Research

Negotiating “Third Spaces”: EAP Apprenticeship, Academic Writing, and Chinese Students

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Abstract

The aims of this exploratory research on the academic writing apprenticeship of Chinese students are four-fold: (1) to determine what students thought were the purposes of academic writing, (2) to find out if students were adopting the preferred organisational patterns in writing argumentative essays, (3) to identify what their most common errors were when writing for academic purposes, and (4) to determine teacher perceptions of the academic writing program. The researcher surveyed 47 Chinese students, analysed the organisation of 31 sample essays, conducted an error analysis of 120 paragraphs, and interviewed 10 EAP writing teachers. Findings revealed that students generally associated academic writing with skills-based improvement rather than development of higher order skills as criticality; students acculturated to the preferred ways of organising essays; lexis posed the most serious issue for student writing; and teachers interviewed generally raised concerns about the effectiveness and direction of the writing program.

One major consequence of globalisation is the increase in the number of extension campuses of western universities in different parts of the world. In this paper, an extension campus refers to an institution that operates as a branch of a university that is based in the west. Asia, in particular, has seen the growth of universities catering to the English language needs of students who would rather be educated on local shores, but within a generally western university model. This has been the case in China.

Most extension campuses of western institutions of higher education offer degree programs featuring a final year of study in the main institution after two or three years of study in China. Studying in an institution following a Western model may pose challenges to students used to the local system of education. Challenges range from adapting to new ways of doing things to acculturating to new conventions and meeting the expectations of western education predominantly taught by an international faculty, most of whom are native English-speaking, if not educated in western countries.

One of the biggest challenges for Chinese students taking EAP writing in their first year lies in the level and kind of writing expected in the university. Candlin & Hyland (1999, p. 11) describe writing as a “site of struggle and change.” What may make writing difficult is the process of adapting, fitting in, and accommodating another system quite different to what one brings into the field. Angelova and Riazantseva (1999) noted that there are problems that make writing for academic purposes in one’s non-native language an extremely cognitive and socially demanding task. Such problems may be attitudinal, cognitive (adapting to rhetorical styles, expressing opinions, register, and the writing process), or social (e.g., reaction to feedback and how to interact with professors). What may make writing “a site of change” may have been expressed by Shen (1989, p. 46): “Looking back, I realize that the process of learning to write in English is, in fact, a process of creating and defining a new identity, and balancing it with the old identity . . .”

As a subdiscipline, academic writing could not be more complex for students going through this process of transition to a target academic culture. “Academic writing . . . involves familiarity with writing conventions of the university culture and disciplinary subcultures in which the second or foreign language learner participates” (Schneider & Fujishima, 1995, as cited in Xing, Wang, & Spencer, 2008, p. 71). For Chinese students, a study by Su and Norton (2008) noted that students found linguistic challenges and strategies for writing to be the most difficult hurdle. One possible linguistic challenge is effective vocabulary for academic use. Indeed, Santos (1988, as cited in Xing, Wang, & Spencer, 2008) found that lexis is what non-native users of English find the most problematic in writing. Jordan (1997, as cited in Xing, Wang, & Spencer, 2008) also noted that students find vocabulary the most challenging. According to Edwards and Ran (2006, p. 10), “some [students] say that they simply do not have sufficient command of English to explain what an author says in their own words.”

This paper explores the academic writing experience of Chinese students in China who were registered in the foundation programs of the extension campuses of two western institutions. The research was guided by the following questions:

- What do the students think is the purpose of writing academic essays?
- What patterns do students follow in organising an argumentative essay?
- Which language forms do they have the most difficulty with in academic writing?
- How do the teachers feel about the academic writing course they were teaching in terms of how this met expectations in higher education overseas?

Conceptual Background

The main concepts that influenced the researcher’s perceptions of what was occurring in the contexts being investigated were the idea of apprenticeship via EAP writing and the notion of third spacing.

How is EAP a form of apprenticeship? Firstly, EAP acculturates students to conventions in writing held and practiced in the target academic culture. This is especially the case with Chinese students; many had not written an academic paper prior to their foundation year. The conventions of writing an academic paper are a big jump for students who may have only been exposed to English instruction involving exercises limited to grammar. Secondly, the issue of gaining access into the writing conventions of the target academic culture becomes in itself a process of initiation and apprenticeship into another culture and exposes students to other ways of making knowledge in the classroom that may not have been known to the students, including conscious processes (building autonomous skills) or classroom practices (cooperative

interaction and collaborative work). In this process of apprenticeship, teachers become the transmitters of a target system of conventions that students need to learn. A community where the practice of knowledge transmission is centered on the notion of facilitators or adept practitioners (teachers) and recipients (students) is eventually constructed, similar to Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of communities of practice. However, should knowledge be only transmitted? Can knowledge be negotiated along this process of apprenticeship?

The other idea that anchors this paper is "third space," used here to refer to the transitional space that students enter as they negotiate expectations in the target discourse/s (see Figure 1). It is that space where students merge where they are coming from with what is expected of them in terms of writing conventions. It is where they assess the value of their experience and their big and small cultures in relation to the apprenticeship they have experienced in the target academic culture. Holliday's (1999) notion of big culture (ethnic / national) and small cultures (any cohesive social grouping, e.g., youth culture or classroom culture) triggers ideas about the frames that Chinese students bring to their academic writing classes and how these merge or contrast with the generally western orientation of EAP programs. A student's big and small cultures may consist of national, youth, classroom, and writing cultures. In contrast, the target EAP cultures are professional-academic, the university culture, the university's national culture, and the western EAP culture. In the research context, the target EAP culture has been known to emphasise critical reading, argumentative skills, critical analysis, and problem solving.

Figure 1. Cultures interacting when students engage in a "third space."

Essentially, *third space*, as used in this paper, represents the hybrid space where students merge their big and small cultures with the target culture, which in this case is the EAP writing culture. It may be important to point out here that Bhabha first used the term *third space* in line with his idea of liminal negotiation of cultural difference (Graves, n.d.); however, it is not the purpose of this paper to discuss third space, as used here, and its similarities or differences to Bhabha's use of the term.

Methodology

Research Contexts

The two research contexts (Institutions A and B, located in different parts of China) had been running EAP writing programs for undergraduate Chinese students for no more than five years at the time the research was conducted. The aims of the writing programs were somewhat similar: to instruct students on the use of academic language needed for Year 2 and beyond, develop student skills in organising essays and arranging evidence to support ideas, develop their criticality, build their skills in autonomy, and develop their voice and stance in writing.

Participants and Procedure

There were four phases involved in this exploratory research.

Phase 1: Exploratory Survey. An initial survey of 47 first-year Chinese students about their experiences to date (most had finished one semester and were beginning their second) was conducted in Institution A, where the research was started. All participants were in their first year of a foundation program for a degree and came from three groups or classes. The purpose of the initial survey was to find out what students thought about joining an EAP program in academic writing in a western university. As shown in the Results section, two questions were of specific importance: 1) what students consider as the purpose of a researched essay, and 2) what students consider as the purpose of essay writing.

Phase 2: Analysis of Organisational Patterns. To find out whether or not students were becoming “acculturated” to the preferred organisational patterns in academic writing, the next step was to determine how they were arranging information in their essays. Phase 2 is the qualitative part of the research where sample sets of writing, comprising 31 essays, were chosen from two student groups in Institution A. The two groups were chosen because one was perceived as strong, and the other weak. The objective for the choice of groups was to see if both groups, regardless of perceived writing abilities, were grasping the concept of organising academic essays. Both groups were asked to write an argumentative essay, as this type of essay was a common academic task expected from students. Both writing sets were collected towards the end of the semester. Both groups were taught by the same instructor. As the outputs were end-of-term work, these had gone through re-drafts at least once.

Phase 3: Error Analysis. As there were evident concerns on form and accuracy reflecting on the written outputs of the students previously taught, it was decided that the research should determine what language-related issues were contributing to student challenges in writing. As the researcher eventually moved to teach at Institution B, Phase 3 was conducted for both Institutions A and B in that it might be interesting to compare the language issues for students in both institutions. An error analysis on student-written samples was done for two groups (a total of 30 students) from Institutions A and B. The corpus consisted of 120 paragraphs (60 from each institution) of eight types. For Institution A, the paragraphs consisted of a summary, comparison and contrast, analysis, and introduction. For Institution B, the paragraphs included non-linear description, process and procedure, introduction, and argumentation. Each paragraph ranged from 120 to 160 words. In addition, to see how errors occurred in a longer text, an error analysis was also done on one full essay written by each group (30 in total). The essays of both groups were argumentative in nature. All texts were practice sets and formed parts of class requirements. The essays and paragraphs were read by one rater, the specific lines where the mistakes registered were coded, and the mistakes were tallied as they occurred in columns representing the categories identified (Tables 1 and 2).

Phase 4: Teacher Perceptions. In the last phase, interviews were conducted with 10 EAP teachers from Institution B to obtain teacher perceptions of how the writing program was fulfilling its objectives. As the researcher had already moved to this institution when the research progressed, access to teachers became possible only for Institution B. At the time of the interviews, the teachers were either currently teaching academic writing or had taught it the previous semester. Except for one, the teachers interviewed were native speakers of English. The questionnaire used is provided in Appendix A.

Results and Discussion

Phase 1: Exploratory Survey

The responses to the writing-related items in the exploratory survey are shown in Figures 2 and 3. Multiple responses were allowed for both questions. A summary of the results is given below.

Question 1: What do you think is the purpose of research essays?

Figure 2. What students consider to be the purpose of researched essays. $n = 47$

As shown above, the development of writing ability was seen to be the main reason for writing essays. Students also chose knowledge acquisition and improving research skills as the next top reasons. However, of the 47 respondents, few chose the development of critical thinking. This begs the question of whether or not they value this skill or lack awareness that it is valued, and whether it is not explicitly taught. It is expected that part of the process of learning how to write in a particular genre (in this case, academic writing) is learning to examine one's ideas.

Question 2: What do you think is the purpose of essay writing?

Figure 3. What students consider to be the purpose of essay writing. $n = 47$

The majority of respondents considered the purpose of essay writing to be to improve their skills in academic writing, improve their English in general, and prepare them for future studies, while only a few respondents mentioned the acquisition of knowledge. This may be explained by the focus on process in an EAP course. As shown below, there seems to be less concern about content. Respondents wrote:

The content may not be the most important. The process when we are writing may be more important. (Respondent 1)

To practice what I have learnt. Not only theory but also practice. (Respondent 2)

Since we have a lot of time to prepare for research papers, the purpose should be checking whether we can do enough academic reading and collecting, re-organising information. (Respondent 3)

It seems from the responses that student concerns about the purposes of writing essays are more immediate and local, and focus on the development of skills. Such concerns contrast with higher learning objectives such as knowledge acquisition or developing criticality in thinking. In addition, the responses for both questions indicate the small culture orientation that students were bringing into their university-level academic writing program. In this case, what seems to operate as a small culture is the “classroom culture” that students were bringing from high school. This classroom culture tends to value the immediate relevance and applicability of skills being learned.

Phase 2: Analysis of Organisational Patterns

The analysis of 31 argumentative essays revealed that students had clearly developed an awareness of an “EAP” way to structure information in their essays by the end of term. In writing argumentative essays, they adopted one of two options in organising information: the top-down (thesis-driven) organisation of information, or a more open structure that does not state a clear thesis at the beginning of the essay, but initially provides a balanced discussion of two points of an argument and ends with a conclusion that indicates some kind of a decision. Examples of these patterns are given in Appendix B.

For Group 1, eight students adopted a top-down structure, seven followed an open structure, and only one wrote an essay that seemed to show no evident structure at all. For Group 2, five students adopted a top-down structure, while the remaining 10 adopted an open structure for their essays. Results from both groups indicate that students were definitely becoming acculturated to preferred patterns of organising writing in an argumentative essay. In this sense, it can be said that the instruction provided was working and acculturating students to the conventionalised writing expected in the academic context.

In response to a question on what students find easiest to do in EAP writing, one respondent wrote:

Maybe it's . . . like the outline or the organisation of the whole article . . . The structure, several patterns already designed . . . it's easy . . . We don't have to think of new patterns ourselves. (Respondent 4)

While what was said indicates evidence of student “acculturative” ability to the organisational patterns normally modeled in texts, certainly creating a mind-set among students that fixes organising writing in specific patterns goes against fostering critical thinking. In this sense, therefore, it would seem that there is a need to build awareness among students that rhetorical patterns produce some kind of guide for novice writers. However, it is building among students the thinking that other possibilities may exist in organising information that may need emphasising.

As regards to building cohesion in writing, a growing consciousness was noted on student use of transitional devices to link ideas in their essays. However, a consistent trend was that while students developed an awareness of their use, some were not using them appropriately. Thus, it seems that while students tended to understand some form of academic languaging, connected ideas were not always the end product of their choices. It is crucial to have students think more about this aspect of academic writing, as outputs can read like a collage of disconnected ideas, but have superficial links to give a semblance of cohesion.

The following are examples of the qualitative notes on the analysis of the organisation in student essays.

Group 1 (end of first term)

Adopts a structure but there was no indication of an argument.
A structure was adopted but does not necessarily indicate viewpoint.
Open structure. No clear position taken. No conclusion adopted.
Good flow but lacked discussion of actual position taken.
Lack of support for lead sentences (top-down structure).
Most of presented information was off. Unsupported argument.
Top-down structure followed.
Position taken right at the beginning. Conclusion confirms this.
Discussed two sides of the issue, providing a longer discussion to the position taken.

Group 2 (Semester 2)

Argument not initially clear. Attempted to cite specific examples.
"Open" starter (no particular argument set forth). Next paragraph fails to establish connection.
Purpose statement signals a more open stance but succeeding paragraphs clearly indicate the writer's position.
Open argument at the beginning yet follows through with more directed discussion in the body, which supports a viewpoint.
Use of signposts can be improved. Not necessarily unpacking the argument.
Top down. 5-paragraph essay. Inappropriate use of cohesive devices.
Very clear organisation. Enough details discussed. Inappropriate use of transitions.
Disconnected ideas though some examples are relevant. Inappropriate use of transitions.
Conclusion does not give the impression that the essay is ending.
Already made the transition to the writing culture expected.
Very clear thesis statement. Clearly supported points. A structure was followed.

Again, it is evident from the qualitative notes that the concept of structuring information in essays is something that students have learnt. However, the adoption of a structure did not always necessarily lead to a sound argument. Content and relevance of information remain key elements in the development of an argument.

Phase 3: Error Analysis

Interestingly, an error analysis conducted on 120 paragraphs of variable rhetorical devices written by students from the two institutions showed that students in both groups encountered similar problems. The top four language-related problems were the same in terms of ranking, with lexis proving to be the most cumbersome, regardless of the type of rhetorical device. While this may not be surprising, one may note that students wrote different text types, two of which, Process / Procedure and Non-prose Description, are somewhat technical in orientation. What had been shown by the error analysis is that regardless of the type of writing, students made the same type of errors. This may mean that instead of focusing instruction on the use of

specialised vocabulary or constructions common in a specific text type, direct intervention on these identified errors may be more helpful for students to improve their writing.

The distribution of errors across 120 paragraphs is noteworthy. Tables 1 and 2 show lexis-related errors occurred almost twice as often as those of the second-ranking verb errors for both groups from the two institutions. While the top four most recurrent problems were the same in ranking for the groups in the two institutions, there were slight differences in the extent to which they occurred in student writing. Institution A students had twice as many sentence construction issues than Institution B students and had more form-based mistakes. Both groups, however, had committed the same number of mistakes in subject-verb agreement. Overall, the results point to the consistency of discrete form-based type local errors in written outputs of students. Similar academic writing programs would do well to provide some kind of form-focused instruction on these items, which tend to hamper student efforts at producing more effective written work. Tables 1 and 2 show how consistent the errors are, indicating the level of attention and treatment that they require.

Table 1

Institution A Error Analysis (Summary, Comparison and Contrast, Introduction, Analysis)

Top Problems Identified	Frequency of Occurrence
Lexis-Related (Word Choice / Word Form)	232
Verb Tense / Aspect	131
Sentence Construction Issues	107
Agreement (Subject-Verb)	63

Table 2

Institution B Error Analysis (Argument, Non-Prose, Process and Procedure, Introduction)

Top Problems Identified	Frequency of Occurrence
Lexis-Related (Word Choice / Word Form)	204
Verb Tense / Aspect	106
Sentence Construction Issues	69
Agreement (Subject-Verb)	63

Additionally, results indicate that as mistakes in basic sentence structures are consistent, there is a strong need to address and strengthen students' general English language competence. At the very basic level, this requires re-teaching students the use and function of specific words (including their forms and parts). A question that arises is how can an EAP apprenticeship run smoothly if a student's writing ability does not meet the basic requirements of the program? Of course, there is an understanding that the admission process for both institutions only allows those students who have achieved a certain level of competence via a standard English language testing scheme for international students. Still, simultaneous support or extra help has to be provided to students who, hampered by languaging issues, are unable to navigate their apprenticeship smoothly. In one of the research contexts, this support was available, so the expectation was that just before the students were mainstreamed into university work in their final years, they would be given much more exposure, practice, training, and orientation into the kind of writing expected in a western institution of higher education. However, the other research context lacked this kind of crucial support.

Phase 4: Teacher Perceptions

The ten teachers interviewed for this phase of the research were from Institution B. They seemed to believe that the EAP writing program in Institution B may be too advanced for the level of the students, bringing into question how best to support students in developing their general English language competence. The other factors noted can be considered behavioural or attitudinal, which connects with the notion of “small cultures” that students may be taking with them into the classroom. The teachers interviewed thus noted:

They're not used to writing in the way they are expected to do. (Teacher 1)

The work is trying to get students to construct research papers in a logical manner, but unfortunately you are putting a kind of [western] approach on a completely different kind of thinking. The way of thinking is flowery, 'round and 'round the subject without getting to the point. (Teacher 2)

What we do here, I think it is a kind of indoctrination into the western culture. People say that we're culturally insensitive, but if you study in another country, you have to understand the country's culture. (Teacher 3)

The teachers pointed to significant factors that influence the apprenticeship process of Chinese students in academic writing courses. The main factor is the big and small cultures that may be involved as students make the transition to the culture of writing expected in a western university. Teachers recognised the complexity of the issue of getting the students into the EAP academic writing culture. There did indeed exist expectations of the group (native-English speaking teachers and academics mostly from one country) who were themselves proceeding from their own cultural frames in assessing student performance in academic writing. Worth mentioning is the academic subculture that places emphasis on critical reflection (interpretation, making connections, and evaluation).

Other important themes that emerged from the interviews involved teacher perceptions of what EAP teaching entails, perceptions of students' main issues in writing, and avenues the teachers felt the program should take. Teachers believed that EAP essentially involves teaching students how to write “formulaic” essay types. However, they believed that student competence level is not up to par and there is a need for more work on general English. As regards perceived major problems in writing, some teachers thought achieving an academic style was a problem; others felt that it was accuracy. Hence, the teachers interviewed felt that there is a need to go back to the basics. They also felt it is important to build student confidence and provide more positive reinforcement. As it was observed that students have a very systematic way of doing things once they grasp the idea of what they are supposed to do, nurturing this potential among students will likely be in their favour.

Teachers commented on the culture of writing expected in the university:

We have redrafting here right. Often the redrafting is making the connections. They're not really reflecting. They're not really engaged in a way of thinking at all. When they go to the university, they get the huge shock or fail because they don't get that. The redrafting and all the artificial stuff we do here, I think that's the biggest problem . . . I was talking to my students about science reports. I was making the connection between scientific writing and academic writing generally . . . Why write that in your science reports. What do you write in the introduction and then in the end, what do you do . . . because that's what you do in the science report? (Teacher 4)

There's a massive lack of transference of skills . . . EAP is teaching quite formulaic essay types, and they do do lots of it in language analysis, but in terms of their whole approach in learning English, I think EAP is quite particular . . . Here we're almost teaching them how to learn something because it's a foundation and bridging year. It's like . . . we're like taking them away from their high school learning. (Teacher 5)

The issues pointed out by the teachers are certainly significant. Firstly, the "culture of writing" itself may run in total opposition to ways of thinking that students bring to their writing activities. The lack of transference of skills or application of knowledge to writing involved in content courses, for one, may imply a heavy compartmentalisation of the teaching of skills that leads to student inability to process connections or transferability. In addition, perceptions of "artificiality" of how things were being done indicate a need to re-evaluate how current programs may be made more relevant to respond to the writing needs of Chinese students.

Conclusion

In sum, this exploratory research has found the following. In Phase 1, Chinese students in the research contexts generally believe that the main purpose behind essay writing is immediate improvement of skills and relevance and use to their academic studies. From the findings in Phase 2, it is evident that Chinese students are able to structure or organise their essays in academically acceptable ways when given some form of instruction or modeling. However, whether or not they are able to take this awareness to approaching the writing of unfamiliar texts is not clear, most probably because of the compartmentalised approach to the teaching of skills. As found in Phase 3, Chinese students' issues in writing are essentially consistent, with lexis occupying a prominent position. This finding implies that universities expecting students to function effectively in their studies (including content courses) must provide focused intervention through provision of support from writing centers, or specialised tutorial help. It would seem that there is a need to strengthen the general English language skills base of students if they are expected to succeed in academic writing programs and take on broad skills from here to apply to writing required in content courses. There is some question about whether to focus vocabulary input on general categories or a specialised academic vocabulary on specific disciplinary content which students have the possibility of recycling. Finally, based on teacher perceptions presented in Phase 4, it is strongly recommended that EAP writing programs in extension campuses responding to the perceived writing needs of Chinese students work on increasing teacher awareness of the subcultural transitions expected from students.

A limitation encountered in this research was that the data were mostly what was available during specific periods as the research progressed. The progression of research was simultaneous with site transfers for the researcher and accounted for why some data were collected only in one institution, rather than perhaps ideally both institutions. However, as the

goal was not to compare the two research contexts, the data collected and analysed for both appear to have served their purposes in their exploratory value. It is thus fair to say that the initial findings here need verification across case studies that would entail following through with particular students beyond their first year of apprenticeship.

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Appendix A
Interview Questionnaire Used with EAP Teachers of Academic Writing

1. How long have you been teaching EAP and in which contexts?
2. Are there any clear differences teaching EAP to Chinese students compared to other contexts you have taught?
3. What do you see as the emphasis of the writing program that you are currently teaching?
4. What do you see as strengths of Chinese learners of EAP writing? What about main weaknesses?
5. Which aspects in EAP writing programs do you feel Chinese students can engage with effectively? Which aspects can they not?
6. Which specific skills in writing do Chinese students need to function effectively in the context of the main campus in the west?
7. What do you see as the main cause of students' failure to engage effectively in EAP writing practices? (And potentially, with the discourse expected the western higher education institute they will spend their last one to two years?)
8. What is the chance that students' perceived weaknesses may be "subcultural" in nature rather than "learning-based"? Or can the two be distinguished?
9. How do you see the current writing program you teach as addressing the needs of your Chinese students? And in preparing students for writing requirements in the western university they are eventually headed to?
10. If you were to design an EAP writing program for Chinese students to prepare them for a western university's type of writing, which areas would you emphasise, and why?
11. As an EAP teacher, do you see your role as initiating students into a set of practices / conventions in writing? Or as someone who acculturates students into a specific "culture of writing" as that required in the western university which this institute has proceeded from?

Appendix B

Samples of Student Written Outputs and Preferred Organisation Patterns

Excerpt 1

Top-down structure with no clear argument taken, yet has a clearly stated purpose statement. The information was based on a source text.

It is generally believed that war is caused by the negative aspects of human nature, such as selfishness, possessiveness, irrationality and aggressiveness... Fortunately, it is a relatively peaceful era now although some small regional conflicts wars still exist. The terrible and dark world war times have taught human beings a lesson that wars could truly do great harm to people. There's still many argue that with technology developing, modern wars are the most danger to humans. However, the harmfulness of modern wars can't be denied. This essay will mainly discuss the causes, effects of modern wars and ways to prevent it from happening and characteristics as well, which are all used to support the statement above.

Modern wars have been mainly civil wars that are usually caused by three reasons. First, ethnic groups that are fighting for more autonomy or for a state of their own; second, groups trying to get control of a state, and third, the so called 'failed states, where the central government has collapsed or is extremely weak and fighting is occurring over political and economic 'spoils.'

Modern wars are so called not only for they happen in modern times but also for the characteristic that distinguishes them from traditional wars. These two characteristics directly lead to the effects of modern wars. Firstly, modern war often lead to more civilians killed than soldiers. Also, the destruction of the land by the fighting is often immense so that when the fighting finally ends, civilians return to an ecologically damaged land.

Technology used to greatly increase the destructive capacity of weapons is another characteristic of modern wars. Additionally technology has also been used to increase the weapons' accuracy, penetration ability... All these factors contribute greatly to the harmfulness of wars to human beings and all the living things on this planet.

However, although the destruction of modern wars is obvious and severe as illustrated above, we should still hold the confidence that we can control and prevent it from happening.

Excerpt 2

Adopts a structure that identifies a clear argument from the start.

Peace has been the theme of world since the end of WWII. As the countries all around the world have reached a same agreement that the harm that modern war will bring to mankind is unanticipated. The tragedy of WWI and WWII showed us, war can only bring us deaths and loss, it is meaningless for one to pursue it. This essay will highlight the deepest danger of modern war may bring to mankind, along with some analysis hereby.

The higher technology is applied to the arms, the more dangerous modern war will be. When the nuclear weapons were first invented, it is never regarded to be the ultimate development subject, but it comes out to be the killer of humankind. The deadly explosion in Hiroshima and Nagasaki killed tens of thousands of people of Japan in 1945. Although it accelerated the end of WWII, but the damage to mankind is cruel. ... then a characteristic of modern war is clear to be seen: more civilians are killed than soldiers. The refugees in war have to face the explosions and deaths... War kills people of innocent. This shall be counted in the dangerous sides of modern war.

Except for the deaths, another characteristic of modern war is the use of technology which increases the destructive capacity of weapons, just like some examples in the first part of this essay have mentioned. Thus a bigger amount of citizens will be killed in modern war..a public concern has existed that the possibility of nuclear war seems to be increased, as the world is still devoting to the stockpile of nuclear weapons.

To sum up, it is clear that the final victims of war is human beings ourselves. There is no need to hurt one's own by wasting time and money on the harmful toys. War is the last and worst choice that mankind should avoid.