been many years since we last spoke, albeit, to the fault of no one in particular. So long in fact, I only vaguely remember the details of your face, but mom says I reminder if you “if I would cut my damn hair.” Maggie looks like you to, I see it more and more the older that we get. Everyone always believed that I would follow in your footsteps, and I almost did. Turns out, however, the Jake is the grease monkey and I am book worm. I finished the first of hopefully many manuscripts recently. It’s called Alexandria’s Genesis, I am sorry that you will never get to read it. I miss you; love you, dad.

researcher’s commentary on Xander.

Xander wrote about his father. Although this journal was written in a letter form, which was different than the model in a form of short paragraph, Xander talked about how he and his father looked alike, and he almost followed in her father’s footsteps. Dr. Reeves, the professor of this class, had provided students chances to write journals that were different from the prompt if they were not able to write on the topic. Xander wrote this journal differently, but he matched the spirit of the model that Xander appreciated his father in some ways but became a writer, not a “grease monkey”.

close imitation journals.

In this section, 14 participants’ close imitation journals are presented and analyzed. These unedited close imitation journals were an in-class activity and were written after the freestyle journal and then submitted in the electronic final portfolio. Each participant’s close imitation journal was formatted in the syntax structure as the original model from Katherine Anne Porter’s story (Figure 6 and Table 2) and the imitated model from Dr. Reeves (Figure 7). To measure if the participants followed the model, the researcher will focus on each journal based on the syntactic structure. The researcher will also focus on the participial phrases in sentences 1, 4, 5, and 6 and the anaphora in sentence 6 in order to determine if the students met the learning objective.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Syntax Structure of Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  She had fenced in a hundred acres once, digging the post holes herself and clamping the wires with just a negro boy to help.</td>
<td>Subject pronoun/ helping verb/ transitive verb/ prepositional phrase (indefinite article/ adjective/ direct object)/ adverb, participial phrase (gerund/ definite article/ noun)/ reflexive pronoun/ coordinate conjunction/ participial phrase (gerund/ definite article/ noun)/ preposition/ adverb/ indefinite article/ infinitive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  That changed a woman.</td>
<td>Demonstrative subject pronoun/ transitive verb/ indefinite article/ direct object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  John would be looking for a young woman with a peaked Spanish comb in her hair and the painted fan.</td>
<td>Proper noun/ modal/ helping verb/ present participle of a phrasal verb/ indefinite article/ adjective/ common noun/ prepositional phrase (preposition/ indefinite/ adjective/ object prepositional phrase)/ prepositional phrase (preposition/ possessive pronoun/ object of the prepositional phrase)/ coordinate conjunction/ definitive article/ adjective/ noun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Digging post holes changed a woman.</td>
<td>Gerund phrase (gerund/ object)/ transitive verb/ indefinite article/ direct object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Riding country roads in the winter when women had their babies was another thing.</td>
<td>Gerund phrase (gerund/ object)/ prepositional phrase (preposition/ definite article/ object)/ relative pronoun/ common noun/ transitive verb/ possessive pronoun/ noun/ linking verb/ adjective/ predicate nominative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  [Her accomplishments were] sitting up at night with sick horses and sick negroes and sick children and hardly ever losing one.</td>
<td>Possessive pronoun/ common noun/ linking verb/ gerund phrase verb/ prepositional phrase (preposition/ object of preposition)/ prepositional phrase (preposition/ adjective/ object/ coordinate conjunction/ adjective/ object/ coordinate conjunction/ adjective/ object)/ coordinate conjunction/ adverb/ adverb/ gerund phrase (gerund/ pronoun).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  John, [she] hardly ever lost one of them!....</td>
<td>Direct address, subject pronoun/ adverb/adverb/ transitive verb/ determiner of number/ prepositional phrase (preposition/ object pronoun).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14 students’ close imitation journals.

Ashley’s close imitation journal.

Mother had been in college once, raising the children herself and studying in the night with just no one to help. That changed a woman. Mama would be looking for a place to live with a good neighborhood for kids in her eyes and the dream house. Providing for two kids changed a woman. Working while raising kids in the winter when food and jobs are scarce was another thing. [Her accomplishments were] staying up soothing kids with songs and warm hugs and medicine and hardly ever gave up on one. Dad, [she] hardly ever gave up on one of them!

researcher’s commentary on Ashley.

Ashley’s journal was a close imitation of the model which was based on Porter’s syntactic structure. Although she added some prepositional phrases throughout the journal, they did not affect the meaning but emphasized the feelings. For example, Sentence 3, “Mama would be looking for a place to live with a good neighborhood for kids in her eyes and the dream house”, Ashley added the prepositional phrases of “to live” and “for kids” which indicated her mother’s love for her children. The participial phrases in Sentence 1, 4, 5 and 6 and the anaphora in Sentence 6 was correct in grammar.

Brenda’s close imitation journal.

Mother had tried making pretzels once, placing them in the oven herself and turning the timer knob with just a single gesture to start. That changed a tradition. My mother would be looking for new shapes to make with a cookbook in her hands and an apron around her waist. Creating new bread shapes changed a simple meal. Rolling dough in the mornings when she had free time was another thing. [Her accomplishments were] starting up a dough creature with us and letting us eat them and dunk them in cheese, hardly ever leaving leftovers, not even one. Honestly, [she] hardly ever left just one of them.

researcher’s commentary on Brenda.

Brenda’s journal was not a completely close imitation of the model which was based on Porter’s syntactic structure. In the model, Sentence 1 was past perfect tense, and Brenda’s was past perfect continuous. Although the tenses were different, it did not affect
the meaning of the sentence. The participial phrases in Sentence 1, 4, 5 and 6 were correct in grammar; however, the anaphora in Sentence 6 was incorrect. In Sentence 6, “[Her accomplishments were] starting up a dough creature with us and letting us eat them and dunk them in cheese, hardly ever leaving leftovers, not even one”, “us”, “letting us eat them”, and “dunk them in cheese” were different not only on the syntactic structure but also on the parts of speech—object pronoun, participial phrase which was functioning as noun, and verb/ object pronoun / prepositional phrase, respectively. Because of the incorrect use of the anaphora, Brenda’s journal was not totally the same syntactic structure as in the model. Therefore, this journal is not totally the same as the close imitation of the model.

*Crystal’s close imitation journal.*

GG had crossed the Atlantic on a boat once, sleeping in the small cabin herself and braving the trip with just her parents to talk to. That changed a woman. Ron would be looking for a kind and smart woman with a sweet accent and tone in her voice and quick wil. Crossing the Atlantic changed a woman. Dining with soldiers in the chow-hall when war was devastating her home was another thing. Her accomplishments were staying up all night with sick children and sick parents and sick sailors and hardly ever forgetting one. Ron, [she] hardly ever missed one of them.

*researcher’s commentary on Crystal.*

Crystal’s journal was a close imitation of the model which was based on Porter’s syntactic structure. The participial phrases in Sentence 1, 4, 5 and 6 and the anaphora in Sentence 6 were correct in grammar.

*Dylan’s close imitation journal.*

Grandma had raised five children once, putting in the work herself and being the best with just a house to herself. That changed a woman. She would be looking for a sign that with a bit of faith in her life, she would be okay. Parenting had changed a woman. Waking up in the middle of the night when babies continued to cry—was another thing. [Her accomplishments were] raising up her
children with little experience and motherly intuition and faith, trust and hardly ever giving up on one. Friends, [she] hardly ever gave up on one of them!

*researcher’s commentary on Dylan.*

Dylan’s journal was not a completely close imitation of the model which was based on Porter’s syntactic structure. Sentence 3, “She would be looking for a sign that with a bit of faith in her life, she would be okay”, was which was different than the model because he added a dependent clause starting with “that with a bit of faith in her life” and included two prepositional phrase. Moreover, the tense in Sentence 4 was simple past tense, and Dylan’s Sentence 4 was past perfect tense. Dylan also used a dash in Sentence 5 which was not in the model. Although the participial phrases were correctly used in the journal, the anaphora was incorrect. Sentence 6, “[Her accomplishments were] raising up her children with little experience and motherly intuition and faith, trust and hardly ever giving up on one”, this anaphora pattern was an adjective and a noun. The “little experience” and “motherly intuition” were correct, but “faith” and “trust” were missing the adjectives. In the same sentence, the comma between “faith” and “trust” was incorrectly used and did not follow the model.

*Elena’s close imitation journal.*

Gramps had gone to school to be a teacher once, studying in the dark all by himself and raising the small family he had with just a night job to support them. That changed a man. His family would be looking for a silly farm boy with a haybale over one shoulder, the wind in his hair and the person who would probably not go far. Learning mathematics changed a farm boy. Raising a family in the poor conditions of a student when life got so tough that you could only get your sons bricks for Christmas to warm their beds was another thing. [His accomplishments were] staying up most of the night with a late-night job and doing homework on his breaks and finding time to spend with his family and hardly ever failing one. Yes [he] hardly ever failed one of them!
researcher’s commentary on Elena.

Elena’s journal could be measured as a close imitation of the model. The participial phrases in Sentence 1, 4, 5 and 6 were correct, but the anaphora in Sentence 6 was incorrect on the syntactic structure. In Sentence 6, “[His accomplishments were] staying up most of the night with a late-night job and doing homework on his breaks and finding time to spend with his family and hardly ever failing one”, the anaphora pattern on this sentence was noun phrase, but the syntactic structures were different. The first word of the anaphora “a late-night job” was indefinite article/ compound adjective/ noun, and the other two, “doing homework on his breaks” and “finding time to spend with his family”, were gerund phrases that functioned as noun. Since the different syntactic structures, they failed to meet the rule of the anaphora, the function of the words matched the model. Although the syntactic structure of the anaphora was incorrect, but they all functioned as nouns. Consequently, Elena’s journal could be considered the same as the model.

Fiona’s close imitation journal.

Grandma had told me about her first husband once, feeling in the despair herself and grieving the loss with just trying to heal. That changed a lot. She would be looking for a reason to move on with a new man eventually in her life and the new beginnings. Grieving had changed a young woman’s perspective. Raising my mother in the seventies when not having her husband was another thing. Her accomplishments were recalculating up life’s choices with remarrying again and finding new love and hardly ever dreaming of the one. She hardly ever imagined about finding one of them.

researcher’s commentary on Fiona.

Fiona’s journal could be measured as a close imitation of the model. The participial phrases in Sentence 1, 4, 5 and 6 and the anaphora in Sentence 6 were correct in grammar. However, the syntactic structures in Sentence 2 and 4 were different than the
model. The structure in Sentence 2 of the model was demonstrative subject pronoun/transitive verb/indefinite article/direct object. The Sentence 2 of Fiona’s journal started with demonstrative subject pronoun and transitive verb, but it ended with an adverb “a lot”. Furthermore, the tense of Sentence 4 was changed from simple past to past perfect. Although the structures in these two sentence were different from the model, the journal still kept the same meaning and spirit of the model. Therefore, we considered Fiona’s journal a close imitation.

Grace’s close imitation journal.

Mom had driven across the country once, piling six kids into the beastly wood paneled station wagon herself and making the long journey with just big brothers help to rely on. That changed a woman. It only made her strong. Dad would be looking for a sleep deprived woman smelling of Arden’s Red Door, with a bunch of kids in her car and the midnight hour drawing near. Moving thousands of miles from home changed a woman. Fearing rest stops in the night when alone with children was another thing. Defying and ignoring fear, she always faced it head-on. [her accomplishments were] Lifting up our spirits with games and songs of her own creation and stories like Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and hardly ever retold one, after all it wasn’t about fame; just fun. Truly, [she] hardly ever forgot it wasn’t about fame; just fun!

researcher’s commentary on Grace.

Grace’s journal was not a completely close imitation of the model which was based on Porter’s syntactic structure. While the model contained 7 sentences, Grace’s journal had 9 sentences. She added, “It only made her strong” and “Defying and ignoring fear, she always faced it head-on” before Sentence 3 and 6, respectively. In addition, the anaphora was incorrect in sentence 8 which also contained comma splice and fragment. In sentence 8, “[her accomplishments were] Lifting up our spirits with games and songs of her own creation and stories like Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and hardly ever retold one, after all it wasn’t about fame; just fun”, the “games” was a noun, and “songs of her own creation” and “stories like Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” were a noun
phrase and a prepositional phrase which indicated that the anaphora pattern was different. Consequently, the different amount of sentences, the incorrect use of anaphora, and the mistake in the sentences showed that Grace’s journal was not a close imitation.

*Kyle’s close imitation journal.*

I had visited Mexico City once, walking in the megalopolis myself and exploring the neighborhoods with just intermediate Spanish skills to help. That changed an American. Thieves would be looking for a white traveler with a wide, distracted gaze in his eyes and the right opportunity. Traveling alone changed a boy. Trying new foods in the streets when I had few pesos was another thing. My accomplishments were climbing up Torre Latinoamericana with no fear and meeting locals and speaking Spanish and hardly ever confusing anyone. I hardly ever confused one of them!

*researcher’s commentary on Kyle.*

Kyle’s journal could be measured as a close imitation of the model. The participial phrases in Sentence 1, 4, 5 and 6 were correct, but the anaphora in Sentence 6 was incorrect in grammar. In Sentence 6, “My accomplishments were climbing up Torre Latinoamericana with no fear and meeting locals and speaking Spanish and hardly ever confusing anyone”, the syntactic structures of the “no fear”, “meeting locals”, and “speaking Spanish” were adjective/ noun, participial phrase, and participial, respectively. Although the gerund phrases were functioning as nouns, the structure pattern was different with did not meet the rule of anaphora. However, the incorrect pattern did not affect the meaning of the sentence, so Kyle’s journal could be considered as a close imitation.

*Lucy’s close imitation journal.*

Mother had taken us to the cherry fields once, picking in the morning light, herself and stacking the bins with just daughters to help. That changed a child. I would be looking for a strong mother with a bandana over her face in her plain flannel and the cherry bucket. Waking up at 3am changed a child. Picking dark sweet cherries in the summer when most friends vacationed, for me was another thing. [Mom’s accomplishments were] fixing up meals for 5 kids with
little money and time and support, two jobs and hardly ever giving up on one. Child, [she] hardly ever lost faith on one of them!

*researcher’s commentary on Lucy.*

Lucy’s journal could be measured as a close imitation of the model, although it contained some comma mistakes, such as Sentence 1, 5, and 6. The participial phrases in Sentence 1, 4, 5 and 6 and the anaphora in Sentence 6 were correct in grammar. Since this journal was unedited, comma mistakes could be corrected after editing, then this journal would be a close imitation.

*Margaret’s close imitation journal.*

Grandma had beat cancer more than once, months in the hospital by herself and fighting the cancer with just our family to help. That changed a woman. She would be looking for a final cure with a pair of crochet needles in her lap and the bead moccasins on her feet. Fighting cancer changed a woman. Rolling out Kruschiki in the winter when her very bones ached was another thing. [Her accomplishments were] sitting up all night with her children and her grandbabies and sharing stories and hardly ever forgot one. Dad, [she] hardly ever forgot one of them!

*researcher’s commentary on Margaret.*

Margaret’s journal was a close imitation of the model which was based on Porter’s syntactic structure. The gerund phrases in Sentence 1, 4, 5 and 6 and the anaphora in Sentence 6 were correct in grammar.

*Nick’s close imitation journal.*

Mother had smoked meth once, loading in the drug herself and inhaling the smoke with just Sal to watch. That changed a woman. Mother would be looking for a better drug with a longer lasting high in her mind and the numbing feeling. Numbing was what changed a woman. Numbing of the body, in the mind, when she took the hit was another thing. [Her accomplishments] were fleeting up and away with all hope lost and mind gone and yet she stopped using and hardly ever touched one. Mother, [she] hardly ever used one of them!
researcher’s commentary on Nick.

Nick’s journal could be measured as a close imitation of the model. The gerund phrases in Sentence 1, 4, 5 and 6 were correct, but the anaphora in Sentence 6 was incorrect in grammar. The “all hope lost”, “mind gone”, and “yet she stopped using” were different in structures which did not meet the rule of anaphora. However, this journal was unedited; the anaphora could be corrected after editing. Correcting the anaphora by changing the syntactic structure and their parts of speech, Nick’s journal could be considered a close imitation of the model.

Owen’s close imitation journal.

Father had been enlisted once, supporting the family himself and leaving the country with just mom to raise me. That changed a man. He would be looking for a computer with a webcam in the tents and time enough. Leaving home changed a man. Operating avionics equipment in wartime when time was scarce and the weather was blistering was another thing. [His accomplishments were] working the flight line all day with tired airman and bored crew chiefs and annoyed sergeants and hardly ever getting a break. Mom, he always came home eventually!

researcher’s commentary on Owen.

Owen’s journal was a close imitation of the model which was based on Porter’s syntactic structure. The participial phrases in Sentence 1, 4, 5 and 6 and the anaphora in Sentence 6 were correct in grammar.

Penelope’s close imitation journal.

Tante Kristel had hidden from the war once, waiting in the forest herself and watching the planes with just a single candle to see. That changed a girl. Her brother would be looking for a small child with a half-melted candle in her hand and a face full of fear. Living through the war changed a girl. Hiding her tears in the night when her youngest brother died was another thing. [Her accomplishments were] getting up in the morning with shaking limbs and aching lungs and eyes full of tears and hardly ever letting one fall. Gabi, [she] hardly ever let one of them fall!
researcher’s commentary on Penelope.

Penelope’s journal could be measured as a close imitation of the model which was based on Porter’s syntactic structure. The participial phrases in Sentence 1, 4, 5 and 6 were correct, and the anaphora in Sentence 6 were incorrect in grammar. The syntactic structure of this anaphora was participial phrase, but the third one, “eyes full of tears”, was in different structure. Although the structures were different, they were all functioning as noun. Therefore, Penelope’s journal could be considered a close imitation.

Xander’s close imitation journal.

Dad had worked on heavy machines once, welding the drums himself and working the long days with just his colleagues to keep him company. That changed a man. Mother would be looking for a hard-working man with flakes of metal in his hair and the hands of a craftsman. Raising a family changed a man. Working on his wife’s car in the garage when he had a little free time was another thing. His accomplishments were putting up with his boys with collected patience and building a life and loving his family and hardly ever raising his voice to one. Mom, he hardly ever raised his voice to one of them.

researcher’s commentary on Xander.

Xander’s journal could be measured as a close imitation of the model which was based on Porter’s syntactic structure. The participial phrases in Sentence 1, 4, 5 and 6 were correct, but the anaphora in Sentence 6 was incorrect in grammar. The anaphora in Sentence 6 was “his boys with collected patience”, “building a life” and “loving his family”. The syntactic structure of the first one was different than the other two possessive pronoun/ noun/ prepositional phrase and participial phrase. Since this journal was unedited, the incorrect use of anaphora could be corrected after editing. Therefore, Xander’s journal could be considered a close imitation.
A Summary of the Findings

Table 3 is a breakdown of the first sentence in each of the close imitation journals as well as the subjects the 14 students wrote about.

Table 3. List of the First Sentence of Close Imitation and Its Subject by the Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>First Sentence of Close Imitation</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>Mother had been in college once, raising the children herself and studying in the night with just no one to help.</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>Mother had tried making pretzels once, placing them in the oven herself and turning the timer knob with just a single gesture to start.</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal</td>
<td>GG had crossed the Atlantic on a boat once, sleeping in the small cabin herself and braving the trip with just her parents to talk to.</td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dylan</td>
<td>Grandma had raised five children once, putting in the work herself and being the best with just a house to herself.</td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elena</td>
<td>Gramps had gone to school to be a teacher once, studying in the dark all by himself and raising the small family he had with just a night job to support them.</td>
<td>Grandfather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiona</td>
<td>Grandma had told me about her first husband once, feeling in the despair herself and grieving the loss with just trying to heal.</td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>Mom had driven across the country once, piling six kids into the beastly wood paneled station wagon herself and making the long journey with just big brothers help to rely on.</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyle</td>
<td>I had visited Mexico City once, walking in the megalopolis myself and exploring the neighborhoods with just intermediate Spanish skills to help.</td>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>Mother had taken us to the cherry fields once, picking in the morning light, herself and stacking the bins with just daughters to help.</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td>Grandma had beat cancer more than once, months in the hospital by herself and fighting the cancer with just our family to help.</td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>Mother had smoked meth once, loading in the drug herself and inhaling the smoke with just Sal to watch.</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen</td>
<td>Father had been enlisted once, supporting the family himself and leaving the country with just mom to raise me.</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penelope</td>
<td>Tante Kristel had hidden from the war once, waiting in the forest herself and watching the planes with just a single candle to see.</td>
<td>Aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xander</td>
<td>Dad had worked on heavy machines once, welding the drums himself and working the long days with just his colleagues to keep him company.</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After doing the word count and analyzing the journals from the 14 participants, the researcher examined the use of close imitation in a classroom. The learning objective of this activity was to help students to learn gerunds and participial phrases. Although some participants did not use the anaphora correctly (sitting up at night with sick horses and sick negroes and sick children and hardly ever losing one—the original anaphora sentence from Porter’s paragraph). All the participial phrases in the journals were correct which indicated that this imitation activity met the learning objective and served as an evaluation of their applied grammar knowledge. Additionally, most of the students could write a close imitation that was the same as the model. In an addition, although there were only seven out of the 14 participants who included the freestyle journal in their electronic final portfolio, the researcher analyzed these seven participants’ freestyle journals and the close imitations. The researcher concluded that the contents and the stories from the freestyle journals remained the same in the close imitations.
Chapter 5

Discussion and Reflection

Chapter 5 is a brief discussion of findings from the freestyle journals and stylistic imitation journals that the 14 participants wrote in Grammar for Teachers winter quarter 2019, the same grammar class in which I had interned the previous quarter. The instructor and my thesis advisor, Dr. Reeves, invited me to come to her class to ask her students to allow me to include their work in the present study, and they gave their consent to participate in the last week of the quarter. In Chapter 4, I analyzed the freestyle journals and the close imitations of the paragraph from “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall” by Katharine Anne Porter (1965, p. 83). The final data set, seven writers’ comments about stylistic imitation that appeared in their final reflection essays, is included in this chapter alongside my own reflections as a researcher, including my own rough draft of stylistic imitation that I had written in English 564, Pedagogical Grammar and Composition, with Dr. Reeves in 2017. This paragraph was included in the literacy narrative that was written in the same class and appears in Chapter 3 of this thesis, and I will reflect on this experience at the end of this chapter.

Discussion of Findings

Like Janine Rider (1990), some compositionists may say that stylistic imitation will cause students to lose their own voice:

Yet when I first read David Bartholomae’s “Inventing the University” and tried to accept this notion of invention, I found myself skeptical. His “invention” seemed too imitative, too centered on recapturing the forms of the past rather than creating a form for the presents. (p. 175)

However, the present study suggests that students can maintain their own voice, even when they follow Porter’s paragraph structure which may feel formulaic to those not
participating or to instructors who have not done it themselves or taught it. The seven out
of the 14 participants had provided both of the freestyle journal and the close imitation
journal—Ashley, Brenda, Grace, Kyle, Margaret, Nick, and Xander. By analyzing the
freestyle and close imitation journals from the seven writers, I have concluded that the
close imitation journals echo the authentic voices from the freestyle journals. Students are
able to tell their own fascinating stories with a pre-defined syntactic structure—that of
Katharine Anne Porter and their professor, Dr. Reeves.

Of even greater concern, would be critics who might argue that stylistic imitation
is plagiarism. By most English teachers’ and writers’ standards, plagiarism means
copying words, phrases, paragraphs, and/or ideas from an existent passage without giving
credit. However, stylistic imitation is not copying Porter’s words or ideas, but imitating
the syntactic structure of the passage. While following the structure of Porter’s sentences,
it is true that writers were to mirror her word forms and tenses in their close imitations.
The 14 writers, however, appeared to feel very free to choose their own content and tell
their own stories. As explained in Chapter 2, no scholar argued that stylistic imitation is
plagiarism. Many scholars (Clark, 1951; Geist, 2004; Goldgar, 2001; Minock, 1995),
however, have argued that this kind of stylistic imitation is not plagiarism. In addition,
what is proposed in this thesis is stylistic imitation as a way to practice writing—students
are not normally publishing their work. However, if students publish a stylistic imitation,
they need to give credit to the writers’ work, as I will demonstrate in the stylistic
imitation that I wrote.
7 Students’ comments on Stylistic Imitation

Ashley’s comment.

One of my favorite lessons was the stylistic imitation. Seeing how someone may construct a sentence and then mimic the format with your own words. I have constantly struggled with formatting my sentences. Never really being taught the fundamental structure of a sentence and how to properly utilize it to its maximum potential I just wrote down whatever. Because of this the same comments would typically appear on my academic papers: Excellent subject but contains many errors. I would go back and carefully look through my paper, but I never recognize the fundamental errors. That has been until now. Straight away when I sit down to write I can see most of the errors before they begin. I undoubtedly know my papers will nevertheless contain errors within the pages, but now I can identify most and fix them quickly.

Brenda’s comment.

My experience in the Grammar for Teachers course has been a good one overall. I think my favorite assignments to do were the Heuristics and Style Imitation because I could relate my own experience and background into each assignment and make it part of the assignment.

Grace’s comment.

The Grammar and Usage in the Classroom book from Mark Lester is a good addition to any course but I’m impressed by the stylistic imitations and mirror image exercises in which students can practice sentence structures….Scaffolding tools such as heuristic devices: stylist imitation and mirror image, multimodal literacy, journaling, collaborative work, and flipped classrooms work together to create a Whole Language approach I know will benefit the students.

Kyle’s comment.

My favorite activity that did this quarter was the stylistic imitation. I have never done anything like that before, and I was pleasantly surprised with what I was able to produce. Even while imitating someone else’s style, one can still create a unique story. I truly enjoyed creating a story with the provided foundation and will definitely be using this for my future students….Students will practice stylistic imitation so that they can get a feel of how an academically mature paper sounds and looks like. Dr. Reeves’ “Osaka Castle” is a great foundation for this activity.

Margaret’s comment.

There are times when I find Stylistic Imitation very helpful, such as when I am struggling to come up with a topic or when I am experiencing writers block.
However, I found this exercise quite challenging because it was hard to fit my piece into the restricted guide lines I was given. At the same time, those restrictive guide lines challenged me as a writer because I had to let go of my own writing style. There are parts in my imitation where you can tell the style didn’t line up very well, such as the part with the moccasins and the sentence following “Her accomplishments were.” Overall I think that this could be helpful to a younger audience and could be simplified down to the essence of a mad-lib. You could leave the blanks open with the phrase of speech such as a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, and so on. If I were to include this in my classroom I think I would start with mad-libs and slowly work that out until they are filling in the blanks themselves like I did in this activity. These activities would not only show their growth and challenge them, but give them the confidence they need as writers.

**Nick’s comment.**

I would not do stylistic imitation as in-depth as we did (obviously I would not teach younger students college level). However, I think that it gives better understanding of grammar. I think it would be an interesting and creative activity that could give the students a chance to have fun while doing something that may be a little difficult.

**Penelope’s comment.**

As a writer, stylistic imitation allows me to explore new techniques and structures of writing that I never would have tried on my own. It allows me to see how others write to give me new ideas about how I, myself, can write. It also helps to prompt my imagination when the muse doesn’t seem to be calling. Just as stylistic imitation helps to strengthen me as a writer, I believe it will do the same for my future English students. Through imitating the writing of others, they will be able to find their own style and voice. It will also help them to learn the basic rules and structure of grammar, since they’ll see it reflected in the grammar of those who have spent many years studying it. And it will do all this in a way that is both interesting and fun for the students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ashley | ● “construct a sentence and then mimic the format with your own words”  
● “fundamental structure of a sentence” |
| Brenda | ● “relate my own experience and background into each assignment and make it part of the assignment.” |
| Grace  | ● “practice sentence structures” |

Table 4. Summary of Students’ Comments on Stylistic Imitation

68
Kyle  ● “Even while imitating someone else’s style, one can still create a unique story.”
● “creating a story with the provided foundation”
● “get a feel of how an academically mature paper sounds and looks like.”

Margaret  ● “very helpful, such as when I am struggling to come up with a topic or when I am experiencing writers block.”
● “those restrictive guide lines challenged me as a writer because I had to let go of my own writing style.”
● “helpful to a younger audience and could be simplified down to the essence of a mad-lib”
● “give them the confidence they need as writers”

Nick  ● “gives better understanding of grammar.”
● “an interesting and creative activity that could give the students a chance to have fun while doing something that may be a little difficult.”

Penelope  ● “to explore new techniques and structures of writing”
● “to give me new ideas about how I, myself, can write”
● “to prompt my imagination when the muse doesn’t seem to be calling.”
● “helps to strengthen me as a writer”
● “to find their own style and voice”
● “help them to learn the basic rules and structure of grammar”
● “is both interesting and fun for the students”

Participants had commented stylistic imitation can help them to understand grammar and to learn sentence structure which led to a deeper understanding of academic papers and writing patterns. Stylistic imitation is following the syntactic structure of an existing passage from previous writers. These passages are constructed into a grammatical format or style. Imitating the passage, students also strengthen themselves with different writing styles from theirs while still maintaining their own voices and telling their stories from experience. Although some participants had said that the stylistic imitation restricts the format, which affects their writing style and challenges younger writers, they still thought that stylistic imitation was interesting and creative.
Researcher’s stylistic imitation

In spring quarter of 2017, I enrolled in Dr. Reeves’ English 564, Pedagogical Grammar and Composition, where stylistic imitation was first introduced, and it inspired me. As an L2 writer, I always have difficulty to start writing a paper. However, this was different for the stylistic imitation. The same as the participants, I imitated Katherine Anne Porter’s story and the imitated model about her mother that was created by Dr. Reeves. What was different from the writers’ journals in the present study was that the stylistic imitation was not an in-class activity in English 564. It was assigned as homework for the graduate students. Starting with thinking about the topic, I finished the stylistic imitation within 20 minutes, but it was a combination of free style and close imitation because mine has 211 words and 16 sentences while Porter’s paragraph has 97 words and seven sentences. I was truly surprised how quickly and efficiently I was able to complete this paragraph, following Porter closely but feeling free to modify form and content as desired:

Uncle had practiced Chinese writing once, writing on the papers himself and correcting it with just himself to change. Uncle used to have sloppy handwriting. When my uncle was about ten years old, his family—father, mother, and sisters—always complained about his unreadable writing. Time after time, he heard complaints about his writing. He would be hoping to change his handwriting and to show other people that he could write nicely too. That changed a boy. Writing very nicely on the papers when spending time with friends was another thing. He gave up his playtime to practice his handwriting. Every day after school, uncle would took out brush, ink, and old newspaper to practice writing. At that time, his father, my grandpa, could not buy nice white papers for his son to practice writing. However, he collected old newspapers from neighbors, so that uncle could use them to write. Grandpa would be looking for a better work with a nice handwriting and the understandable writing in uncle’s papers. Practicing writing changed a boy. Staying up all night with tired eyes and tired arms and tired hands and hardly ever giving up on one. With many practices, uncle had changed his handwriting. Now, everyone has commented on his very nice handwriting. (Min Yi Liang, 2017, revised 2019: inspired by Katharine Anne Porter’s “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall” (1965, p. 83))
As I reflect on the experience of writing this paragraph, I realize that this kind of imitation requires me to analyze and draw analogies like skills we use as math majors, so it may have been easier for me than it was for some of the undergraduates in English 459 winter quarter who started the work in class and finished it at home.

**Researcher’s Reflection on Stylistic Imitation**

While I was writing this stylistic imitation two years ago, the most difficult task was finding a topic that would interest peer readers of my literacy narrative in which this paragraph first appeared. After I had figured out what I was going to write about, all I needed to do was put in the correct word forms in the blanks my professor provided in the prompt. This was not difficult for me. Furthermore, this stylistic imitation helped me to expand it into a literacy narrative:

I still remember my mother told me about my uncle’s story. Uncle had practiced writing once, writing on the papers himself and correcting the handwriting just himself to change. Uncle used to be having sloppy handwriting. When my uncle was about ten years old, his family—father, mother, and sisters—always complained about his unreadable writing. After time to time and complains to complains, he would be hoping to change his handwriting and to show other people that he could write nicely too. That changed a boy. Writing very nicely on the papers when spending time with friends was another thing. He gave up his play time to practice his handwriting. Every day after school, uncle would take out brush (Figure 1), ink, and old newspaper to practice writing. At that time, his father, my grandpa, could not buy nice white papers for his son to practice writing. However, he collected old newspapers from neighbors, so that uncle could use them to write. Grandpa would be looking for a better work with a nice handwriting and the understandable writing in uncle’s papers. Practicing writing changed a boy. Staying up all night with tired eyes and tired arms and tired hands and hardly ever giving up on one. With many practices, uncle had changed his handwriting. Now, everyone had commented his very nice handwriting.

Figure 1. Brush and Ink
The stylistic imitation which followed the model from Katherine Anne Porter and the imitated model about her mother that was created by Dr. Reeves gave me a great idea to start the literacy narrative. By following the models, I could write about the story of my uncle practicing handwriting. Additionally, writing Uncle’s story, I also explored my own literacy narrative. Explaining my own understanding of how handwriting is important in the Chinese culture and my uncle’s story of practicing handwriting, I connected my own experience of learning how to write Chinese characters to my uncle’s story and recalled my own memory of learning and practicing writing Chinese characters. At the same time, I wrote about my early experience of writing the English alphabet and compared these to my writing experiences of Chinese and English. Including the stylistic imitation in my literacy narrative captured the spirit of the essay and the feelings to the readers. As Ken Davis (1984) listed the benefits for stylistic imitation and agreed that students gain “1) greater sensitivity to language: 2) broadening of one’s own stylistic powers; 3) new flexibility in the revision of one’s own work” (p. 6). Imitating Porter’s story and Dr. Reeves’ imitated model, I learned the grammar and the styles that were used in the models in order to explore my own writing style to write my uncle’s story and the literacy narrative.

In 2010, Jessica Dinneen created an ethnographic action research project which analyzed 18 college level multilingual writers’ poems by doing stylistic imitation of the “I Am From” poem by Mary Pipher’s book and appearing in her book, *The Middle of Everywhere*. Dinneen (2010) suggested that teachers “should be repeating some activities that lead to L2 writers finding new voices through close and free stylistic imitation” (p. 107). In other words, even though stylistic imitation is formulized on syntactic, students
still are able to compose in their voices which is different from what Rider (1990) was 
critiquing which she stated that would cause students lose their voices. Dinneen (2010) 
also illustrated the transition of the different voices (p. 107):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Pipher} & \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{Dinneen} & \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{Writer 18} & \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{Writer 18’s ancestors} & 
\end{align*}
\]

As what she called “a layering of authors’ voices… [w]hat this means is that through 
stylistic imitation this layering is a natural phenomenon inherent in a models approach 
whereby Dinneen followed Pipher’s model, 18 multilingual writers followed Dinneen’s 
model, and ancestors’ voices immerged in the final text” (p. 107 - 108). Similarly, the 
“layering of authors’ voices” in the present study can be illustrated as follow:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Katharine Anne Porter} & \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{Reeves} & \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{Writer 14} & \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{Writer 14’s families} & 
\end{align*}
\]

The voices of the 14 writers are heard, despite the fact that they followed the models of 
Porter and Dr. Reeves. Each voice is unique. There is a giving of voice in the telling of 
family stories—through stylistic imitation, the 14 writers also “immersed” (Dinneen, 
2010) their families’ voices in the text. This is the multi-vocity that we aim for in 
postmodern curriculum theory. This is the epistemic space we want to provide in our 
writing classes. In my case, I provided a space for my voice and my uncle’s voice, not 
only in the stylistic imitation but also in the literacy narrative when I included the stylistic 
imitation about my uncle’s handwriting in my literacy narrative.
Chapter 6

Conclusion and Final Reflections

Chapter 6 is the conclusion, including implications of the findings for using stylistic imitation as pedagogy, discussion of the research questions, re-visitation of assumptions, limitations of the present study, recommendations for future research, and final reflection.

Implications of the Findings

There are still different perspectives among NESTs and the NNESTs in ELT; however, being an effective language teacher is more important than focusing on the teacher’s English proficiency level. What I desire is to be a teacher who influences students with my own experience of being an ELL and L2 writer. Living in and being educated from high school through the master’s program in the United States, I am still struggling with writing. The primary reason for this was the lack of understanding and practice in English writing before enrolling in school in the United States. Like me, many international students are facing or have faced the struggles that I have been through while completing writing assignments and trying to acquire American academic writing patterns.

Stylistic imitation is one of the writing tools that I have experienced and benefitted from in graduate school, so I wanted to discover how Americans responded to this kind of lesson. With the instructor, Dr. Reeves, I conducted the action research case study of stylistic imitation in the Grammar for Teachers course and analyzed the journals from the 14 participants. I now feel even more certain that stylistic imitation can be used as a teaching technique. Zamel (1976) said that for L2 writers to “create and express their
own thoughts and ideas in the second language, they need the same kind of instruction that students in English classrooms need” (p. 68). At the beginning of the learning process, ELLs are not able to do free composition on their own because it requires “sufficient language skills and organization to be able to handle the writing” (Bracy, 1971, p. 239). In the process of mastering the English free composition, ELLs need some materials to guide them in order to produce correct patterns of L2 writing, as Zamel (1976) demonstrated in her approach from controlled composition to free composition as shown in her article (p. 70):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>total control</th>
<th>(increase in complexity)</th>
<th>free composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>substitution, manipulation or transformation of sentences &amp; patterns</td>
<td>imitation &amp; differentiation of stylistic patterns</td>
<td>frequent, uncontrolled writing practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9. Process of Controlled Composition to Free Composition

Zamel demonstrated that imitating different stylistic patterns can help students to improve and transfer from total control to free composition. What I am proposing in this study is that stylistic imitation should be a teaching technique when students are in the process of learning to write—both for creative writing and for academic purposes. Likewise, I found that all 14 writers were able to match the original syntactic structure from Porter and the imitation by their professor, Dr. Reeves, while producing effective paragraphs in which they told compelling family stories. Topics varied from an aunt’s WWII story set in Germany to a grandmother’s story about bouts with cancer to a mother’s story about making pretzels for her children. The original Porter paragraph provided writers with a very viable framework to bring their own stories alive. They
seemed to meet the challenge as if playing a game or solving a math problem with a formula. Their analytic skills seemed very strong, despite the stereotype that English majors are not good in math. Though they did not write this in their journals, the professor noted that some thought it was fun because it felt like a puzzle, as indicated in answers to a question on the final exam—not a data set collected for the present study.

Discussion of the Research Questions

Research Question 1. What is style?

Style, in literature, was defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “[t]he manner of expression characteristic of a particular writer (hence of an orator) … a writer’s mode of expression considered in regard to cleanness, effectiveness, beauty, and the like” (as cited in Stodola, 2013, p. 58). Without analyzing one’s writing, it is hard to define what this writer’s style is. In the glossary of the *Harbrace College Handbook*, written by Hodges, Horner, Webb, and Miller, style was defined as “[a]n author’s choice and arrangement of words, sentence structures, and ideas as well as less definable characteristics such as rhythm and euphony” (as cited in Stodola, 2013, p. 59). Defining one’s writing style, audiences need to analyze the syntax, wording, tone, and register that the original writer used. In our abstract for the presentation at the Spokane Regional ESL Conference, we explained that “[t]he emphasis on style is not ornamental, but practical and rhetorical—it provides writers tools for crafting sentences and paragraphs that appeal to particular audiences of their choosing” (Reeves, Liang, and Alkhidhr, 2019). In the freestyle journals that the seven participants wrote, they had their unique writing styles throughout their journals. Although the participants’ freestyle
journals followed the spirit of the freestyle journal model that was written by Dr. Reeves, the participants did not lose their own voices or writing styles.

Research Question 2. What is stylistic imitation?

In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, imitation is “[t]he adoption, whether conscious or not, during a learning process, of the behavior or attitudes of some specific person or model” (as cited in Stodola, 2013, p. 59). In other words, imitation is a learning process which follows one’s behavior or attitudes. Hence, stylistic imitation fosters learning and self-expression by following another person’s writing style while giving credit to the original—“inspired by Katherine Anne Porter” but not plagiarizing. In addition, Quintilian indicated that “rules of style, while part of the student's theoretical knowledge, are not in themselves sufficient to give him oratorical power… practice without the models supplied by reading will be like a ship drifting aimlessly without a steersman” (as cited in Sullivan, 1989, p. 12). As Quintilian said, when learning style, students need to follow models, and modeling is a major concept of stylistic imitation—learning style by following a model syntactic structure.

Research Question 3. How does stylistic imitation help students express themselves following a model paragraph written by an established American writer?

The original model of the stylistic imitation that was written by Katharine Anne Porter told the story of Granny, and this provided students with a syntactic framework and a way to tell the stories about their families or themselves. Through stylistic imitation, in this study, all 14 writers were successful in telling their stories, as discussed in Chapter 4. Even though the close imitation is in
formulaic syntactic structure, it opened spaces for students to explore their own and their families’ voices.

Research Question 4. How do the students respond to doing stylistic imitation in a senior level Grammar for Teachers class?

The 14 of 25 students who signed the consent forms and participated in this study responded positively and commented that stylistic imitation can help them to understand grammar and to learn sentence structure which led to a deeper understanding of academic writing and writing patterns. Although some students said that stylistic imitation is restrictive in syntax, which affected their writing styles, they still thought that stylistic imitation was “interesting” and “challenging.” In fact, one female writer, Margaret, said that she often had problems getting ideas for something to write about, but this activity actually served as a heuristic or invention devise for her. It made “coming up with a topic” easier, and it helped her overcome writer’s block.

Re-visitation of Assumptions

Assumption 1. Learners will be able to write the freestyle journal with the content and the spirit that were created by Dr. Reeves’ model of the freestyle journal.

Although out of the 14 participants, there were only seven of them who provided the freestyle journals in their electronic portfolios. These seven freestyle journals still showed that the participants were able to write the journal and follow the model journal that was written by Dr. Reeves. In addition, each journal followed the spirit of the model and showed how someone overcame a challenge. Overall, it seems that all seven showed respect for the person being described.
Assumption 2. Learners will be able to follow Katherine Anne Porter’s model and Dr. Reeves’ model of stylistic imitation of the syntactic structure.

This assumption was affirmed. By analyzing and interpreting each participant’s close imitation journals, the primary researcher found that the journals were almost exactly the same in syntactic structure as the original model. All the participial phrases that were in the students’ close imitation journals were correct in grammar and followed the same structure as the model. The students also included the same number of sentences as the model. Although there was one student who had nine sentences instead of seven, it did not affect the content and spirit of the close imitation. In the close imitation journal, some of the students misused anaphora, but it was not the main lesson for this activity—students were learning the correct form of the gerund or participial phrase. In this respect, one student, Brenda, did not produce a mirror image of the original, but effectively added two short sentences which did not detract from the quality of her writing at all.

Assumption 3. Learners will be able to tell their stories through the formulaic syntactic structure.

This assumption was also affirmed. Following the formulaic syntactic structure, the students were able to write close imitation journals in which they told their families’ stories. As they wrote, they also expressed their own and their families’ voices, giving voice to others in their stories. Telling family stories is a powerful rhetorical move that creates space in the classroom for culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2016; Muñiz, 2019).
Limitations of the Present Study

Some readers may feel that the following were limitations:

1. The writing samples were short—only 97 words, and we required only two paragraphs, but we did not include the Osaka Castle activity about a place they had visited. If time had permitted, we would have asked the students to write a whole essay with the close imitation in addition to a single-paragraph journal in order to see students’ improvement in writing.

2. It might have been beneficial to have the students identify the pros and cons of stylistic imitation before the final portfolio was submitted.

3. Variables that could not be controlled for included the following:
   a. entry level proficiency of the students;
   b. university major of the students;
   c. age of the students, and
   d. motivation of the students.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future researchers could use the textbooks that are assigned for class readings to find an interesting and meaningful passage for stylistic imitation, or students could choose a paragraph from their favorite author to imitate. Researchers could also take this action research into an English as a Second/Foreign Language classroom, and see if the results are the same for L2 writers.

Follow-up future research is needed. In the present research, stylistic imitation was used to practice a specific grammar rule and syntactic structure—the proper use of the participial phrase. The student writers were using participial phrases correctly
throughout the close imitation journals. However, there was no follow-up journal or essay assignment that showed students’ understanding of using participial phrases correctly on their own. Therefore, a follow-up process is recommended for future research to determine if they could do more than follow the model and construct phrases correctly on their own without notes or a model.

**Final Reflections**

This kind of narrative inquiry requires an iterative process. Reading and re-reading over and over, I saw the 14 students’ writing at different times and saw something new and different each time. This iterative process Dr. Reeves and I went through brought us closer to the writers and gave us deeper feelings each time. Since we had both done the stylistic imitation ourselves, like Dinneen (2010), we felt more connected to the 14 writers and to Porter, and we were very impressed with what they did with the Porter paragraph. Like us, through stylistic imitation, students were not only learning the grammar rules but also telling their families’ stories. Even though stylistic imitation was a formulaic syntactic structure, students were able to share their own stories and their families’ voices that were embedded in the stories. Their contributions fulfilled this research study. I feel lucky to have had the opportunity to read their journals and learn about them and the people whom they wrote about. I hope that other writing teachers will do, introduce, and practice stylistic imitation in their classrooms while sharing their writings with students in order to learn about the students, their families, and their talents while getting closer to them and creating a writers’ community.
References


*Figure 1.* [Brush and Ink]. Retrieved May, 2017, from Baidu image.

*Figure 2.* [Penmanship Book for Chinese]. Retrieved May, 2017, from Baidu image.

*Figure 3.* [Example of My Handwriting in Lines]. Retrieved May, 2017, from Baidu image.

*Figure 4.* [Penmanship Book for English]. Retrieved May, 2017, from Baidu image.

*Figure 5.* [Different Position While Students Were Writing]. Retrieved May, 2017, from Baidu image.

*Figure 6.* [Stylistic Imitation Prompt Page 1]. From Reeves’ class handout, 2019.

*Figure 7.* [Stylistic Imitation Prompt Page 2]. From Reeves’ class handout, 2019.

*Figure 8.* [Stylistic Imitation Prompt Page 3]. From Reeves’ class handout, 2019.

*Figure 9.* [Process of Controlled Composition to Free Composition]. From “Teaching composition in the ESL classroom: What we can learn from research in the teaching of English,” by V. Zamel, 1976, *TESOL Quarterly, 10*, p. 70.


www.jstor.org/stable/3585940
Appendix A

Stylistic Imitation as an English-Teaching Technique:

Pre-Service English Teachers’ Responses to Training and Practice

Consent Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Investigator</th>
<th>Responsible Project Investigator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Investigator (PI):</td>
<td>Dr. LaVona Reeves,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min Yi Liang</td>
<td>MA-TESL Program Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23123 E Sinto Ave, Liberty Lake, WA 99019</td>
<td>Department of English, Patterson 211 “I”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone number: (509) 220-7272</td>
<td>359-7060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:Minnie@eagles.ewu.edu">Minnie@eagles.ewu.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:lreeves@ewu.edu">lreeves@ewu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Purpose and Benefits:** This research explores the use of guided writing to teach Western style composition. As part of the course assignments in English 459, you will be introduced to and assigned to do some guided writing, which is called stylistic imitation. Then you will write about what you consider the benefits and challenges to you as a writer and a pre-service English teacher. My research involves an analysis of students’ journals and short essays students write in English 459—Grammar for Teachers—where I have interned and where Dr. Reeves teaches stylistic imitation. Dr. Reeves is the responsible project investigator and thesis chair. I am conducting this research to fulfill the thesis requirement for the Master of Arts in English/TESL Emphasis.

**Procedures:** The data for my research are your normal class assignments; therefore, you are not being asked to do anything extra for the research that you are not already doing for class. In other words, I am asking you to let me include the information contained in your journals and responses to class activities in my master's thesis. Your decision to let me use your course work for my research is totally voluntary. Though completion of the assignments is expected as they are part of the normal classroom activities, having your work used for research is not a requirement. Your decision to not participate in this study will in no way affect your grade in English 459 or your standing at Eastern Washington University.

**Risk, Stress or Discomfort:** The risks of participating in this study are not expected to exceed those encountered in daily life. You will receive clear instruction regarding the writing
you are required to do. These activities will be part of the class that all students will participate in, but your own writing will appear in the thesis only with your permission. Though completion of the assignments is required, as they are part of the usual classroom activities, you will not be required to submit your work to me if you choose not to participate in this thesis project. It is totally voluntary. Your decision to not participate in this study will in no way affect your grade or your standing at Eastern Washington University.

**Other Information:** Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time without penalty. The data collected will be kept confidential. Only Dr. Reeves & I will know your name. Your name will not be used in the thesis, but your written work will be referenced by a designated name that no one can connect to you. Some of your writing will appear in the thesis, but without your name. You will also have the option to refuse to allow specific writings to be included in the thesis. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant, you may contact Ruth Galm, EWU’S Human Protections Administrator, at (509) 359-7971 or rgalm@mail.ewu.edu. Please return the form whether you are participating or not.

Min Yi Liang

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Investigator’s name</th>
<th>Primary Investigator’s signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Yes, I will participate.**
The study described above has been explained to me, and I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I have had an opportunity to ask questions. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. I understand I will receive a copy of this consent form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s name printed in English</th>
<th>Student’s signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
AUTHOR

Min Yi Liang

EDUCATION

2017 – DATE  Master of Arts in English: Teaching English as a Second Language
Eastern Washington University, Cheney, Washington

2012 – 2017  Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies
Minor in English as a Second Language
Minor in Mathematics
Certificate in English as a Second Language
Eastern Washington University, Cheney, Washington

2010 – 2012  Associate of Arts Degree
Spokane Falls Community College, Spokane, Washington


LANGUAGE PROFICIENCIES

Mandarin  Native speaker.
Cantonese  Native speaker.
Taishanese  Native speaker.
English  Advanced Mid.

CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

Winter, 2016 – Winter, 2018
Classroom volunteer at Asia University American Program at EWU

Spring, 2016
Classroom volunteer: English Language Development at Central Valley High School

Fall, 2017
Intern in English 112, Composition for Multi-Lingual Students, at EWU

Fall, 2018
Intern in English 459, Grammar for Teachers, at EWU

Spring, 2019
Intern in English 564, Pedagogical Grammar and Composition, at EWU

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2016  Cultural Humility: Expectations, LD's, Culture Shock, Trauma at Spokane Regional ESL Conference

2018  Cultural Understanding of Plagiarism in English Language Learners at EWU Symposium

2019  Stylistic Imitation for Fluency, Grammar, & Creative Thinking at Spokane Regional ESL Conference

2019  Stylistic Imitation as an English-Teaching Technique at EWU Symposium