The performance of Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD) students on a high-stakes writing test

Jacqueline Moore (198629059)
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Melbourne Graduate School of Education
University of Melbourne
Abstract

This study compares the performance of Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD) candidates with L1 candidates on a high-stakes test of argumentative writing in English. The aim of this research is to identify and describe essential differences in rhetorical approaches taken to the writing test by these two groups. The specific rhetorical features of interest are those associated with the genre of written argument, as it is taught in Australian schools. The writing test concerned is one part of a large cross-curricular scaling test used to assist in the ranking of Year 12 students, for the purpose of gaining entrance to a course of tertiary study in Australia.

Each year scaling tests are conducted in numerous Australian education jurisdictions to assist with the university entrance ranking of Year 12 students. Such tests typically include a writing task that measures a candidate’s ability to think and write at a level deemed appropriate for tertiary study. The writing task of interest here requires candidates to produce a script of approximately 600 words within 150 minutes. Candidates are asked to develop a written argument in response to a set of stimulus materials related to an issue of broad public interest. This test of writing was jointly developed in 1984 by an educational testing agency in consultation with groups of teachers from senior secondary colleges and the board of studies in the relevant jurisdiction. The task was conceived as a valid or authentic test of the writing process. Several reviews have been conducted since the introduction of this writing test and the teachers working in the relevant jurisdiction continue to support it in its current form.

A mixed methods approach is used in this study to provide both quantitative measurements and qualitative descriptions of differences in writing test performance of the two candidate groups. The main data sources include numerical test scores and de-identified student writing scripts. A purposive sample of 20 CALD and 32 L1 test scripts is selected for coding and analysis. An additional set of 12 scripts from the highest performing L1 scripts is then added to the analysis to strengthen the findings.

CALD candidates whose scripts are analysed in this study demonstrate a strong knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, along with a firm grasp of the structural features of written argument. One explanation for the absence of CALD students at the top performance level, as supported by the qualitative data presented here, is that they are less prepared to be creative and adventurous in their rhetorical choices than are their L1 counterparts. Markers reward an ‘A’ more readily to writers extending themselves beyond the conventional features of the task to produce what is viewed as an exceptional piece of writing.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

i the thesis comprises only my original work towards the masters

ii due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

iii the thesis is less than 22 000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Signed:
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I would like to thank the board of studies in the educational jurisdiction from which the test described in this study is taken. The board granted permission for me to undertake this research and to use relevant data and documentation for which it owns the rights. For reasons of confidentiality the board will not be identified in this paper nor will the sources of board documents referred to herein.

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Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. ii
Declaration .............................................................................................................................. iii
Acknowledgements .............................................................................................................. iv

1 Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 7
   1.1 Key terms ....................................................................................................................... 7
   1.2 Purpose of this study ...................................................................................................... 8
   1.3 Background to this study ............................................................................................ 1
   1.4 Organisation of the thesis ........................................................................................... 2

2 Literature Review .................................................................................................................. 3
   2.1 The legacy of contrastive rhetoric .............................................................................. 3
   2.2 Genre-based writing instruction and critical literacy .................................................. 4
   2.3 A place for this study ................................................................................................... 7
   2.4 The high-stakes writing test in a changing environment ............................................ 9
   2.5 Test accommodations and their effects ...................................................................... 10
   2.6 The marking process .................................................................................................. 13
   2.7 The CALD test candidate .......................................................................................... 15

3 The study ............................................................................................................................. 18
   3.1 Methodology ............................................................................................................... 18
   3.2 Design integrity and rigour ....................................................................................... 19
   3.3 Method ......................................................................................................................... 20
      3.3.1 The data ................................................................................................................ 20
      3.3.2 Sampling .............................................................................................................. 21
      3.3.3 Research Question 1 .......................................................................................... 22
      3.3.4 Research Questions 2 and 3 .............................................................................. 23

4 Results .................................................................................................................................. 27
   4.1 Research Question 1 .................................................................................................... 27
   4.2 Research Question 2 .................................................................................................... 29
   4.3 Research Question 3 .................................................................................................... 39

5 Discussion ............................................................................................................................ 43
   5.1 What makes for a ‘good’ written argument? ............................................................... 43

6 Conclusions .......................................................................................................................... 47
6.1 Limitations of the study................................................................. 47
6.2 Recommended further research...................................................... 47
References .......................................................................................... 49
Appendices ....................................................................................... 55
Appendix I ....................................................................................... 55
Appendix II ...................................................................................... 57
Appendix III ..................................................................................... 59
1 Introduction

1.1 Key terms

The acronyms ‘CALD’ (Culturally And Linguistically Diverse) and ‘L1’ will be used to refer to the two main participant groups with which the study is concerned. In the educational jurisdiction to which this study is connected, CALD is the agreed acronym for students enrolled in ESL (English as a Second Language), as opposed to the mainstream subject of English.

The term ‘rhetorical approach’ is used in this study to refer to several elements of writing either generally associated or, at least not inconsistent with, the genre of ‘argument’.

The term ‘argument’ is used interchangeably with the term ‘persuasive’ when referring to the genre of writing discussed in this paper. The use of either term is acceptable here as the writing task concerned is not defined strictly as one or the other.

The particular intention of this study is to elucidate features most likely to impact on the scores that markers allocate to scripts written by respondents at the higher performance levels.
1.2 Purpose of this study

This study seeks to investigate the following questions in order to advance the knowledge in second language writing research:

RQ1 On a test of argumentative writing, how do the results of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) candidates compare to those of L1 candidates?

RQ2 What differences are there in the generic features of CALD and L1 argumentative writing scripts?

RQ3 How do any differences in the generic features of CALD and L1 argumentative writing impact on the overall quality of the script?

The objective of this study is to illuminate the differences in rhetorical approaches that may be found in the CALD and L1 writing scripts produced for a high-stakes test. It is anticipated that a number of factors play a part in CALD student writing performance as do cultural perceptions about the nature of written argument.
1.3 Background to this study

Having worked on the development of writing assessments for a number of years and noting the quantitative differences in results achieved by CALD and L1 candidate sub-groups, it is timely to investigate these. Each year the CALD group achieves on average 10% lower than the L1 group in the particular writing test with which this study is interested. This in itself may seem unsurprising, given that this complex task involves the production of a piece of argumentative writing under timed and high-stakes test conditions. The language ability of students who have received just a few years of education in an English language setting could be expected to be less advanced than that of native speaker students. This has indeed been found to be the case in recent studies of L2 argumentative writing skills. In her findings on the acquisition of such skills in recently arrived Chinese students completing Year 12 studies in Victoria, Wu (2010) concluded that; “time constraints were a key issue for these students in developing their academic language competence, and analytical and organisation skills” (p. vi). This view is reiterated elsewhere, including the work of Duff (2001) and Gibbons (2002). It should be noted, however, that some research suggests these factors are not of themselves enough to satisfactorily explain low performance on essay writing in English as an L2. There are other forms of social disadvantage and motivational factors which impact on the acquisition of high level literacy skills (Rayman-Bacchus, 2005).

In the service of university entrance selection, large-scale testing has an important role in ensuring consistent processes and standards are maintained for stakeholders, both within and across testing cycles. The strict conditions within which scaling tests are developed, as a high-stakes measurement tool, should be noted when considering the seemingly inflexible appearance of this method of student ranking. The issue of relevance in this study is the role of an argumentative writing test in this ranking process. Cummins and Davison (2007), amongst others have noted “tensions in education in general and the subject English in particular between the notion of argument as expanding modes of thinking and critique and argument as the mechanism for high-stakes assessment” (p. 546). They pointed to the move away from L2 teaching and learning toward a more cross-cultural approach to classroom pedagogies. Elder and Davies (2006) have suggested that the rapid growth in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) necessitates the introduction of language testing accommodations, particularly those that prioritise communicative competence over linguistic accuracy. Test developers and administrators tend to take a conservative stance with regard to new varieties of English in high-stakes test environments. At the same time, some accommodations along the lines suggested above, have been introduced to the writing test in which this study is interested. These are explained in Section 2.4.
The Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education (2005) states; “Careful standardization of tests and administration conditions helps to ensure that all test-takers are given a comparable opportunity to demonstrate what they know” (p. 2). In an effort to reduce the gap between CALD and L1 test results a number of accommodations were introduced in 2006 and have been retained since. The question as to whether these accommodations have either succeeded in leveling the playing field, or in fact ‘provided an unfair advantage’ to English language learners over other disadvantaged groups (Butler & Stevens, 1997), will not be directly addressed here.

1.4 Organisation of the thesis

The Literature Review (Section 2) provides a detailed discussion of the points raised above. It also addresses some significant bodies of thought and research around issues associated with the topic of this thesis. Similar studies to those documented here are acknowledged both for their broad contribution to the field and the particular influence they have had on this study. Despite the fact that this study takes a rather different approach, the legacy of work done in Contrastive Rhetoric (CR) and Critical Contrastive Rhetoric (CCR) has influenced the perspective with which it set out. For this reason, the relevant work of several researchers in CR and CCR is considered in Section 2. A brief review of theoretical and practical approaches taken in their research is also provided.

Recent literacy movements that have influenced the way that writing instruction is carried out in Australian schools are also be explored in Section 2, as is the work of a number of language testing researchers. This exploration focuses on the ‘genre approach’ to writing instruction which has prevailed in our education system for over 25 years and has shaped the way that written argument is regarded. The candidates on the test discussed here have received Genre Based Writing Instruction (GBWI) in learning to write an argument in their English or ESL classroom.

Section 3 of this thesis provides details of both the methodology and the research design employed. A mixed methods approach is used in the search for answers to the central research questions; an explanation and justification for the mixed methods approach used is outlined. The results with respect to each question are laid out in Section 4 in the form of tables, charts, graphs and, where appropriate, in excerpts from written transcripts. The analysis and discussion of these results are attended to in Section 5.
2 Literature Review

2.1 The legacy of contrastive rhetoric

In 1966, the idea advanced by Robert Kaplan about ‘cultural thought patterns’ spawned what came to be known as the Contrastive Rhetoric (CR) movement (Kaplan, 1966). Research in CR is concerned with how a person’s first language and culture influences their approach to writing in a second language. Although this study is not conducted in the CR tradition, the field of CR has influenced many of the ideas central to it. For example, there remain strong academic voices asserting that Australian language policy, as it applies to the education system, continues to privilege some cultural groups over others. Clyne and Sharifian (2008), for example, state that in the “Australian upper secondary school examination assessments, too, there is an imputed link between linearity and relevance which is absent in German/Central European education systems” (p. 8). The generic elements of writing valued in the Australian education system are discussed in Section 2.2.

A good number of useful recommendations have emerged from the work of CR and its sub-branches that relate to ESL. For example, it has long been widely accepted that ESL teachers should familiarise themselves with the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their students, so as to better address their L2 learning needs (Lado, 1957). Mu (2007) suggests that “it is useful to identify the strategies used by proficient L2 writers, particularly writers in an authentic context, so as to inform the L2 writing classroom” (p. 29). The specific linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds of L2 writers whose work is studied here will not be the central interest. The focus of the text analysis to be used is not the way that particular L1 discourse patterns may impact on the attainment of L2 patterns.

A study in contrastive linguistics by Kamimura and Oi (1996) claimed that previous studies had focused on “form (organizational pattern) rather than content (rhetorical persuasiveness)” (p. 2) in L2 student writing in English. These researchers set out to redress this imbalance and several of their analytical points are also investigated in this study. Kamimura and Oi’s rationale for looking both at and beyond organisational aspects of L2 argumentative writing includes the observation that different cultures take different approaches to this genre. Their study specifically contrasted the approach to written argument taken by Japanese and American college students.
The Japanese rhetorical tradition had been previously described (Okabe, 1993) as more concerned with eliciting emotional empathy from the reader, than with persuading them through the use of logic, as is the emphasis in the western rhetorical tradition. Kamimura and Oi set out to test this by measuring the number of affective and rational appeals made in the writing of each study group. They also considered some organisational aspects of written argument such as the ‘thesis statement’ and the ‘conclusion’. These and other categories used in the Kamimura and Oi study will be used for the analysis of L1 and L2 student writing conducted in this study (see Section 4).

2.2 Genre-based writing instruction and critical literacy

“A large part of culture shock is in fact genre shock.” (Eggins, 1994 p. 35)

Martin (1984) defined genre as “a staged, goal oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture” (p. 25). In the context of this definition, the word ‘staged’ refers to a sequence of steps. Since the early 1980s there has been debate between the ‘Sydney School’ and the ‘New Rhetoricians’ around whether or not genre should be taught ‘explicitly’, as set of fixed rules and conventions for successful writing. Each side of this debate is concerned with a different group of learners which goes some way to explaining their differing views. The New Rhetoric group is interested in university students and professionals, whereas the Sydney School aims to improve outcomes for children of diverse backgrounds and adult migrants (Hinkel, 2005).

In Australia, and in several neighboring Asia-Pacific countries, the Sydney School approach to explicit Genre-Based Writing Instruction (GBWI) appears to have prevailed. A great deal of progress has been made in writing pedagogy since Hyland (1990) opined that L2 writer “problems are often due to an inability to marshal the resources of content and organisation to meet the demands of the argumentative genre” (p. 75). A good proportion of the CALD writers in this study sample are very capable of managing these demands. There are however, a range of views as to where more than two decades of the GBWI approach has left our student writers, both L1 and L2.

From the 1990s there was a move away from the ‘process approach’ to writing instruction, based on what many perceived as its reliance on ‘invisible pedagogies (Bernstein, 1996). This view of writing instruction underpins that of Hyland (1990) in respect to the teaching of written argument: “an effective argument is as much a matter of organisation as content or creativity and constructing meaning involves developing rhetorical steps” (p. 66). The alternative position might be put that too strong a focus on ‘steps’ and ‘organisation’ can detract from content and creativity.
More recent research suggests that this issue has not been entirely resolved (Cummins & Davison, 2007); “to construct a persuasive written argument is a highly-valued skill in all English-speaking societies, but the structure and purpose of such argument may vary and its linguistic features are often assumed, rather than explicitly taught” (p. 534). It is likely that a balance needs to be struck in order to use the best of both the process writing approach and the genre-based one.

Early moves toward GBWI came from the work of numerous academics who were concerned with the school experiences and potential academic prospects of recently arrived migrant children. Love noted that Australian children were learning the standard text types (writing genres) at primary school and were then able to move on to create new and “playful versions” of their own (1999b, p. 200).

In an increasingly culturally diverse society, a clear gap was developing between this group of children and those who began their Australian education later in primary or secondary school. From the late 1980s there was a push to make open the hidden aspects of school success in this country to empower migrant children educationally.

Around this time Kalantzis and Cope (1993) amongst others (eg. Kress, 1993; Martin, Christie, & Rothery, 1987) called for the explicit teaching of the genres of social power to allow access to all school learners, particularly those from a non-English speaking background. Love (1999b) presented a detailed case for the explicit teaching in schools of the meta-language associated with writing genres, asserting that this is indeed the only way that these essential language conventions might be learned by recently arrived students. At the same time, several voices from the critical literacy movement denounced the failure of the GBWI approach to challenge these same language conventions and the existing power structures that valorise them (Luke, 1996).

The Critical Literacy movement provided an opportunity, at least in theory if not in reality, for non-standard forms of English to be valued equally to the traditional forms (Allison, 2011). Over the last ten years some academics have expressed doubts about the focus on critical literacy in the school curriculum. Some research has found that this approach inadequately prepares EALD students to meet the standard of writing expected at university. In her study of the writing of Queensland L1 and L2 senior secondary school students, Allison (2011) found that even the brightest CALD students struggled to achieve good results when producing a piece of critical or argumentative writing. This was the case despite at least 15 years of critical literacy in the English curricula of Queensland and several other Australian educational jurisdictions.
It may seem counterintuitive to call for the provision of ‘a more flexible, plural model’ of ‘good writing’ to secondary CALD students and, at the same time, to make more explicit the elements of ‘good writing’, but this is indeed what Allison appears to do (p. 196). The movement from open-ended process writing approaches through to GBWI and on to critical literacy over the last 25 years reflects the inherent difficulty in striking the right pedagogical balance.

New Rhetoricians, such as Master (2006) would likely argue that the more explicit the conventions of genre, the more constraints are placed on the learner. Freedman and Pringle (1994) and Wu (2010) have advocated for teaching learners more varied ways to write an argument to move them away from the ubiquitous ‘five paragraph essay’ (introduction, three body paragraphs and conclusion) or the ‘for/against’ model. They suggest that these are often the only models taught.

The debate about the impact of GBWI has also arisen in relation to student writing on the Australian National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy tests (NAPLAN). This program tests the writing of learners in years 3, 5, 7 and 9. The following observations are made in the 2014 Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) NAPLAN report:

Many students in the lower grades, in particular, continued to follow a generic structure based around an introduction adopting some stance: *I strongly believe that*

..., a series of brief paragraphs with rather prosaic connectives, *Firstly* ...

*secondly* ... etc., and a conclusion that mainly provided a summary of the text.

In relation to the quality of Year 7 and 9 writing the Queensland report notes that the better responses incorporated tonal techniques such as humour and compassion. These observations suggest that there is a kind of continuum from formulaic early primary school writing to the more nuanced writing produced by the middle of secondary school.
2.3 A place for this study

It is widely recognised that producing a sustained piece of written argument is a complex and challenging task for secondary school students and requires a good deal of practice to master (Flower & Hayes, 1980; Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009). This kind of writing task is highly valued for its ability to provide an objective measure of academic ability as part of a large scale test battery. The most well-known example of this may be found in the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) that has operated in the US since 1926. The SAT includes a task requiring candidates to write a point of view on an issue and, as such, is very similar to the task used to provide data for this study. The U.S. Professional College Board (2015) website states: “Colleges can use the SAT writing score as part of their evaluation of a student’s readiness for college-level work”.

The past 30 years have seen numerous linguistic studies contrasting the argumentative (or persuasive) writing of L1 and L2 students and a sample of these are reviewed here. Many of these studies have focused on the organisational aspects of written argument. In 1986, Purves was able to classify the writing style of 14 different participating countries using categories such as personal versus impersonal, ornamented versus plain, abstract versus concrete, single versus multiple focus. He also considered propositional coherence strategies versus appositional coherence strategies (Purves, 1986). Connor’s approach (1987) was somewhat different to that of Purves. She created three sets of criteria for argumentative texts: the text structure (problem-solution); the text’s successive speech acts (asserting a claim, justifying the claim, and inducing the original claim from observations); and evidence of awareness of audience. Essays written in L1 from Finland, Germany, the U.S., and Britain were then rated holistically. An examination of the highest and lowest rated essays from each language group revealed that the best rated essays fulfilled the cross-cultural expectations implied by Connor’s original criteria. She found a correlation between “the presence or absence of the features she identifies and a high or low independent rating, thus implying the existence of a universal argumentation style which transcends cultural boundaries” (Leki, 1991, p. 133).

Ferris (1994) compared the L1 and L2 persuasive writing of first year college students in the United States. In so doing, she replicated Connor and Kaplan’s (1987) CR study and used the same models of analysis (argument superstructure, speech act sequence, and persuasive adaptiveness) (p. 47). Ferris found that the more advanced native speakers used a variety of techniques to introduce new points in support of their argument, as opposed to the second language writers, who tended to rely more heavily upon discourse markers such as: “first, however, on the other hand and in conclusion” (p. 54).
She also found that the L1 writers in her study were better able to integrate “assertive rhetorical questions” (p. 51) to which a negative response is implied. The L1 writing demonstrated a stronger ability to anticipate and deal with potential counterarguments. Overall, the Ferris study found clear contrasts between L1 and L2 argumentative writing.

Research undertaken by Cummins and Davison (2007) used Martin’s (1985) model of genre analysis and revealed systematic variation in the linguistic structure and features of the students’ written arguments. They found that the L2 students in their study exhibited a preference for writing hortatory rather than analytical exposition. This preference was then linked back to the differences in expectations and socialisation practices between schools in their country of origin and schools in Australia. L2 learners arrive in the Australian classroom with a particular set of linguistic skills and cultural perspectives. These need to be quickly adapted to the new educational and language community into which the student now finds him or herself. In their native country they may have had very little, or even no, experience of being asked to voice their personal views about social or political matters (Yang, 2001). Suddenly, these young people are expected to express their views openly and independently at least in classroom discussions.

The Cummins and Davison (2007) study found many senior secondary L2 students failed to recognise that the expression of individual opinions and feelings is appropriate for classroom discussions, but less so for writing in examinations. According to Cummins and Davison, “more recently arrived Hong Kong students’ texts became far more emotive and spoken-like over the course of their final two years of school, in an apparent process of socio-psychological convergence” (p. 12). The issue of hortatory versus analytical writing style also emerges in this study.

Research has also been conducted into the use of rhetorical questions by L2 learners, such as that conducted by Wong (1988) and referred to in Ferris (1994). Wong described the use of rhetorical questions as an organisational strategy within a persuasive text. She looked at the various ways rhetorical questions are used by L1 and L2 writers in an effort to persuade. Her study did not clearly link this analysis to the overall effectiveness of the persuasive texts investigated. Wong analysed two types of rhetorical questions, the ‘interrogative’ (the answer to which introduces new information) and the ‘assertive’, a question to which a particular (usually negative) answer is implied. Rhetorical questions are common in secondary student persuasive writing.
In reporting on her study, Ferris concludes that L2 student writers “may benefit from more specific instruction in the discrete elements of an argument”. She goes on to list a number of the key skills required for successful written argumentation, including “the introduction and modeling of specific rhetorical tools (e.g., the two types of rhetorical questions)” (p. 57).

2.4 The high-stakes writing test in a changing environment

The use of writing tests in Australia to assist in determining university entrance eligibility is both widespread and well-established. In fact, the essay remains the dominant form of assessment in both schools and universities across many countries (Rayman-Bacchus, 2005). The writing test concerned here is an example of the increasingly popular Reading To Write (RTW) task type. As such, it reflects the demands placed on students by “simulating the kinds of tasks encountered in academic settings” (Shin & Ewert, 2014, p. 260). What has changed markedly over the lifespan of this particular writing test is the diversity of its candidature. A combination of higher rates of retention amongst secondary students, with a sharp rise in the number of both local and CALD students seeking university entrance, has created an increasingly heterogeneous cohort.

As many a researcher has noted, not all students have access to the ‘cultural capital’ needed to acquire English written conventions (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Love, 1999). It is noted that there are groups within the overall cohort of test candidates who have less opportunity to develop the cultural capital referred to above. The increasing diversity of the cohort reduces the accuracy with which the essay can provide a reliable measure of student ability. This is the case for any similar large-scale writing test and will continue to challenge test developers, administrators and other stakeholders alike. However, this study limits its scope to investigating some differences between the writing of CALD and L1 student groups.

Numerous studies have found that CALD students have widely varying views of what makes for a ‘good’ essay (Houndsell, 1987; McCune, 2004). Students bring with them ideas drawn from prior knowledge, educational experience and cultural background about what amounts to good writing (Connor, 1997; Rayman-Bacchus, 2005). The manner in which their subsequent educational experience in Australia intersects with these factors has been shown to yield unpredictable results (Cummins & Davison, 2007).
In respect to this issue, Rayman-Bacchus (2005) has asked “should the notion of a good essay become more open and relativistic, thereby allowing the voice of the international student to be heard and treated more equitably?” (p. 71).

In a formative model of written argument (Andrews, 1995), two key skills are described as follows: “the pupil is able to write in a lively, readable way” and “the pupil is able to be sensitive to the purpose of the argument and to the audience” (p. 161).

Other research into what makes for ‘good writing’ in the eyes of English and ESL teachers (Robinson, 1994) has resulted in the following list of “linguistic and rhetorical features: syntactic maturity, mechanical correctness, effective and appropriate use of language, evidence of personal voice, cohesion/coherence, audience awareness, organisation, effective tone, content and ability to evoke a human response” (Mu, 2007, p. 57). These features are accounted for in the marking guide for the writing test discussed in this paper (Appendix II).

2.5 Test accommodations and their effects

The material presented as stimulus for the writing task referred to in this study deals with a topic of general public interest in this country. Each year the writing test topic and related stimulus remains unknown to candidates until the test sitting to control for uneven topic knowledge among test-takers (Shin & Ewert, 2014). Some of these topics may also be of interest in other countries, although international or cross-cultural relevance is not the primary determinant for topic selection. Students from CALD backgrounds may find at least some of these topics difficult to address due to their cultural unfamiliarity.

Research has shown that markers regard language errors in student writing negatively and readily penalise students accordingly. The research of Vann, Meyer, and Frederick (1984) and later work by Roberts and Cimasko (2008) concluded that markers respond more negatively to L2 than to L1 writer error. However, these researchers were not conclusive on this question, nor on that of which kinds of errors markers treat most harshly. Contrastingly, Janopoulos (1992) concluded that markers often overcompensate for ESL writer errors. They found that markers tend to be more critical of ‘Standard American English’ (SAE) writers than L2 writers because the L1 writer ‘should know better’ (Johnson & VanBrackle, 2012).
Some research suggests that the ‘CALD’ group is itself a highly diverse one and that it is not universally disadvantaged by standardised writing tests: “Some international students seem to quickly acquire a good grasp of academic writing while some home students entering postgraduate studies seem to experience serious difficulty with written English” (Rayman-Bacchus, 2005, p. 69). However, a greater weight of research points in the opposing direction, suggesting that CALD students understandably have difficulty in finding their ‘voice’ within a linguistically, culturally and institutionally unfamiliar environment (Canagarajah, 2006; Congjun Mu, 2007; Connor, 1996; Gale, 1994; Hirvela and Belcher, 2001; Kamani, 2000; Lam, 2000; Schoonen et al., 2003).

The sorts of questions asked for some time by both test developers and administrators involved in the writing test at issue here are:

- To what extent can CALD students construct a sustained piece of written argument in keeping with the widely held view of this genre as it is taught in Australian schools?

- Do CALD writing scripts produced under test conditions contain culturally derived language features that may disadvantage them?
A number of researchers recommend that accommodations be judiciously employed in high-stakes tests with candidates who either have a disability or are L2 (Butler & Stevens, 1997; Davies, 2006; Abedi & Ewers, 2013). Below are some considerations from Abedi and Ewers (2013) regarding the appropriateness of accommodations (pp. 4-5).

i. Effectiveness: an accommodation must be effective in making an assessment more accessible to the recipients.

ii. Validity: an accommodation should not alter the focal construct, i.e., the outcomes of accommodated and non-accommodated assessments should be comparable.

iii. Differential Impact: an accommodation should be sensitive to student’s background characteristics, and their academic standing, i.e., one size may not fit all.

iv. Relevance: an accommodation should be appropriate for the recipients.

v. Feasibility: an accommodation must be logistically feasible to implement in the assessment setting.

Accommodations applied to the writing test of interest in this study address four of the five considerations described above. They cannot deal with Differential Impact, as this requires a computer adaptive approach, not available to a test still conducted using paper and pen. As an accommodation to CALD candidates the administrators of this writing test decided several years ago to separate the CALD and L1 scripts for the purposes of marking. The CALD candidates’ writing scripts are marked by a small group of markers who have experience in ESL teaching. The criteria for deciding which candidates qualify for ‘CALD’ status is outlined in Section 2.6.

The emphasis in marking should be on the quality of what is written; and surface errors, or the employment of a rhetorical style other than that of the ‘argumentative essay’ should not be unduly penalised. This approach contrasts with that applied to the scoring of the NAPLAN writing test. As noted by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, NAPLAN writing scripts deemed to be ‘off genre’ necessarily suffer a negative impact to their scores (2014).

In respect to the stimulus material offered in the test paper, candidates are given a good deal of scope for constructing their own response to a broad theme. Schools prepare their students thoroughly for the task and there has been positive feedback reported from teachers to the board of studies. The assessment criteria for the writing task provided to test candidates are shown in Figure I.
The CALD marker group receives the following directions:

| When they see it, markers should look through first language interference to the quality of what a candidate is saying. Markers should also be sensitive to differences in cultural norms, and differences in what is thought to be an appropriate response to a writing test prompt. |

2.6 The marking process

Each script is blind-marked (ie: each marker is unaware of the score given by any previous marker) by four markers using a holistic scale, each out of a total of 20 points. A holistic marking scale seeks to arrive at a global score for a piece of writing based on a set of guiding criteria. Analytical marking scales attribute specific scores to each criterion which may be weighted according to perceived importance.

The question as to whether a holistic scale produces more reliable results than an analytical one is not at issue here. However, it is worth noting that other writing tests used in Australia for university selection ranking also use holistic scales. Multiple marking offers the best way to prevent marker bias from affecting the integrity of the scoring process. In the writing test with which this study is concerned discrepancy marking is conducted in the event that two marker scores differ by at least five marks. Usually this process involves adjusting one score up and another one down so the overall score of the script is not substantially impacted.
CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF WRITTEN EXPRESSION

In assessing written expression markers will consider the following issues:

THOUGHT AND CONTENT

(the quality of what is said in the piece of writing)

* what is made of and developed from the task
* the kinds of thoughts and feelings offered in response to the task

STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

(the quality of the structure and organisation developed to present what is said in the writing)

* the shape and form of the piece
* the sequence and cohesion of the piece

EXPRESSION, STYLE AND MECHANICS

(the quality of the language used to organise and present what is said)

* the effectiveness and appropriateness of the language
* the expressiveness and fluency of the language
* the control of the mechanics of English

Figure I: Criteria for assessment of writing task
2.7 The CALD test candidate

Students who seek to be regarded as Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD) for the purposes of sitting the modified version of the scaling test need to meet a number of criteria. The criteria below are set out in the policy and procedures manual provided to schools within the jurisdiction. For ethical reasons, the jurisdiction will remain anonymous in this thesis.

A student will be determined to be from a CALD background if:

- the home college principal judges, on the basis of documented evidence, that the test will not provide an accurate assessment of the student’s scholastic aptitude because of English language difficulty, and
- the student has received fewer than four years of education conducted in the English language prior to commencing Year 11 studies, and
- a teacher provides a written recommendation that the student would not be capable of scoring a B or higher in the subject English.

According to criteria above a CALD test candidate would not be expected to achieve within the highest score bracket on the writing test. The difficulty for the CALD student is the limited time in which they have to develop the requisite skills (ie: less than five years by the time they sit the test). The L1 student, however difficult their socio-economic circumstances, at least has the advantage of having completed most (if not all) of their life experiences and education in an English speaking environment.

In attempting the writing test, the CALD candidate is at a disadvantage not only with regard to English language proficiency, but is also less likely to have had experience with the genre of the written argument. Numerous studies have considered the extent to which students from CALD backgrounds struggle with the argumentative essay, the format most widely regarded by western educational institutions.

The following extract from the directions given to markers attempts to mitigate those disadvantages described above.

Quite different aspects of the stimulus can be selected for discussion by individual candidates. The task is described as an argument on the cover of the test, and the instructions request a ‘point of view’, but the notions of an argument and a point of view are to be very liberally interpreted in the marking. Candidates may write more formally structured essays, or they might write quite direct expressions of their ideas and feelings about the theme. Candidates may write a point of view as a kind of personal narrative rather than a debate or formal dialectic.
Candidates can move in and out of different kinds of discussion. Some candidates even take a more or less narrative approach, and these scripts are to be assessed as a point of view, even though they may not offer explicit arguments.

CALD test candidates are enrolled in the Year 12 ESL subject as opposed to mainstream English. At the time of testing, these students have experienced less than five years of education in an English-speaking context. The level of literacy required for a strong performance on this argumentative writing task is that of ‘analyst’. A comprehensive range of literacy skills must be demonstrated by these students – from decoder to analyst – in a very short space of time within the mainstream context (Freebody, 1990).

In order for candidates to locate the issue in the stimulus material provided by the test booklet, they need to have developed sound reading skills and at least some level of critical literacy. The relevant ESL course framework document makes the following claims about the course:

All courses based on this course framework should enable students to:

- understand, analyse and critically reflect on a broad variety of texts – written, visual and multimodal
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the relationships between texts and their social and cultural contexts
- compose coherent and cohesive texts for social, creative and academic purposes
- locate, evaluate, interpret and synthesise information from a variety of sources
- exchange opinions and convey information appropriately
- communicate effectively when listening, speaking and writing.

A number of the skills described above come into play in attempting an argumentative writing task. The first one refers to the ability to ‘critically reflect’. From a Critical Literacy perspective, this would amount to the learner being able to interrogate a text to find evidence of multiple perspectives and vested interests (Wajnryb, 2000). To what extent can a person who arrives in Australia as an adolescent be expected to have moved to this position? Many of these young people have already developed culturally specific patterns of social interaction that determine who is permitted to say what and to whom (Connor, 1987).

At the time that CALD students attempt their university entrance scaling test, they will have completed just over a semester of year 12 studies. They will have experienced no more than four previous years of education in an English language setting. According to many linguistic experts, this is not long enough to develop critical language awareness and its requisite meta-language (Fairclough, 1992).
The focus by Australian English teachers on critical literacy “has implications for newly arrived NESB (Non-English Speaking Background) learners whose knowledge of meta-language may be minimal or based on traditional grammar rather than on functional grammar, for example, Chinese speakers” (Alford 2001, p. 7). Likewise, Lankshear and Knobel (1998) warn “we cannot produce critical readings and re-writings of specific texts without the necessary operational capacities for accessing those texts and for framing and communicating our critical response” (p. 7).
3 The study

3.1 Methodology

Describing a mixed methods research approach inevitably involves distinguishing it from the more traditional quantitative and qualitative approaches. The distinction between quantitative and qualitative data is not always a straightforward one. Qualitative data is broadly regarded as descriptive or non-numerical data. On the other hand, some qualitative data are expressed in numbers, as practitioners need a way to convey how many times a particular theme or pattern arises (Tesch, 1990). Quantitative data are expressed in numbers and are generally used to measure how many or how much there is of something to provide the basis for statistical analysis.

Mixed methods research is often referred to by practitioners, as the ‘third research paradigm’ (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007), as opposed to a mere combination of the first two approaches. Not all mixed methods approaches to research are the same. An agreed definition for this research approach is still evolving and continues to provide subject matter for academic discussion. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009) suggest a way of thinking about mixed methods research that is applicable to this study: the “collecting, analyzing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study” (p. 265).

The conversation about mixed methods approaches to research has moved on from the so-called ‘paradigm wars’ (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) in which researchers lined up on either side of the debate to argue that the two approaches were fundamentally incompatible. Over the last ten years, qualitative-oriented, social-constructivist based mixed methods research approaches have increased in popularity. Green (2005) and Mason (2006) argue that qualitative-oriented mixed methods research can be used to develop complex understandings through the application of multiple lenses, perspectives and stances, while also challenging simplistic answers to complex questions. This study does not aspire to achieving all of these goals, but it does explore beyond the quantitative data, in an attempt to seek a more nuanced understanding of what the numbers represent.
3.2 Design integrity and rigour

A common justification for using a mixed methods approach is that of complementarity. The approach provides the conditions for a researcher to gain a better understanding of their research problem and assists them to clarify a given result (Hesse-Biber, 2010). Quantitative data offers breadth by delivering large-scale statistical evidence while qualitative data contributes the detail needed to tell the story behind the statistics. A mixed methods approach, if conducted competently, can deliver both breadth and depth thereby increasing the validity of a study.

Another reason to combine methods from across research approaches is the accessibility of both kinds of data and the principle that each has a contribution to make toward strengthening the findings. In other words, there is a kind of pragmatism offered by the mixed research method (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007). Indeed, some have compared it to a form of diplomacy and has, as such, described it as the “art of the possible” (Patton, 1990, p. 13). The mixed methods approach in this study reflects the view of Punch (2009) that neither the quantitative nor the qualitative approach is superior to the other, that both have their strengths and weaknesses, and that they can and ought to be combined.

Triangulation (Campbell & Fiske, 1959) can be achieved through the use of multiple data sets of the same type and obtained by similar methods. The mixed methods approach provides for the use of different data collection methods toward an answer to the same research question/s. More than one method of data collection (test results and document analyses) is used in this study to bolster the strength of its findings. Triangulation, also known as multiple operationalism, helps to ensure that the results of research projects are valid, rather than being the biased product of a particular research method. In her chapter on ethnographic research methods in L2 education Harklau (2006) describes a central feature of this approach as the “comparison across multiple data sources, commonly known as triangulation” (p. 180).
Critics of qualitative research methods claim that there is inherent bias in that the researcher provides the research tool. Goulding (2002), an expert qualitative researcher in the area of management research, responds as follows:

It is widely accepted that qualitative researchers should adopt a rigorous and self-conscious examination for bias at each stage of the research process. There is also the requirement that the researcher checks for negative incidents in the data and accounts for occurrences that do not fit the emerging story. Moreover, qualitative researchers also make use of external referees such as other fieldworkers, academics and the informants themselves, in order to check the accuracy of their interpretation. They also check indirectly through the use of similar or related literature which enables them to provide a comparative picture (Goulding, 2002, p. 18).

These matters are addressed at various stages of the study documented in this thesis.

3.3 Method

3.3.1 The data

The educational ‘case’ for research in this study is a select group of Year 12 CALD and L1 students who have completed a test used for university entrance ranking (ie: to calculate their Australian Tertiary Admission Rank or ATAR). The data to be analysed are generated from the writing scripts produced by these candidates under high-stakes test conditions. Permission has been granted by the board of studies for the use of the writing scripts and test score data used in this research.

The analytical model adapted for use in this study was influenced by that used in an earlier study that analysed differences in written argument produced by first year Japanese and US College students (Kamimura & Oi, 1996). The focus of the 1996 study was on the “extra-organizational aspects of contrastive rhetoric: the rhetorical appeals, diction and cultural aspects” (p. 1). An approach such as Kamimura and Oi’s has yet to be taken in comparing aspects of the argumentative writing of CALD and L1 secondary students in Australia. However, their findings are both referred to in and consistent with, those of recent research into the writing of analytical exposition by undergraduate L1 and L2 students in Australia (Lee, 2014).

The primary research material for the present study is a sample of writing test scripts produced by Year 12 students seeking a university selection ranking in 2012.
3.3.2 Sampling

Purposive sampling (Punch, 2009) was used to select 20 CALD scripts that scored between 14 and 16 (‘B’) on average from a total of 20 points across markers. A corresponding number of L1 scripts from the same score range was selected. The thinking behind this approach is that “the sample is drawn from the population in a deliberate or targeted way, according to the logic of the research” (Punch, 2009, p. 155). Scripts scoring no higher than an average of 16 marks were selected for study because, there were in fact, insufficient CALD scripts that achieved a higher score. In the case of scripts scoring below 14 out of 20, it is likely that mechanical language errors would distract from the focus of this study (ie: rhetorical strategies used in written argument). A third group was then introduced to the study in order to test whether any existing contrasts would increase when the writing of the strongest cohort was included in the analysis. This group is represented by a set of 12 scripts scored as ‘A’ (70+ points from a possible total of 80).

As outlined in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), purposive sampling is generally, but not exclusively, associated with qualitative work, as researchers “hand-pick cases to be included in the sample” (p. 156). In this study, quantitative data (the script scores) are used to select the most appropriate samples for a subsequent qualitative research task. The approach taken to sampling is consistent with that described as ‘purposive sampling’ and distinguished from other broad approaches such as probability sampling, convenience sampling and mixed methods sampling (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

Some advantages of using purposive sampling, in terms of meeting the objectives of this study, are outlined above. By selecting a specific sample it creates the conditions for an in depth study but not for one that offers breadth (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). As suggested by Gorard (2003), it is sometimes necessary to include a ‘boosted sample’ in order to obtain data relating to a previously underrepresented group. In the context of this study, the CALD group represents just 7% of the total test-taker cohort. It was necessary to over-select from this group for the purposes of this research.
3.3.3 Research Question 1

A quantitative analysis of test results comparing the two groups of interest is used to address the first research question in this study:

RQ1 On a test of argumentative writing, how do the results of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) candidates compare to those of L1 candidates?

The first research question of this study relies, almost by definition, upon quantitative data collection methods. The scores attributed to the writing scripts are numeric and can be described as reliable to the extent that they have been subjected to an internal method of validation through a process of multiple blind-scoring. In this sense, this study may be open to the accusation sometimes aimed at mixed methods of having the ‘quals’ follow the ‘quants’ (Green & Preston, 2005), thereby attributing greater meaning to the quantitative data. In the early design phase of this research project, quantitative data was used to locate the sample scripts to be analyzed, a technique advanced by Sieber (1973).

The differences in writing test results of CALD and L1 candidates are not normally reported on at the end of each cycle of this particular test. The data needed to be extracted and graphed for the purpose of this study. This quantitative data is useful in providing a broad overview as it reflects the results of a large number of test-takers.

In order to avoid interference from problems with grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation, this study uses scripts from each group scoring at the upper end of the range. Scripts within this score range show sound language competency in addition to a control of the key features of written argument. Section 5.1 provides a detailed description of the genre-specific elements of argumentative writing.

The raw scores on the writing task were created by adding together the four scores (out of 20) allocated by markers to each script against the criteria shown in Figure I. Therefore, each script receives a total score out of 80 marks. Wherever a discrepancy of five or more points arose between the scores given by markers, a lead marker would give the script a final score. Mean scores for the two groups have been substantially different each year over the life of this writing task. The L1 group typically achieves a significantly higher mean score each year than the CALD group, although this effect has been somewhat mitigated by accommodations to marking introduced in 2006 (explained in Section 2.4).
The raw test scores are treated as objective here due to the fact that a number of procedures have been used to validate them. The scores are recorded in spreadsheets from which a sample within the score range of 60-68 marks (out of 80) was selected. The selection of writing scripts to be analysed was arrived at through a process closely resembling that known as ‘purposive sampling’.

The intention was to include in the study sample a set of scripts displaying features reasonably consistent with the expectations for writing within this score range. In keeping with this intention, scripts receiving ‘discrepant’ scores, were not selected for the study. These are scripts for which at least two markers disagreed substantially about quality. Often these scripts contain atypical features about which markers may disagree as to how they should best be scored. Avoiding discrepant scripts maximises the inclusion of ‘typical’ cases and minimises those containing features that may render them ‘outliers’ (refer to Appendix II).

**3.3.4 Research Questions 2 and 3**

Research Questions 2 and 3 were designed to compare the approaches to written argument taken in a set of writing scripts scored as ‘B’ from both the CALD and L1 groups.

**RQ2** What differences are there in the generic features of CALD and L1 argumentative writing scripts?

**RQ3** How do any differences in the generic features of CALD and L1 argumentative writing impact on the overall quality of the script?

According to the scoring guide (Appendix II) the scripts scored as ‘B’ demonstrate a ‘strong’ proficiency in control of the argument genre (in contrast with ‘A’ scripts which demonstrate ‘very strong’ proficiency and ‘C’ scripts which demonstrate ‘sound’ proficiency). The focus of this research study is the extent and nature of qualitative differences between rhetorical approaches taken by each participant group.

The process of qualitative document analysis followed in this study involves a number of phases of work. Once the scripts to be analysed are identified they are word processed to ensure that any hand-writing unevenness does not impact on the way they are interpreted and to allow space for coding. The coding technique used is an iterative one that avoids the forcing of data into preconceived conclusions.
As Eisenhardt (1989) has advised; “the key to good cross-case comparison is counteracting these tendencies by looking at the data in many divergent ways. One tactic is to select categories or dimensions, and then to look for within-group similarities coupled with intergroup differences” (p. 540).

To consider Research Question 2, the scripts in this study were coded initially using six of the seven categories employed in a similar study conducted by Kamimura and Oi (1996) that compared L1 and L2 written argument. A category called ‘Background Information’ used by Kamimura and Oi was not used in this study. The decision to omit this category was based on the fact that background information is provided to candidates in the test booklet with which this study is interested (see Appendix I). Contrastingly, the 1996 study used a simple and unseen writing prompt to which candidates needed to bring their own knowledge and understandings. Naturally, many writing scripts reviewed in the production of this study contained background information and personal anecdotes outside of that provided in the test booklet. However, it was not a primary interest of this study to determine how much, if any, additional background information was provided by test candidates. The main interest here is in the extent to which a range of rhetorical features were employed in constructing a piece of persuasive writing.

The Kamimura and Oi coding categories used in this study are as follows:

1. Thesis statement
2. Reservation
3. Hesitation
4. Rational appeal
5. Affective appeal
6. Conclusion

The coding categories used by Kamimura and Oi reflect the generally accepted features of a written argument. A written argument includes a ‘Thesis statement’ that outlines the stance the writer will take on the topic and a reason for taking that position. This statement most commonly appears in the opening paragraph of the essay. The essays in this study address the question of whether society should allow for more electronic security measures to be implemented to protect people against crime. Many writers offer an argument for or against this proposal based on whether they consider safety or privacy to be more important. One script in this study offers the following thesis statement; “social changes that have unfolded in the past two decades demand a corresponding change in the regulation of social media and other internet-related applications.”
The next Kamimura and Oi coding category also used by this study is that of the ‘Reservation’, also often referred to as ‘refutation’. A good piece of written argument will acknowledge and use evidence to effectively refute potential opposing arguments. In another script from this study the writer responds to the argument that the right to privacy is inalienable and should be upheld at all costs. “Only those participating in cyber-crime should have anything to fear from increased internet security measures.” The writer goes on to supply some relevant supporting evidence from the test stimulus material and from their own experience of internet security issues.

It seems logical that the third coding category ‘Hesitation’ would, by definition, not appear in the same piece of writing as a ‘thesis statement’ or a ‘reservation’. The former is a statement in which the writer expresses that they lack a clear position on the issue under discussion. An example of a hesitation statement written by a Japanese student is provided by Kamimura and Oi; “I think I can’t say that a capital punishment is for or against” (1996, p. 4). Thesis statements clearly declare, whilst reservation statements at least imply, that the writer has a view on the issue under discussion.

The Kamimura and Oi study regarded sentences that followed the thesis statement as “appeals” (1996, p. 4), which were divided into Rational appeals and Affective appeals. These two coding categories are also used in this study. Rational appeals are those directed toward the reader’s sense of logic, while Affective appeals aim to invoke an emotional response. A Rational appeal from one of the scripts in this study states that, “millions of videos are stolen via torrenting websites every year and only a minority of offenders are ever prosecuted.” In the same script the following Affective appeal is made; “until serious government surveillance can bring cyber-criminals in our society to justice, justice itself will remain undermined.”

The Conclusion commonly makes up the final paragraph of an essay and provides a summing up of the points made throughout. It is usual for the Conclusion to relate back to the Thesis statement to give the reader no doubt as to the writer’s position. For example; “the level of criminal prevention that can be attained through the use of government owned electronic surveillance systems far outweighs any potential risk of their misuse.”

Given that it was part of a high-stakes test the student writers in the present study were likely to have been quite intensively prepared for this writing task. Candidates sat the test with the expectation of scoring highly enough to gain university selection in Australia. On the other hand, the students in the Kamimura and Oi (1996) study were of college age and undertook the writing task as a low-stakes classroom activity.
Additionally, these Japanese students were recent arrivals to the United States and had not attended secondary school in an English speaking country. It is probable that their L2 skills would not have been as well developed as the students in this study and that their preparation for the writing task was much less rigorous.

The coding process used in this study is a qualitative, hermeneutic, multi-text analysis designed to identify differences in rhetorical strategies employed by CALD and L1 writers. In this context, the term ‘hermeneutic’ refers to the focus on the language used in a particular exchange, in order to better understand the way it is experienced by participants. To some extent, the approach taken is that like described elsewhere (Denzin, Lincoln et al., 2005); “the analysis of texts that stresses how prior understandings and prejudices shape the interpretive process” (p. 27). The investigation of research question 2 involves the generation and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative decisions are made during the coding of writing scripts and the results of this activity are then tabulated for graphical representation and discussion.

This study is concerned with ‘rhetorical strategies’, rather than the mere counting of cohesive ties or other such micro-linguistic units. The rhetorical strategies of interest are “the means CALD writers use to organise and to present their ideas in writing conventions that are acceptable to native speakers of English” (Mu, 2007, p. 3). One reason to go beyond the focus on cohesive ties alone is that their effective usage does not adequately account for differences between the perceived quality of CALD and L1 writing.

As Leki stated, studies reliant on this are too focused on “atomized, disparate bits of information that seemed either to be incapable of explaining differences in larger segments of discourse or almost to trivialize the difference” (1991, p. 125). A more recent review of the literature (Liu & Braine, 2005) concludes that the research is ‘contradictory’ on the question of whether the deployment of cohesive devices differs between ‘good’ and ‘weak’ writing (p. 624). Another justification for the kind of focus on rhetorical strategies taken is that its results may be of interest to educators as opposed to academic linguists. As stated by Lincoln and Guba (2001), “if you want people to understand better than they otherwise might, provide them information in the form in which they usually experience it” (p. 120). It is anticipated that the results of this study will be of interest to stakeholders, such as senior secondary teachers, language teacher educators, the assessment board of the relevant jurisdiction and other similar bodies. The intention is to provide detailed and meaningful insights into the data as opposed to statistical representations and descriptions alone.
4 Results

4.1 Research Question 1

RQ1 On a test of argumentative writing, how do the results of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) candidates compare to those of L1 candidates?

The data displays in this Section have been created from the 2012 writing test results. Figure II shows 2012 writing test scores for the L1 candidate group. The mean score for the 2661 L1 candidates was 52.2 from a possible total of 80 points. There is a standard deviation of 9.6 and a normal score distribution is shown.

Figure II – Histogram for L1 2012 writing test scores
Figure III – Histogram for CALD 2012 writing test scores

Figure III shows the 2012 writing test scores for the CALD candidate group. The mean score for the 186 CALD candidates on the test was 39, with a slightly higher standard deviation of 11 and the distribution skewed toward the lower end of the scale.

In summary, the L1 group achieved on average 13 score points higher than the CALD group on the writing test. Over half of the CALD group achieved a score less than 40 on the task whilst over half of the L1 group achieved a score over 50. Clearly, the CALD group finds the writing task more difficult than does the L1 group.
4.2 Research Question 2

RQ2 What differences are there in the generic features of CALD and L1 argumentative writing scripts?

The writing scripts of the two ‘B’ scored groups in this study show little or no variation at all on most of the Kamimura and Oi variables. That is to say, the CALD test-takers employed the requisite features of written argument to the same extent as did the L1 group at this score level. When the writing scripts of the third (L1’A’) group are considered the contrasts become stronger. The results are shown in Figures IV – VIII below.

On Code 1, Thesis Statement (Figure IV) all three groups included a clear statement in their written argument to orientate the reader to the position to be taken on the issue. Only two of the L1 ‘B’ scoring group did not clearly state their position as such. This appeared to be a stylistic decision made by each of these writers who chose to take a narrative approach to the task. One of these writers took the perspective of Mark Zuckerberg and wrote an imagined speech that he might deliver at an international social networking security conference. This script was a lively and engaging piece in which Mr. Zuckerberg spruiks the advantages of social networking and the privacy features that he has put in place for his customers. The candidate didn’t neglect to present a point of view but chose to do so in a less conventional manner.

![Figure IV – Code 1: Thesis statement](image-url)
The results displayed in Figure V indicate that the best writers were attentive to the convention of acknowledging at least one alternative point of view to their own. In the top performing L1 group, 100% of scripts demonstrated this ability compared with 80% of CALD scripts and 75% of L1 ‘B’ scripts. Two L1 ‘B’ and at least two CALD scripts focused on the need to remove anonymity from cyberspace to prevent criminal behavior that is currently going unchecked. These scripts were sprinkled with imperatives such as the government ‘must’ do this and ‘should’ do that, but the alternative view about the value of privacy was not acknowledged at any point.

Figure V – Code 2: Reservation

A general observation made during the first round of coding was that the issue located within the stimulus material seemed familiar to test-takers and they were generally conversant with the debate. Some writers could rely on their general knowledge and the cues from the stimulus material to put together a serviceable written argument. Others possessed a deeper understanding of related issues and employed a range of rhetorical skills to take their response to a more sophisticated level. This observation is supported by the findings in relation to Code 3, Hesitation. All scripts involved in this study presented a clear position on the issue provided and as such there were no data to be graphed.
Figures VI and VII display results from coding the scripts in this study for Rational and Affective Appeals. The results of the Kamimura and Oi study (1996) showed that American student writers use more rational appeals and Japanese students use more affective appeals (p. 1). By contrast, this study found little difference in the tendency of CALD and L1 writers to employ both kinds of appeals. In coding, the number of these appeals was counted for each script within each study group.

The total number of rational appeals made by the L1 ‘B’ group (across 20 scripts) was 58 compared with 55 for the CALD group. In regard to the total number of affective appeals, the figures were 46 and 39 respectively. These results are not consistent with those found by Kamimura and Oi as they suggest the L1 writers in this study were in fact more inclined to use affective appeals than were the L2 writers. The cultural and educational backgrounds of the study groups would go some way to explaining differences in the findings of this study and that of Kamimura and Oi.

![Figure VI – Code 4: Rational Appeal](image-url)
In respect to Code 6 (Conclusion), Figure VIII shows that student writers in this study, with the exception of one, provided a clear conclusion to their piece of writing. The single CALD script not to do so was written in a circular style. Its writer more intent on exploring the issues than on offering conclusions.
The results shown in Figures IV-VIII indicate that the CALD and the L1 writers in this study were indeed well versed in the genre of written argument. There was little difference between each group on most of the coding categories applied from the Kamimura and Oi study (1996). As these coding categories were insufficient in explaining the differences in the scores achieved by each subgroup it was decided that new coding categories be created. These categories arose from observations made during the first coding phase of the rhetorical features apparent in CALD and L1 writing scripts.

The four new categories are as follows:

7. Dichotomises the issue (ie: treats the issue as a two-sided debate)
8. Recycles language from the stimulus material
9. Uses figurative language (refer to Appendix III for a list of these)
10. Uses rhetorical questions

Results from the second phase of coding revealed greater disparities between the rhetorical features employed by candidate groups on the four new variables, as shown in Figures IX–XII below. On Code 7 (Dichotomises the issue) Figure IX shows that there was twice the difference between the approach taken by the two L1 groups, than between either of them and the CALD group. All of the top scoring test candidates took a dichotomous approach to the issue (ie: identified a central question/s and then constructed arguments for and against). Interestingly, less than half of their ‘B’ scoring L1 peers did likewise.
Of the CALD candidates in this study, 70% constructed a two-sided argument in response to the issue they identified. A possible reason for these differences may be that the top scoring candidate group was less inclined to take a stock-standard approach to the task than were the other two groups. A greater variety of approaches was noted across top-scoring writing scripts, in which candidates appeared willing to express themselves freely and to be less constrained by the rules of the argument genre.

Figure IX – Code 7: Dichotomises the issue
As seen in Figure X, more than twice as many CALD candidates (65% compared with 30% L1 ‘B’ and 25% L1 ‘A’) borrowed words or phrases from the stimulus material provided to support their own writing. This tendency has been highlighted in numerous other studies of L2 writing and is sometimes referred to as ‘textual appropriation’ or ‘source text borrowing’ (Weigle and Parker, 2012).

Figure X – Code 8: Recycles language from the stimulus material
The term ‘figurative’, when used to describe language, refers to words or expressions that carry a symbolic or metaphorical meaning rather than a literal one (Thatcher & MacQueen, 1971). On Code 9, there appears to be a strong tendency for the best L1 writers to sprinkle their written argument with such literary flourishes (Figure XI). Over 80% of the ‘A’ scripts contained elements of figurative language (e.g.: hyperbole, alliteration, metaphor etc.). By contrast, only 60% of the ‘B’ scoring L1 scripts and only 10% of the CALD scripts included examples of figurative language.
Interestingly, CALD writers in this study were almost equally as likely as L1 writers to include rhetorical questions in their argumentative writing. The extent to which this could be a teaching effect is unclear given that the ESL Course Framework makes no reference to rhetorical questions. Although sometimes regarded as another form of figurative language, due to their non-literal meaning, rhetorical questions were coded separately in this study.

![Figure XII – Code 10: Uses rhetorical questions](image)

As shown in Figures XI and XII, the L1 writing scripts analysed in this study made more liberal use of persuasive devices such as figurative language and rhetorical questions. Although not one of the categories coded for in this study, it was also observed that L1 writers were far more likely to integrate examples from popular literature or history to support or illustrate a claim.

In contrast, the CALD writers took an approach to the task that was more hortatory than creative or imaginative. What is meant by ‘creative’, in this context, is the incorporation of persuasive devices (including figurative language or imagery) which may extend to a departure from the strict rules of the genre of argumentative writing. Only one script from the CALD group made a clear attempt at this, although it was not adequately sustained throughout the piece.
The results shown in Figures XI and XII and Table I should not be taken to suggest that only scripts that utilise figurative language obtain high scores or that markers are consciously looking to reward this feature. What is clear from the data, however, is that high performing L1 writers tend to employ a level of sophisticated language that often incorporates features, generally regarded as ‘figurative’ devices. To illustrate this further, Table I contains a representative set of titles found in the CALD set of scripts and in the top-scoring L1 scripts.

The test paper instructs candidates as follows: ‘Give your piece of writing a clear and accurate title’. CALD candidates heeded this instruction as demonstrated by the wording of the five titles in the column to the left. On the other hand, the column to the right contains five titles that seem designed to attract the immediate attention and engagement of the reader. Upon reading such a title, a marker might expect that the writing to follow will be both interesting and intelligent. Where this expectation is met the marker may be more inclined to view the script favourably.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CALD</th>
<th>L1(top scoring)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Should the government perform personal investigation for citizens’ security concerns?</td>
<td>A PALATABLE PROTECTION OF PRIVATE PARTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy is only a small problem of new Technology</td>
<td>THE BATTLE OF TRUTH AND LIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy vs. Social Security</td>
<td>Digital Dystopia: are we perpetrators?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet privacy is the environment of internet</td>
<td>‘Do not disturb’: a plea for personal privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy should not be a concern</td>
<td>Big Brother is World-Wide Watching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I - ‘Give your piece of writing a clear and accurate title’
4.3 Research Question 3

RQ3 How do any differences in the generic features of CALD and L1 argumentative writing impact on the overall quality of the script?

The presence of figurative and idiomatic language in a piece of written argument suggests the writer is aware of the value in projecting a ‘dialogic voice’. As Andrews (1995) explains, the production of a successful piece of written argument is an exercise in imagination as much in logico-deductive intellect. The writer creates a dialogue, both between the points of view presented in the argument and with their reader. Through this set of manoeuvres a writer can connect with the reader providing a necessary precondition for persuasion to occur. This feature of good written argument is connected to the ‘voice’ construct as first defined by Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) and further researched by Zhao and Llasa (2008).

It is not only in the creation of an attention-grabbing title that the L1 test candidates show a preparedness to express their authorial voice. The excerpts below show the first two sentences of two randomly selected scripts; the first is from the ‘A’ scored L1 set, the second is from the ‘B’ scored CALD set.

1. The realm of the online world, instantly connecting each person to every corner and facet of the globe, constantly evolving through dynamic relationships, has become a modern metropolis. Yet, just as the individual, when stepping into the outside world is no longer invisible, so too is every user of the internet.

2. Nowadays people are highly dependent on the internet it has become a huge part of life – email, social networks (Facebook), media (Youtube), the news and so on. It makes communication a lot easier. However, as people are enjoying surfing the internet anonymously, they rarely know that their privacy are being violated.

Scripts are largely assessed on the merit and sophistication of the arguments presented. However, many strong L1 writers also appear to believe that the inclusion of a creative element will improve the quality of their writing and its potential score. This observation is commensurate with those in the 2014 QCAA NAPLAN report referred to in Section 2 of this paper.
The best examples of student writing incorporate a range of elements, not all of which are necessarily within the prescribed scope of the argument genre.

For example, one L1 script scored at 79 carries the following title:

‘The delicacy of privacy: let’s not make a meal of it.’

The same script concludes with the following remark:

‘..in trying to protect the online world we must be careful not to serve our privacy up to the power hungry and unscrupulous.’

The script quoted from above, is just one example of a writer creating an image in the title which is developed further at a later stage in the essay or, at least, referred back to in its conclusion. This script was highly regarded by markers for the strength of arguments and evidence presented and the adroit manner in which they were structured. In addition to these qualities, the writer has included a number of hyperbolic statements and metaphoric descriptions in an effort to engage with and thus, to persuade the reader.

An unanticipated category emerged during the coding process which could have been labelled ‘popular culture reference’ or, more specifically George Orwell’s 1984. In the ‘B’ scripts alone, the number of L1 writers (seven) referring to this famous work at least once in their script (or its title) far outnumbered that of CALD candidates (two). It is noteworthy that the recommended Year 12 English text list in the relevant jurisdiction includes this Orwellian classic, while the corresponding ESL text list does not. In general, English-L1 writers are rewarded for incorporating in their writing allusions to other texts (literary, historical, pop culture), or events in English literature. However, it is often not part of the writing schemata that a CALD student brings with them to the ESL classroom (Duff 2001). The results of this study suggest that L1 students have developed greater confidence than CALD students, in manipulating the ‘rules’ of the argument genre and in creatively integrating suitable cultural references.

For example, the same script referred to earlier (scored at 79), includes a reference to and quotation from the film Gattaca, as a way to illustrate an important point about the dangers of allowing the creation of DNA databases. ‘In the movie Gattaca they “have discrimination down to a science” and such a situation in which employee selection is based on genetic privilege is entirely possible with the correct infrastructure in place.’
Of the twelve high-scoring scripts reviewed for this study, one stands out in terms of the extent to which it utilises figurative language to create a strong and persuasive voice that clearly convinced the markers. The script was scored at 75 and there is no question as to the quality of arguments it offers. The creative manner in which it presents these arguments is what is of note here. The writer cleverly pits ‘team private’ against ‘team public’ in ‘a battle that has become a lop-sided punch up with team private all but hanging on a loose thread and team public standing tall with its knock-out punch.’ In an extended metaphor, the writer goes on to use many instances of hyperbole, to develop an entertaining and engaging piece of writing.

One of the two CALD scripts to make a real effort at incorporating figurative language elements and includes a simile to personify the internet by describing it as ‘a close friend’.

‘Internet is totally like our close friend nowadays, we spend time with “him” every single day.’

This writer also describes the ‘nakedness’ that we would feel if the government was able to track our every move in cyberspace. This was not one of the highest scoring CALD scripts, it contains many instances of poor grammar and expression, but it is remarkable in its efforts to experiment with figurative and idiomatic language.

The other CALD script included the following example of figurative language:

‘Internet is a pool of individuals around the world. Like fluid, it has no boundaries.’

Across the 20 L1 ‘B’ scripts there were a total of 19 examples of figurative language; as for the 12 ‘A’ scripts, there was a total of 24. Thus, the frequency of usage increased with the perceived quality of the script.

Although actual figures were not recorded, a greater prevalence was noted during coding of the following kinds of connective words and phrases within CALD writing scripts: ‘furthermore’, ‘moreover’, ‘first of all’, ‘in the first place’ and ‘after reviewing some examples’. The CALD scripts reviewed for this study did reflect a preference for the ‘five paragraph’ essay format, although they generally stretched the format to seven paragraphs.

It is likely that lower scoring CALD scripts would have demonstrated a greater tendency to depend on the kinds of organisational scaffolds described above. The marking group also commented that this was the case and described it as part of the tendency of CALD candidates to stick to a ‘safe strategy’.
Only one of the CALD scripts analysed here relied slavishly on the five paragraph essay format coupled with the consistent use of the following discourse markers to open each; ‘firstly’, ‘secondly’, ‘thirdly’, ‘fourthly’ and ‘lastly’. The final paragraph simply lists the three arguments made in the preceding paragraphs. This script, which was scored at 53, took a narrow focus in its treatment of the issue and used a hortatory style to assert a somewhat limited point of view. It focused on the question of whether Australia should introduce a DNA database and in presenting an argument about potential costs states that, ‘resources should not be lavished and can be used diligently and wisely in other areas.’ Contrast this approach with the excerpt above which deftly refers to the scenario created in a well-known film text to illustrate a point. The imperative ‘should’ appears several times in this CALD writer’s piece and a number of rhetorical questions are used to push a strident line of argument. The resulting effect on the reader is a sense of having been lectured to.
5 Discussion

5.1 What makes for a ‘good’ written argument?

This study has examined some reasons as to why CALD students do not achieve as highly as their L1 peers on a cognitively and linguistically demanding writing test. The marking procedure followed in this testing program is that CALD script marking commences after markers have spent half a day in marker training followed by at least one further day marking L1 scripts. During this time it is likely that markers would have scored several L1 scripts in the top range (18-20).

It is possible that markers have, by this stage, developed an internal set of criteria around what a top scoring script might look like. This set of criteria comes not as an artefact of the marker training, which for this testing program, explicitly advises that there is no typical ‘A’ script and in fact emphasises that ‘A’ scripts are typified by their diversity. Nevertheless, markers are expected to apply the same scoring criteria to every script they read, including the CALD scripts. After almost two days of marking, they are likely to be able to readily recognise language features in student scripts which best match each level in the score guide. It would be interesting to consider whether the timing of the CALD marking is a factor that affects the way markers regard these scripts.

Many academics have criticised the effects of standardised writing tests for their ‘reductionist’ effect on the teaching of writing in the classroom (Applebee & Langer, 2009). It is therefore somewhat ironic that the findings of this study, about a relatively open-ended writing test, indicate that some test-takers may in fact be hamstrung by relying on an inexpressive and formulaic approach. The CALD group has come through an ESL program based on a different set of curriculum and assessment guidelines to the mainstream English program. These documents reflect quite different expectations of the writing ability of each group at this stage of schooling although both subscribe to a genre-based approach to the teaching and learning of writing.
Writers who limit themselves to literal language are simply stating the facts as they see them. Writers generally use figurative language to strengthen their connection with the reader in an effort to increase the impact of their ideas (Roberts & Kreuz, 1994). L2 learners find most kinds of figurative language challenging to interpret and even more challenging to produce. This is largely due to the difficulty experienced in shifting one’s conceptual understanding from L1 to an L2 (Danesi, 1993). For example, although L2 learners may develop a broad vocabulary, it may not extend to knowing the multiple meanings that many words carry and the way these might be tapped into for effect by skilled writers of English.

It is generally accepted that in order to demonstrate a sound level of critical literacy one must develop a strong and individual authorial voice. These are skills not necessarily encouraged outside of middle-class schools in western countries (Ramanathan & Atkinson 1999; Alagozlu, 2007). The concept of ‘voice’ in writing is both subjective and the subject of debate. As stated in Zhao and Llosa (2008), the idea of “voice is only loosely defined in the literature and impressionistically assessed in practice” (p. 154).

Four of the CALD writers in this study focused a good deal of effort on providing dictionary-style definitions of the key terms. Definitions of this kind were not apparent in the L1 writing scripts suggesting that the L1 writer has learnt that this detail is not essential in most instances. For the CALD writer, the inclusion of the dictionary-style definition in a piece of argumentative writing may have been learnt before they entered the Australian education system, or subsequently in the Australian ESL classroom.

The formulation of the writing task researched in this study assumes that candidates know exactly what it is being asked of them. The test instructions are designed to ensure that expectations for the task are made clear. As it is a long-standing high-stakes test the candidates are likely to have been well prepared for it by their teachers. The results of this study suggest there still may be a slight disconnect between the more open expectations of the task intended by the test developer and the perception of the task that the CALD candidates bring with them.

Language or text analysis as it is taught in secondary English classes includes learning to identify persuasive literary devices used by accomplished writers. Figure XI shows the difference in the tendency for CALD versus L1 student writers to incorporate these devices in their own persuasive or argumentative writing. A gulf between what the writing assessor is seeking and what the CALD candidate thinks is being sought has been identified in research elsewhere (Raimes, 1987; Love, 1999; VATME, 1995; Davison, 2005).
In Australian senior secondary school English curricula a good deal of emphasis is placed on the development of language analysis skills. Students are taught from early on in secondary school that, in order to become competent writers, they need to learn to unpack the literary devices that exemplary writers employ when plying their craft. They are taught the meta-language that is required for effective language analysis. On the other hand, the senior ESL curriculum guides do not provide the same focus on language analysis. This is likely due to a widely held view that ESL students have yet to achieve a sufficiently high enough level of mastery in English to progress into the area of language analysis (Lankshear & Knobel, 1998).

In the educational jurisdiction relevant to this study, the curriculum guides for both English and ESL courses provide scoring rubrics, with a number of criteria against which each assessment task is scored. In the case of both the English and the ESL scoring rubrics, one criterion clearly relates to the effective ‘creativity’ and ‘originality’ of a student’s work. This criterion is applied to all school-based assessment tasks and is not limited to those specifically assessing creative writing skills. An equivalent direct reference to ‘creativity’ and ‘originality’ is absent in the scoring guide for the standardised writing test on which this study is focused (see Appendix II). The wording that comes closest to that of the criterion for classroom based writing assessment described above is; ‘fluent, vivid, imaginative, individual writing with voice and rhythm’. This description appears in the ‘Some possible characteristics’ section and refers to scripts in the ‘very strong’ category.

The ability to use figurative language and other rhetorical devices effectively is likely to feature prominently in the writing toolkit of the accomplished senior secondary student. It is also clear that CALD writers do not demonstrate the same range of techniques in their argumentative writing. These differences in learning opportunities may potentially introduce construct-irrelevant factors into the writing test (Engelhard, Kobrin & Wind, 2014).

Some research into the manner in which individual ‘voice’ is promoted in the classroom has found that CALD students may misunderstand the difference between the context of classroom discussion and that of the writing assessment. In their study of senior secondary ESL student writing, Cummins and Davison (2007) found that senior secondary English teachers encouraged their students to make passionate contributions to classroom discussion. However, written work reflecting a hortatory approach was marked down as arguments presented were increasingly personal and emotive. On the whole, the Cummins and Davison findings are not borne out by the results of this study.
The CALD scripts in the sample used here contain just as many refutations and are fairly well balanced with respect to the number of affective and rational arguments developed.

In her 1994 study, referred to earlier in this paper, Ferris examined both rhetorical and linguistic structures used in the texts of L1 and L2 writers. Her results found stronger contrasts between L1 and L2 argumentative writing on a greater number of variables than does the study presented in this paper. At the same time, a number of Ferris’ findings are quite congruent with those of this study. The Ferris analysis included a categorisation of the ‘openings’ (statement of the writer’s opinion on the topic) and ‘closings’ (writer’s conclusions) as personal, impersonal, mixed, or nonexistent. An example of a ‘personal’ opening would be ‘I think ...’ versus the impersonal ‘It seems . . .’ (p. 52).

During the course of script analysis for this study, it was noted that some CALD writers use the first person register, some use the more objective third person, while others still alternate between the two. No formal data was collected to compare the choice of register within and across the groups in this study. In any case, the ‘voice’ of a writer is not wholly determined by their choice of register; there are several other factors at work. Matsuda (2001) found that NESB writers are indeed capable of expressing an individualistic voice. He demonstrated this claim through an examination of a personal web diary maintained by a Japanese woman. Despite the fact that she was writing in Japanese rather than English, she did create an independent voice through the available discursive features of her L1. Matsuda’s work suggests that voice should be teachable to the ESL learner; according to subsequent researchers (Zhao & Llosa, 2008), “the question is how research could better inform L2 writing pedagogy so that writing instructors may better help L2 writers to ‘voice’ themselves in L2 writing” (p. 157).

At a presentation relating to this study a participant commented that, ‘surely at university level we are expected to write in a cogent and well evidenced manner so the use of figurative embellishment should not enter into it.’ He has made a valid point about the salient features of academic writing. On the other hand, it may be the case that a lesser ability to harness the devices required to create a strong authorial voice presents a socio-cultural barrier for some students, particularly those enrolled in the humanities. Consider the number of student publications which include the word ‘voice’ in their title. Consider also the world of social media in which an increasingly large proportion of communication now occurs. The ability to express oneself effectively in this realm is to project a strong and engaging voice. The words ‘strong’ and ‘engaging’ here do not equate with ‘hortatory’. On the contrary, a hortatory style of communication is generally perceived as somewhat patronising and off-putting. In the words of Oscar Wilde, ‘it is the critical spirit that creates’.
6 Conclusions

6.1 Limitations of the study

For the purposes of this study, access was given to the writing test scripts of the entire 2012 test cohort, in a particular Australian education jurisdiction. Due to a lack of access, this study could not provide the perspectives of test-takers or their English and ESL teachers, about how they regard the expectations of the writing task at issue. There may be potential for a future qualitative research project using think-aloud protocols and interviews with both test-takers and teachers.

Furthermore, due to time restraints, this study was fairly selective in the number of number of scripts reviewed and text features analysed. The task of coding the student writing samples was undertaken by a single researcher, precluding the opportunity to increase the reliability of results, by presenting evidence of inter-rater agreement (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

6.2 Recommended further research

Some issues raised by this study and worthy of further research are around the way teachers prepare their students for the writing test in question. The two main student groups are coming to the test from two distinctly different classroom and curriculum environments. How similar or different is the advice and preparation provided to the mainstream English student from that offered to the ESL student? Given that the highest scoring scripts are those that exhibit a strong authorial voice, often marked by skillful use of figurative language, could a case be made that these techniques should be more effectively taught to CALD students? It would be necessary to determine whether these features are also lacking in low-scoring L1 writing scripts. If so, then there is more than a training effect at work.

Other issues are related to the marking of the writing test and the extent to which the adept use of figurative language may influence marker judgement at the top level of performance. Could the fact that no CALD scripts achieve scores within the top range be because, amongst the CALD writing scripts, there are none that match up to the expectations markers have brought with them? Is it possible that they don’t see any ‘A’ scripts in this sub-set because none of them employ language to the same level of sophistication as the best L1 writers? Could this effect be weakened if the CALD scripts were marked before the L1 scripts?
More research into the importance of the gap in the writing skills of CALD and L1 school leavers, as they transition into tertiary studies, would help to reveal if and how it impacts on their experience of higher education. It should be noted that there has been recent work published in regard to the argumentative writing skills of undergraduate ESL students studying in Australian universities (Lee, 2014). The L2 students in the 2014 study are more recent arrivals to Australia and therefore less familiar with the genre-based approach to writing favoured in the Australian school education system. At what point do CALD students begin to feel part of the linguistic community into which they have entered? How might they be better supported on this journey by their teachers and tutors? For some it may turn out to be less of an issue than was the case in the upper-secondary school years, particularly if they take a course in mathematics or the sciences. However, for students who pursue tertiary studies in the arts, social sciences, law, or education, the language demands they face will certainly increase exponentially.
References


Appendices

Appendix I

Privacy and the internet
When computers can permanently store records of everything, there is cause for increasing concern about privacy in the age of the internet.

The ability to do online inquiries about individuals has expanded dramatically over the last decade. Social networking sites have billions of internet users, and the material on these sites can be used to gather detailed information about individuals.

Employers can do online research about potential employees using information provided by search engines, social-networking sites, photo/video-sharing sites, personal web sites and blogs. According to some experts, many commonly used communication devices may be used to map every move of their owners.

Government plans to increase email and social network surveillance
The British government plans to introduce a new law allowing police and security services to extend their monitoring of the public's email and social media communications. It is expected that the new system will allow security officials to scrutinise who is talking to whom and when the conversations are taking place, but not the content of messages examined.

Internet privacy
Internet privacy is the ability to determine what information one reveals or withholds about oneself over the internet, who has access to such information, and for what purposes one's information may or may not be used. For example, internet users may be concerned to discover that many of the web sites they visit collect, store and possibly share personally identifiable information about them. Similarly, internet email users generally consider their emails to be private and hence would be concerned if their email was being accessed, read, stored or forwarded by third parties without their consent.

Community attitudes to privacy
The Office of the Privacy Commissioner Australia conducted a survey into community attitudes to privacy in 2007.

In a question about whether they were concerned about the use of close circuit television cameras (CCTV) in public places (with the exception of public toilets and changing rooms), 79% of respondents were happy with such use of CCTV.

The table below shows the reasons why some respondents to the survey were concerned about the use of CCTV cameras.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCTV concerns</th>
<th>Total (n=203)</th>
<th>Men (n=117)</th>
<th>Women (n=87)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information may be misused</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invasion of privacy</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It makes me uncomfortable</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not effective in stopping crime/False sense of security</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

Note that respondents were asked for one answer, but some gave more than one – therefore percentages do not add to 100.
Internationally recognised privacy principles

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development designed a set of principles to ensure the fair treatment and handling of information collected about individuals.

This set of principles known as the Code of Fair Information Practices is the basis of most privacy legislation.

According to the Code:

• only necessary information should be collected;
• if possible, it should be collected directly from the individual;
• the person should be told why the information is needed;
• the information should be used only for the intended purpose;
• the information should not be used for other purposes without consent; and
• individuals should be given the opportunity to see their personal information and correct it if it’s wrong.

DNA fingerprints

DNA profiling (sometimes called genetic fingerprinting) is used to assist in the identification of individuals by their respective genetic profiles. Various governments have established national DNA databases to support criminal investigations.

It has been argued that such databases should only be set up in specific circumstances, such as when individuals have been convicted of a serious crime. Others have argued that there should be a systematic development of such databases across a whole population. If it is fair to take the DNA profiles of convicted criminals, is it fair enough to take the DNA profile of all citizens?

From the chat room

A DNA database for criminals is the thin end of the wedge. It will be a short step after that to a national DNA database or to encoding DNA profiles on an identity card or chip which the government will force everyone to carry for “national security” reasons.

Anna

I think the public would be generally accepting of a criminal DNA database for all people. Over time this will become a formidable force in the fight against crime. There are civil libertarians who are worried about us becoming a “police state”, but DNA testing offers a reliable means of taking violent criminals off the streets.

Jason

We have a right to privacy. We do not have to justify keeping our private business from government or anyone else.

Jafar

It is those who have something to hide who are worried about their privacy. We shouldn’t be frightened out of making full use of the wonderful new technologies by possible misuses. Laws can be designed to stop the improper use of data about individuals.

Taylor
Appendix II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>D Satisfactory</th>
<th>C Sound</th>
<th>B Strong</th>
<th>A Very strong</th>
<th>A+</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5&gt;</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>18-19</td>
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<tr>
<td>3%</td>
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<td>5%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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Typical characteristics - scripts at this level tend to be

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<td>lack of focus and substance</td>
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<td>little evidence of grasping the issue or the prompt</td>
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<td>simple and reductive handling of the issues</td>
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<td>crassness or crudeness in the comments on the issues</td>
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<td>clumsiness or crudeness in thought or expression of ideas</td>
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<td>unclear and inaccurate expression</td>
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<td>inappropriate tone and language</td>
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<td>basic understanding or comprehension of the issue or prompt</td>
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<td>basic ability to develop a point of view about the issue or the prompt</td>
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<td></td>
<td>simple, predictable and obvious thoughts and responses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>wandering disorganisation or a mechanical rigidity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>general or vague discussion</td>
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<td>rather clumsy, stolid or clichéd writing</td>
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<td>some grasp of the issue and an ability to comment on it</td>
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<td></td>
<td>some purposeful definition of the topic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>some organisation and direction in the argument</td>
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<td>vocab confusions poor understanding and grasp of issue, little argument or substance, immature, crude generalisations going off on tangents, little planning, lack of direction</td>
<td>paucity of ideas, repetition, untidy argument, lack of flow and fluency, quantity not quality monotonous sentence length and rudimentary shape to the piece poorer command of language than C, little awareness of differing views, loose argument, careless expression</td>
<td>straightforward and fairly competent, simple structure of sentences and argument bland, neat, clear but predictable, gestures towards substantial argument, grasp of subject but not many distinctions, can be repetitive structured and organised, but either too general or mere</td>
<td>some ability to construct a whole piece, clarity and focus logical development, control, easy to read and follow refreshing and interesting</td>
<td>Individuality and independence of thought, critical and analytical intelligence, enthusiasm and/or maturity and balance, a considered and conscious world view able to organise a whole piece, structured and coherent development, judicious use of different kinds of writing Precise, fluent, vivid, imaginative, individual writing with voice and rhythm</td>
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Appendix III

Some examples of figurative language:

- exaggeration/hyperbole
- understatement/irony
- alliteration/assonance
- simile/metaphor/allegory
- personification
- symbolism
- idiom
- synecdoche
- cliché
- metonymy

NB: rhetorical questions are also often classified as figurative language but are treated separately in this study.
Author/s:
Moore, Jacqueline

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Date:
2016

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/91705

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