Youzhong Sun
Liwen Li
Hong Cai *Editors*

Asian Research on English for Specific Purposes

Proceedings of the First Symposium on Asia English for Specific Purposes, 2017

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Contents

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Getting Published in Peer-Reviewed Journals: Advice for Student Authors

Brian Paltridge

Abstract This chapter discusses the challenges that student writers face in getting their work published in international peer reviewed journals and aspects of the peer review process that they need to understand in order to achieve this. Many of the difficulties student authors face in this process are due to their unfamiliarity with the procedures, practices, and expectations of peer review. In addition, students are often unsure of how to interpret and respond to reviews of their work. The chapter outlines typical features of reviewers' reports and, in particular, aspects of the reports that students often find difficult to deal with. Suggestions are made for ways of working through the peer review process with students so that they can better understand it and, as a consequence, participate more effectively in it.

Keywords English for research publication purposes · Writing for publication · Student writers · The peer review process · Reviewers' reports · Review criteria

Getting published in academic journals is increasingly important for research students in terms of gaining employment when they complete their degree. This is especially the case as the competition for entry-level academic positions increases across the world. Publishing is also, of course, important for students who have the acceptance of their work in a peer-reviewed journal as a graduation requirement for their degree. Academic publications are also, in some situations, necessary for receiving a scholarship as well as for obtaining research grants. As Badenhorst and Xu (2016) have argued, research students are often told that "their academic future is dependent on peer-reviewed publications" (p. 1). This is as true when they are applying for an academic position as when they are seeking tenure or promotion later on in their careers. All of this has implications for the field of writing for research purposes (Paltridge, 2019) and, in particular, the need to support beginning academic authors in getting their work published in peer-reviewed journals.

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In this chapter, I discuss work I have done with my colleague Sue Starfield which aims to provide insights into the process of peer review (Paltridge & Starfield, 2016; Starfield & Paltridge, 2019) and some of the matters we think are important for students wanting to get their work published in academic journals. Our interest, in particular, is: "What is it that student writers need to know in order to get their work published in academic journals?" I also discuss a project I recently completed (Paltridge, 2017) in which I looked at the reports that reviewers write on submissions to academic journals and some of the features of these reports that are difficult for beginning academic writers to interpret and, as a result, respond to.

The literature on writing for research publication purposes (Flowerdew, 2014, 2015) discusses the many challenges beginning academic writers face in the process of getting their work published. Li (2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2016), for example, provides detailed accounts of the challenges that Chinese students face in the writing for publication process while trying to meet the graduation requirement of their degrees of getting published during their studies. Flowerdew (2000) gives an account of a Chinese student's experiences of trying to get his work published when he returned to Hong Kong after having gained a PhD in the US. Lillis and Curry (2010) also examine the experiences of multilingual scholars seeking to publish their work and in their later book (Curry & Lillis, 2013) draw on their research to propose strategies that writers can adopt to enhance their chances of getting published. Many of the difficulties these authors face are, in our view, due to their unfamiliarity with the procedures, practices, and expectations of getting published in English language peer reviewed journals. In our book, *Getting Published in Academic Journals* (Paltridge & Starfield, 2016), Sue Starfield and I have tried to unpack this process for writers who are new to writing for publication in a way which will give them an insider's views of what this entails. Below are the main themes we discuss in our book to give a sense of how we approached the topic:

- What's involved in writing for academic journals
- Deciding which journal to send an article to
- Connecting with readers of research articles
- Understanding the process of peer review
- Reading reviewers' reports and addressing their concerns

It is the last two topics that I address in the most detail in this chapter.

In our chapter on understanding the peer review process, we talk about what peer review involves, and the role of editors and reviewers in this process. We also talk about what is expected of authors in this process saying:

> Our favorite authors are those that follow submission requirements and guidelines to the letter and do not expect that the editor(s) will fix their submissions for them. On occasion, we have had to send back a submission to an author numerous times to get the references correct. We persist until all the changes we have asked for are made, mainly because an untidy reference list sends a bad impression to reviewers. A reviewer can think: "If the author has been this careless with the references, how much care has he or she put into the research on which the article is based? Maybe not a lot …." This is not a message you want to send to reviewers. (Paltridge & Starfield, 2016, p. 71)

In the section on reading reviewers' reports and addressing their concerns, we give this example from a friend of mine:

> I have a friend who has published in many of the top journals in her field who, on receiving major revisions for her very first submission to a peer-reviewed journal, just put the article in her bottom drawer thinking the editor was not interested in her article and that this was effectively a rejection. When she told her supervisor this, he said, "Are you mad? This is good news. The editor wants your article. You just need to do more work on it!" She got the article out of the drawer, revised it, and sent it back to the journal, and it was published [in *Applied Linguistics*] (Paltridge & Starfield, 2016, p. 83).

We also quote from the work of Becky Kwan (2010) who discusses the challenges that beginning scholars have in dealing with reviewers' reports. She says:

> Many first-time writers are confused, discouraged or even shocked by the negative reviews they receive and the substantial revisions requested … Some never attempt to revise and resubmit their work that reviewers see as having potential for publication (Kwan, 2010, p. 213).

In our opinion, anything other than a rejection is good news. A request to revise a paper means the editor thinks the paper is potentially publishable, provided the author takes on board the feedback they have been given by the reviewers. So, if a student is being asked to revise, they should do this. Being asked to revise is a very common outcome in the peer review process. In their book, *Writing for Scholarly Publication*, Casanave and Vandrick (2003) emphasize that "revise and resubmit is not a rejection" (p. 261). Many students, however, misinterpret the letter from the editor asking them to revise their article as a rejection. It is not: it is an invitation to revise their article and resubmit it to the journal. A study of the publication histories of articles submitted to an international academic journal has suggested that a key factor leading to publication is "authorial persistence" (Belcher, 2007, p. 1); that is, the author's willingness to revise and resubmit their article through several rounds of revisions so this is what we encourage new academic authors to do.

Why, however, are reviewers' reports often so hard to interpret? Often, for reasons of politeness, reviewers are reluctant to tell authors exactly what they want them to do with their submissions. This can make it difficult for new researchers to understand exactly what the reviewers are wanting them to do with their paper. In my book *The Discourse of Peer Review* (Paltridge, 2017), I examined matters such as these in reviewers' reports on papers that had been submitted to the journal *English for Specific Purposes*. One of the matters I examined was how the reviewers asked for changes to be made to the submissions that they reviewed. I found that requests for changes were largely made as directions, suggestions, clarification requests and recommendations. While a good number of these changes were requested directly, a large number of them were not. That is, the reviewers used both direct and indirect speech acts (Austin, 1962; Sbisà, 2009; Searle, 1969) to do this. Examples of this are:

> Directions
> *Proofread the manuscript carefully* (direct speech act)
> *At the moment the conclusion is too general* (indirect speech act)

Suggestions

My main suggestion is that the author develop clear, fully explained connections between discourse cue conventions and disciplinary frames (direct speech act)

A more summarizing comparison between the differences might be helpful (indirect speech act)

Clarification requests

Clarify why it is important to identify ESP learners' strategies (direct speech act)

What do the findings mean? (indirect speech act)

Recommendations

I recommend that the author familiarise him/herself with Aitchison and Lee (2006), which contains numerous references worth exploring, as well as Caffarella and Barnett (2000) (direct speech act)

And, of course, a sentence which contains the word "recommend" as in the above example, while, on the surface a direct speech, is in fact an indirect speech act as the reviewer is telling the author to read and cite the work being referred to, not just suggesting that they do this.

Other examples of politeness strategies that occurred in the reviews were the use of:

Good news/bad news frames (Belcher, 2007)

Although the theoretical frame is well expressed and appropriate [good news], the literature review is inadequate, appearing to miss many of the studies that, unfortunately, have already produced the very same kinds of findings that this study turned up [bad news].

Praise/criticism pairs (Hyland, 2000)

I think your paper reads a lot more clearly now that you have made changes as suggested [praise]. There are still a few little things that I think would improve the readability of your paper [criticism].

Hedging (Hyland, 2000)

It may be [hedging] there in the data but the write up does not do a good job of making it salient.

Taking personal responsibility for a comment (Hyland, 2000)

To my mind [taking personal responsibility] it is always positive when research challenges stereotypes and certainly stereotypes of East Asian students need to be challenged.

Or cases where the reviewer used a politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987) such as:

Intensifying interest

This is an outstanding [intensifying interest] piece of work, almost a model for the kinds of papers we want.

Expressing approval

This paper represents a useful addition to the literature [expressing approval] on applications of SFL to the teaching of research writing.

Reviewers also avoided disagreement as in:

I am not sure if I have understood [avoiding disagreement] what the author wants to say

or asserted common ground with the author:

As I am sure the author will agree… [asserting common ground]

I also examined the stance (Hyland, 2005a, 2005b) that reviewers took in their reports; that is, the ways in which they evaluated the submissions. What I found was a high use of attitude markers and self-mentions in the reviews as in:

Attitude markers

I *enjoyed* this paper for a number of reasons

Self-mentions

I regret not being able to simply recommend publication

There were, however, compared to published academic writing for example (see Hyland & Jiang, 2016; McGrath & Kuteeva, 2012), many fewer instances of hedging in the reviews, such as:

A good case study *may* be here.

This, coupled with the high use of self-mentions, showed a high level of certainty in the views expressed by the reviewers and, thus, less encouragement for authors to disagree with or negotiate the points of view expressed in the reports.

How, then, can we help student writers understand the process of peer review? We teach a course on writing for publication purposes at the University of Sydney which aims to address this. The students in our course are all enrolled in a research degree at and near the final stage of their studies and, hence, wanting to publish their work. In the course we discuss, in addition to what a good research article should look like and the matters it should address, the topics shown in Table 1 are covered in the course.

Our session on the peer review process includes a discussion of what the process involves (see Paltridge & Starfield, 2016, Chapter 4) as well as a discussion of different kinds of peer review such as double blind, single blind and open peer review. We also focus on the pros and cons of each of these types of review including the reasons for blind review and arguments that have been made both for and against it (see Paltridge, 2017, Chapter 6). When we discuss typical criteria used by academic journals to evaluate submissions we give examples from journals we have edited as

Table 1 Matters addressed in the writing for publication course

The peer review process and how it works
Typical criteria used by academic journals to evaluate submissions
Interpreting reviewers' reports
The pragmatics of reviewers' reports
Evaluative comments in reviewers' reports
Responding to reviewers' reports

well as broader matters that journal editors have said have influenced their judgment. These include whether:

- the topic is within the scope of the journal;
- the author's literature review takes account of the most recent work on the topic;
- the study is well planned and carried out from a methodological point of view;
- statistical analyses, if they have been used, have been appropriately applied;
- the reporting of the research is clear, well written and well structured;
- the research that is reported on is of interest to readers of the journal (Coleman, 2014).

We also discuss how journals editors very often carry out an initial culling of submissions and reasons that are typically given for what are termed "desk rejections" (Craig, 2010; Nexon, 2014a, 2014b) which, for some journals, can be 80% (Hyland, 2017) and for other journals even higher (Paltridge & Starfield, 2016). The questions in Table 2 are the questions we used to do this at *TESOL Quarterly* when I was co-editing it with my colleague Ahmar Mahboob.

Not all the points in Table 2, of course, would lead to a desk rejection if the answer is no but some (for example, the first four questions) would. In the case of questions six to ten, the author may be asked to revise their submission before it is sent out for review. With question 11 (*Is it under the word length for submissions to the journal?*), this depends on how much the article is under the word length. If the article is a little under the word length this is not normally an issue. However, if the submission is substantially under the word length, this could suggest the author has not treated the topic at the level of depth expected by the journal and their article could, for this reason, be desk rejected.

We also provide students with examples of the criteria that are sent to reviewers, something authors often don't see. In the case of *TESOL Quarterly* these are:

- Does the manuscript contain new and significant information to justify publication?

Table 2 A checklist for the initial in-house review of submissions (adapted from Mahboob et al., 2016, p. 43)

1.	Is *TESOL Quarterly* the correct journal for the submission?
2.	Is the article of interest to the international readership of the journal?
3.	Does the article report on research?
4.	Is the research reported on original?
5.	Is textual similarity a problem with the submission?
6.	Are the sources referred to in the literature review up to date?
7.	Does the author compare the results of the study to previous research on the topic so we see how the study moves the field forward?
8.	Has the article been prepared for blind review?
9.	Can the author be identified from the acknowledgements?
10.	Is the article over the word length for submissions to the journal?
11.	Is the article under the word length for submissions to the journal?

- Is the problem significant and concisely stated?
- Are methodological and/or theoretical matters comprehensively described?
- Are the interpretations and conclusions justified by the results?
- Is adequate reference made to other work in the field?
- Does the manuscript appeal to the general interests of the readership of the journal?
- Does the manuscript strengthen the relationship between theory and practice?

These criteria show that it is important that the research that is reported on is original and that the claims that are made are justified by the data, that proper methodological procedures have been followed, sampling decisions have been explained, and the data have been correctly analyzed. They also highlight the importance of locating the article in the latest research on the topic and writing it in a way that connects with the broader readership of the journal.

In the section of the course on interpreting reviewers' reports I bring copies of reviews of submissions I have made to academic journals to the class. These nearly always surprise students as they mostly haven't seen these kinds of texts before and are surprised by the amount of negative comment in them, even though (most of the submissions) were finally published. In our discussion we focus, in particular, on the pragmatics of reviewer's reports; that is, what is meant by what is said in the reports as opposed to what is literally said. That is, whether reviewers have been explicit in telling the author what changes need to be made to the submission, or whether they have used indirect speech acts which are intended to be read as directions (see above, also Paltridge, 2015, 2017 for further discussion of this).

Students also look at the reviews to identify examples of positive and negative evaluations of the author's work. In doing this, they find that while there is (or may be) some positive evaluation of the paper, it is nearly always outweighed by negative evaluation. They then consider the extent to which the negative evaluations need, in their view, to be addressed for the paper to be accepted for publication. And, of course, the answer is very nearly always (or there needs to be an explanation as to why they haven't).

Some key points we make when discussing responding to reviewers' reports with our students are that they shouldn't send an angry email to the editor if they are not happy with a review. They should, rather, thank the reviewers for their feedback then address the reviewers' comments systematically, and politely, taking each comment at a time. They should explain how they have made the required changes, or explain why they haven't made particular changes with a reasoned justification for not having made them.

A further point we make is that student writers shouldn't be discouraged by what seems to be the very high standing of the journal in which they want to publish or what is involved in getting published in it. The good news is that while a journal may have a low overall acceptance rate, if an author is asked to make revisions to their article there is a much stronger likelihood that it will be accepted for publication. Further, as Atsushi Iida (2016), argues, beginning authors shouldn't be discouraged if their paper is rejected by a journal. Even if an article is rejected, he argues, there is still a lot that can be learnt from the process of being reviewed and from the reviewers' comments on the submission.

Gaillet and Guglielmo (2014) in their book *Scholarly publishing in a changing academic landscape*, quote Jim Elledge from Kennesaw State University who gives the following advice to beginning writers who have had a paper rejected:

> For the uninitiated, the first rejection is terrible, but the second (sometimes the third) can immobilize you. You'll be tempted to slip the manuscript into a drawer and forget about it. Don't. (Gaillet & Guglielmo, 2014, p. 53)

Instead, he argues, students should have a list of journals where they think their manuscript is potentially publishable. If it's rejected by the first journal on their list, they should take on board the reviewers' comments and revise the article with their next journal in mind. Go on like this, he says, until it's accepted. Icy Lee (2014), a Professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, describes a situation exactly like this when one of her papers was rejected by a journal. She says:

> I did not jump to the conclusion that my work was not publishable. Taking into consideration the reviewers' comments, I revised my manuscript, resubmitted it to another journal, and it was accepted. My experience shows that we have to … make full use of the reviewers' comments to improve our writing and find a suitable home for our work (p. 258).

Getting published in academic journals, then, is a challenge for all authors, whether they are experienced academic writers or whether they are new to the peer review process. In the words of Ryuko Kubota, a successful academic author:

> Publishing in professional journals is in no way an easy task, but determination and open-mindedness can enable one to become a member of the publishing community (Kubota, 2003, p. 69).

As Miyuki Sasaki, another published author, explains:

> Many people give up revising and resubmitting their papers when they are rejected for the first time. I would have too if I had not known that many researchers actually begin writing good papers from that point (Sasaki, 2003, p. 219).

The very clear message from this for student writers is not to give up, whether they have been asked to revise or whether their article has been rejected. If they take on board the advice that has been outlined in this chapter they will have a much greater chance of getting published and, in turn, becoming part of their scholarly community (Curry, 2016).

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Can We Use an Outside-Expert, Conversational ESP Stimulus with Adjustable Oral Communication Anxiety to Motivate Chinese ELL, First Year, Undergraduate Students During the Final Semester Quarter?

Christine V. Wasko

Abstract This chapter presents the ESP in an EFL class initiative taken by the author/teacher of first-year undergraduate, international trade students at Shandong University of Science and Technology to promote practical ESP dialogue between the students and working business experts via Skype. Consisting of a short lecture, followed by a question and answer period, this task was introduced after extensive, preparation in speaking/listening skills, continuously scaffolded during the semester. The ungraded "opportunity"/exercise incorporated both writing skills as mandatory prepared questions and communicative speaking skills as "live" dialogue initiated voluntarily by the students. Thus, Oral Communication Apprehension (OCA) was adjusted by the individual students according to his or her comfort level. This approach served to thwart the normal waning of student motivation in the last quarter of the semester by offering them the opportunity to speak English with real international business people. Normally neglected by universities, this basic contact with professionals in the cohort's major proved to be a great impetus for the students to actively participate in spontaneous dialogue, productively control their anxiety and connect with their major in a real world situation.

Keywords EFL · Chinese university students · ESP experts · Spontaneous dialogue

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1 Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Several factors work against Chinese university students in their quest to bridge from ELAC (English Language and Culture) courses to upper-level content courses that utilize ESP (English for Special Purposes) and assume an EFL (English Foreign Language) comfort level in comprehension and communication. This is particularly evident in Chinese university undergraduate freshmen; most of whom are unfamiliar with the student-centered western teaching style and its emphasis on a participatory classroom environment. L2 speaking and listening causes the most anxiety to ELL students. Yet, although Chinese universities are quickly becoming internationalized, L2 oral practice rarely extends beyond the formalized tasks of podcast or video notetaking, presentations and limited student responses to in-class teacher queries. Additionally, during the closing quarter of a semester, students tend to lose much of their motivation to learn, having transferred their energy to "cramming" for final exams. Lastly, ELL classroom practice usually does not include the integration of a first year cohort's major, even though the achievement of professional success is a primary motivating factor for Chinese ELL students.

1.2 Data Collection

This chapter is based on teacher observations and student feedback in an ELAC course, for a specific conversational ESP task, presented in the last quarter of the semester to first year, international trade students at Shandong University of Science and Technology in Jinan, China. This task was employed four times, using varied expert speakers active in the cohort's field of study.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Can direct contact with English-speaking experts, actively working in a university cohort's major, motivate students in the last quarter of the semester?
2. Can a conversational task be created to both reduce and positively utilize freshman oral communication anxiety (OCA)?
3. Can an ESP content speaking tasks in an ELAC course encourage freshman students to learn oral ESL?

1.4 Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of this chapter is to report the effects of employing a spontaneous, conversational task with the purpose of exposing the students to experts in their field of study, using ESP as a motivational tool in an ELAC class, applying anxiety concepts to the students' advantage, and centering learning around the speaking aspect of communicative English. This author contends that offering dialogue with speakers other than a native, English teacher during the last quarter of the semester, as the logical consequence of incorporating ESP/content-based materials in ELAC classes, will help incentivize students to bridge the gap between freshmen ELAC speaking skills and upper-level content-based classes that utilize ESP.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Western Teaching Style in Chinese Universities

Most Chinese university freshmen are unfamiliar with the student-centered teaching style of western native English teachers, and because of their foreign language anxiety (Liu & Jackson, 2008; Xiao & Petraki, 2007), such students rely on the Chinese concept of silence in the classroom to save face (Liu, 2001). This communication apprehension (CA) is most debilitating to the learning aspect of speaking (Jing & Junying, 2016; Kahn, 2015), even though university graduates are expected to be confident in oral communication in order to function effectively in their academic and professional lives (Allen, 2002; Kahn, 2015).

In spite of their heretofore dependence on passive learning, most EFL students wish to participate actively in the ELAC classroom (Liu & Jackson, 2008). Many studies have suggested ways in which teachers can incentivize students to participate in learning a second language, namely English (Jing & Junying, 2016), such as providing varying opportunities to practice, giving positive feedback, allowing advanced-level peers to offer support, implementing strategies that build confidence (Ibid., Kahn, 2015), and creating a welcoming classroom atmosphere by reducing fear of mistakes and encouraging risk taking (Liu & Zhang, 2013, citing Mak, 2011).

The above-mentioned strategies should allow university English teachers great leeway in choosing and/or creating lessons. As recommended by Chapman and Apsin:

> …teachers should have the ability to create an active learning environment and, as a result, shift from passive learning to students taking responsibility for their own learning (Chapman & Aspin, 1997).

It has also been recommended that teachers should develop critical thinking skills lessons which encourage students to ask questions and form opinions about a topic (Afshara & Rahimi, 2014). This is especially important, not only for oral participation, but as preparation for upper-level, content classes which require such analytical reasoning and the application thereof. Present communicative teaching methods are largely limited to short concept questions with little follow-up. Whereas, in a class, accustomed to systematic and routine critical thinking exercises and Socratic discussion and debate, student oral engagement becomes a central focus.

2.2 ESP in ELAC Courses

Also of interest to the present study, is introduction of content in the freshman English class, namely that which is related to the cohort's major. Granted, ESP materials should be basic in lexicon and concepts for easy cognitive consumption. Yet, freshman, many of whom barely have an idea of what their major entails, are fully aware of the learning gap between first year English, EAP (English for Academic Purposes) or ELAC (English Language and Culture) and the content courses they will encounter in the following years ahead. Many students, including those in the present study, have complained about this particular issue. In response, some universities have begun to recognize the necessity of introducing ESP into college English teaching (Guo, 2017). Students equally understand its importance for their careers. Authentic and appealing tasks provide a relevance to the students' interests, creating stimulation for the students in developing the related competencies (Mitchell, 1993). Therefore, including materials from a cohort's major subject of study at an early stage can serve as another motivational tool that teachers can use, if scaffolded carefully, to ensure a student's achievable pace of success.

2.3 End-of Semester Motivation

However, sustaining this upward learning progression proves to be more difficult over the course of the semester. Early semester motivation is highly influenced by a teacher's instructional strategies (Jang, Kim, & Reeve, 2012; Reeve & Lee, 2014). If successful, students will learn autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For such a learning climate to be maintained it must recognize progress and improvement, (Ames & Archer, 1988; Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006) and have task-specific expectancies (Elliot & Church, 1997).

There is growing evidence that students' stress levels increase over the semester, especially as they approach exams (Morrison, Goolsarran, Rogers, & Jha, 2013). Thus maintaining a high level of student motivation throughout the semester becomes a challenge to teachers, especially since motivation and engagement are reciprocally related (Reeve & Lee, 2014). Predictably, student motivation drops significantly in the last quarter, as students focus on final exams, the epicenter of Chinese scholastic evaluation. This likely causes the *end-of-semester syndrome* (i.e., worse performance by students at the end of the semester) (Grimm, Markman, & Maddox, 2012).

Yet, students still retain a degree of cognitive flexibility that can be drawn upon to stimulate engagement. Additionally, it has been suggested that a certain degree of task-induced stress can have the positive effect of keeping fatigued students alert (Liu & Zhang, 2013), an element essential to student learning. This study maintains that successful use of these two active factors depends on the task(s) presented by the teacher. Thus the challenge for the teacher is how to provide the correct context to motivate students to engage in and learn at the end of the semester.

3 Pedagogical Factors as Groundwork

3.1 Western Style Classroom Preparation

The author's end-of-semester, conversational task experiment would not have been possible without proper preparation throughout the semester. The western teaching style was implemented on the first day of class. Students were informed that the focus of learning university English would be engaging in an interactive, student-centered classroom, centering on oral communication. To aid the students, mobile phones were allowed to remain operable in class in order to have easy access to a translation app when needed. Credit was given for "trying" on a daily basis via speaking. Defining the parameters of class success, failure/mistakes were not only acceptable, but considered an essential part of learning. Negative teacher feedback was avoided. For those students of slower learning capabilities, peer assistance was encouraged. With constant exposure to oral English in a non-threatening environment, the students felt less and less anxious about using the target language and routinely finding their own translations for speech communication.

More difficult was the introduction of critical thinking that went beyond limited concept questions derived from ELAC text book materials. This Socratic Method of teaching centered on giving students facilitative questions rather than answers. The process placed the learning responsibility on the students through development of logical thinking skills and guided the students to finding their own, reasoned answers. Vigilant scaffolding of inquiring scenarios gave students achievable goals on a constant basis. Additionally, use of unexpected materials and tasks further stimulated alertness to the task at hand. Students soon became adept at both objectively looking at varied, situational fact patterns, and forming and defending a particular point-of view about them. This was achieved through teacher-made materials for class discussions and one-on-one teacher–student explorative dialogues, emphasizing spontaneous, conversational interaction.

The introduction of business-related materials was by mutual agreement between this teacher and the students, who, up to that time, had had no real exposure to international trade, their major course of study, and were eager to learn about it. Some authentic materials were used, though some concepts and definitions were simplified and texts were edited and adapted to the students' English proficiency levels for easier understanding. This content-based teaching approach was merged into problem-solving exercises and debates, again emphasizing conversational speaking. Practiced routinely, the Socratic Method supported students in the process of overcoming their fear of communicating in English. As the exercises progressed in level of difficulty, the students were able to match and sometimes surpass expectations in their critical thinking, creativity, and spontaneous, conversational skills.

3.2 End-of-Semester Motivation

In the last quarter of the semester, the end-of-semester syndrome struck the class, as the students' focus was redirected toward preparation for final exams. In addition, the student–teacher rapport had reached a level of familiarity that was predictably comfortable and therefore, somewhat de-motivating. The students had become used to both the instructor's teaching methods and voice. Therefore, a certain relaxation of alertness naturally followed. The positive use of anxious anticipation in unpredictable lesson materials had to be rejuvenated. Therefore, an experimental exercise in a new scenario was designed to address the issues of spontaneous conversation and inclusion of ESP into the ELAC class, while attending to reduction in speaking anxiety, balanced with the positive, motivating factors of task-induced stress and student cognitive flexibility.

4 The Present Study

The given exercise was used to investigate the level of speaking courage among students, when given the opportunity to engage in spontaneous conversation with an expert in their field of study, International Business.

4.1 Speakers

The speakers were native or near-native English speakers, actively engaged in international business and culture, and all located in the USA. Four speakers, of diverse ethnic and business backgrounds, accepted the assignment:

- SWOT International Corporate Trainer (female, native African-American).
- Culture and Language Training Director for foreign corporate employees working long-term in the USA (female, native European-American).

- Multi-media Company Research Manager (male, Danish immigrant to the USA with near-native English proficiency).
- Director of University of Pennsylvania, Legal English Program (male, native Korean-American).

4.2 Speaker Assignment

Speakers were asked to prepare a 5–10 min talk to be given via Skype, followed by a Question and Answer period. The content of the talk was to generally cover their employment position and interaction within the international and American communities. It was the speaker's choice whether to use PPTs or other visuals in their presentation. The assignment was not intended to require a prolonged or in-depth lecture by the presenters. The criteria were designed to encourage participation in this exercise by offering maximum flexibility in regard to time length, content, and use of presentation aids, while necessitating minimal preparation. For additional preparedness, the speakers were informed of possible student questions and areas of student interest in the experts' fields. This information was gathered from the student-participant portion of the exercise discussed below. Speakers were also made cognizant of the students' general and ESP English levels and advised to speak to that audience.

4.3 Participants

The participants were 33 Chinese freshmen, aged 18–20 years old, from Shandong University of Science and Technology in Jinan, China. Their major was International Trade. All had several years of pre-university English language learning. Their English language levels ranged from basic user (A1, six students) to upper intermediate/independent users (B2+, two students) on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) scale. The remaining 25 students were classified as B1 to B2 speakers at the time of the exercise.

4.4 Participant Assignment

The exercise was presented to the students as a non-graded "opportunity" to interact with industry professionals, and consisted of three parts:

A. Writing Exercise—Mandatory for all students

1. Students were informed of each speaker's occupational background and cultural circumstances.

2. Instructions were to write 1–3 questions of interest to the student and relevant to either the speaker's expertise and/or cultural interactions.
3. Student questions were reviewed by the teacher and corrected for grammar and formal character, relevance, appropriateness, and suitable conversion to a speaking format. Business vocabulary use was included.
4. Teacher recommendations for the final two choices of possible questions to be asked were made.

B. Dialogue (via Skype)—Voluntary

1. After listening to the speaker's presentation, students were invited to voluntarily interact with the speaker during a Q&A session by approaching the computer camera connected to Skype, asking one chosen question, and remaining visible to the speaker while listening to the answer.
2. Students were then free to dialogue further with the speaker if desired.

C. Informal post-talk class discussion.

5 Results and Discussion

Regardless of English language proficiency level, all students were actively motivated to create applicable questions for the various speakers. This part of the exercise was mandatory in order to guarantee participation by all students in the task. Without exception, the questions were well thought-out and exemplified the students' interest in learning about international business and culture. Approximately half of the questions were in regard to business aspects, including job expectations and required criteria for such employment. An almost equal amount of remaining questions addressed the cultural aspects of an international work environment, and specifically how Chinese employees acclimate both business-wise and culturally.

Gauged by their created questions, students were most interested in learning about western business communication and how it contrasted with their own cultural communication. Voiced by each of the four speakers, one of the greatest challenges to Chinese working or studying in the west is the necessity of active oral communication. This was of upmost interest to the ELAC students. In the post-talk class discussions, students shared their surprise that westerners would judge silence as lack of understanding, rather than etiquette. The difference between the Chinese practice of silence and the Western promotion of oral engagement highlighted how cultural/business norms can be misinterpreted and how a Chinese natives must acclimate themselves to a western business culture if their career is to thrive in that environment.

Students were able to control their anxiety levels by having the choice to participate by (1) partaking only in the writing part of the exercise, (2) reading (or speaking by memorization) their question to the speaker and listening to the answer, or (3) extending their conversation with the expert by engaging in follow-up dialogue. For the initial speaker, the first student participant admitted that his anxiety in speaking English had returned because of the new context of this interaction, and he had to be prompted to approach the microphone to ask his question. However, after the opening "push" from the teacher, students actively sought, at a minimum, to ask the experts their prepared question. Student participation grew with each speaker and reached a high point of approximately 25% (eight students) interacting with the speaker, with 22% of those students asking follow-up questions and engaging in actual, spontaneous conversation. One student, who waited until the end of the Q&A of the final speaker, to ask her question, commented afterward, "I was afraid, but I wanted to try it."

The speakers were given great credibility because they were actively involved in the daily operations of international business and culture. Participants were pleasantly surprised to find that not only general, but business English vocabulary had practical, career use beyond the classroom and university grading expectations. The task also gave the students the perception of being more prepared for upcoming content courses.

The results show that flexibility in presenting innovative speaking ESP tasks that include experts in a cohort's subject of study can motivate and inspire ELAC students to continue learning in spite of the end-of-semester syndrome and oral communication apprehension (OCA).

6 Limitations and Recommendations

This observational study was limited to one freshman class of 33 international trade students. Some student concerns were in regard to glitches in the audio quality, the novelty of listening to a different speaker's voice using English and looking directly into the face of someone of authority whom they did not know. Additionally, the coordination of scheduling the talks with speakers residing in different time zones proved complicated in some cases.

Further, the speaking preparation, including ESP content, had been ongoing from the beginning of the semester, thus indicating that such an exercise is best presented after a degree of ELL speaking skills and comfort level are present. The exercise also demonstrates that an opportunity to speak with experts from the students' major subject area can be an important impetus for student engagement to counteract the end-of-semester syndrome, though the negative and positive aspects of OCA must be judiciously balanced.

In addition, the author was fortunate to know and have access to international business experts, who were actively working and willing to participate. Other ELAC teachers may have to coordinate with content teachers and/or rely on outside assistance to recruit speakers. No formal surveys or questionnaires were used because the quantitative assessments could so readily be ascertained through the student questions created, level of active participation, and post-talk student observations.

It is recommended that ESP conversational tasks that contain interaction between students and experts, whether in-class, or via Skype or another video-call device, should be included in ELAC classes to (1) encourage spontaneous dialogue utilizing ESP vocabulary, (2) expose students to experts actively engaged in their university major's subject matter, (3) motivate students in the last quarter of the semester, and (4) both reduce oral communication anxiety and utilize the positive aspects thereof for students' success in speaking English.

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Developing Four English-in-the-Discipline Courses for University Studies in Hong Kong

Wenfeng Wang, Patrick Leung, and Aditi Jhaveri

Abstract This chapter discusses the development of English-in-the-Discipline (ED) courses offered to students of four disciplines: Education, Information Management, Speech and Hearing Sciences, and Applied Child Development at The University of Hong Kong. These courses aim to help students develop their critical reading, report writing, and oral presentation skills for disciplinary studies and academic purposes. Students conduct a small-scale research project on a self-identified topic in their discipline, interview information-rich professionals, and present their findings in the form of a research report and an academic oral presentation. As developers of these courses, we present the course design principles (e.g., genre and experiential learning approaches, and assessment for learning) and sample teaching materials. In light of student feedback, we reflect upon the strengths of the courses in developing students' academic literacy for university studies and the challenges we experience in relation to (a) specificity in disciplinary communication, (b) collaboration with subject teachers, and (c) language teachers' expertise in teaching ED courses.

Keywords English-in-the-Discipline · Academic literacy · Course development · Teacher reflection

1 Introduction

Secondary school leavers entering universities assume *new* roles and identities as members of *new* communities and engage with knowledge in *new* ways. They are expected to learn the ways in which discourse is structured and presented in order to navigate and participate effectively in their respective academic and professional domains (Hyland, 2017b, p. 24). This process not only entails developing general academic literacy skills in synthesizing information from reliable sources and

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making cautious claims in spoken and written texts, but also requires communicative competence in a range of genres typical of a particular discipline, for example, a medical bulletin article in pharmacy, a problem-question answer in law, and a case report in business. As language teachers, we aim to provide active, discipline-specific, and sustained support to students by analyzing the linguistic features, discourse patterns, and communicative functions of the texts as well as their acceptable variations, making them explicit and guiding students toward the expression of their own voices and identities as "budding scholars" (Duff, 2010, p. 169) in academic and disciplinary communities over time.

At The University of Hong Kong (HKU), where English is the medium of instruction, two credit-bearing English courses are offered by the Centre for Applied English Studies (CAES), to facilitate the socialization process of undergraduate students into their target academic communities. The first course, Core University English (CUE), is for all first-year students unless they are granted exemption based on their public examination results in English. CUE supports students' transition from secondary school to English-medium university study by developing their general academic skills. Specifically, it assists students to communicate a clear and critical stance in essays and reports and in tutorial discussions by using and synthesizing academic sources appropriately. The second English language course, English-in-the-Discipline (ED), is taken by all students in their second, third, or fourth year, depending on the curriculum of individual faculties. The ED courses are tailor-made to provide target support to students in the development and effective use of English in their disciplines, for example, teaching students how to write assignments expected in their subject areas. Currently, CAES offers 33 ED courses to students of various disciplines, including:

- Communication course for architecture students
- English for clinical pharmacy
- Language and style of narrative journalism
- Technical English for medical engineering
- Writing psychology: Text and context

A full list of the ED courses can be found at http://caes.hku.hk/home/courses/undergraduate-courses/. The majority of these courses are run in composition with faculty courses and focus on the literacy of a particular discipline rather than a specific course, and a few are adjunct to subject courses where students study related materials in both the ED course (for discourse features) and the subject course (for content) (Hyland, 2017a, p. 20). While the effectiveness of these two types of course provision on students' learning at university is worth researching, the purpose of this chapter is to introduce the development of four ED courses that adopt a composite model. These ED courses are offered to students of four disciplines in the Faculty of Education at HKU: Applied Child Development, Education, Information Management, and Speech and Hearing Sciences. While these four disciplines are housed under the same faculty, each differs considerably in terms of its disciplinary nature and content. However, some key academic language skills are common among these disciplines, namely critical reading, research report writing and oral presentation skills. We were, therefore, able to follow the same composite model when we developed the four ED courses for disciplinary studies and academic purposes.

In the next section, as developers of these courses, we present the course design principles (e.g., genre and experiential learning approaches, and assessment for learning) and sample teaching materials. In light of student feedback, we reflect upon the strengths of the courses in developing students' academic literacy for university studies and the challenges we experience, in relation to (a) specificity in disciplinary communication, (b) collaboration with subject teachers, and (c) language teachers' expertise in teaching ED courses. We hope that our experience and reflection can provide initial insights on how English for Specific Purposes (ESP) practitioners in similar contexts can design courses and materials and develop professionally at the same time.

2 Developing Four ED Courses at HKU

As one crucial feature of ED courses is to provide target, discipline-specific academic literacy support to students, instead of offering one ED course which deploys generic materials, offering different ED courses to cater for four different disciplines (see Sect. 1 for details) enables course teachers to design and tailor-make discipline-specific reading materials and writing tasks that best suit the unique academic language learning needs of the students of a certain discipline. In these four ED courses, students conduct a small-scale research project on a self-identified topic in their discipline, interview information-rich professionals, and present their findings through written and spoken tasks using appropriate organizational and rhetorical features.

Every academic year, approximately 120 Education and 60 Speech and Hearing Sciences students take their respective ED course in their second-year of study at HKU, while 60 Information Management and 30 Applied Child Development students take their ED course in their third year, with a class quota of 20 students for a language course at the University. Students' English language proficiency varies, but most are of an upper-intermediate level (with an overall IELTS score of 7), Cantonese being their first language. Each ED course has three contact hours each week for face-to-face teaching, and students are expected to accomplish 80 h of out-of-class learning, for example, by reading academic sources and writing up their project reports. With reference to learning and teaching materials developed, this section discusses the principles behind the design of the courses.

2.1 Course Design Principles

To maximize the effectiveness of the course and reflect research-informed pedagogical practices, we have followed five major principles in designing these courses, namely collaboration with disciplinary teachers, genre approach, use of authentic texts, experiential learning, and assessment for learning.

2.1.1 Collaboration with Disciplinary Teachers

Based on the notion that fostering a collaborative relationship with disciplinary teachers is most important for their input in the content area (Hyland, 2017b, p. 39), we have collaborated with disciplinary teachers in many ways at various stages of course development.

Before we started developing these courses, supplemented with the details on the program's website, we interviewed program coordinators of Applied Child Development, Education, Information Management, and Speech and Hearing Sciences, respectively, about their curriculum requirements, course provision and students' profiles (e.g., their entry qualifications, English proficiency, and general demographic information). With disciplinary teachers' help, we also collected samples of student writing (e.g., essays, literature reviews, reflective writings, and final year project reports) and analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of their work. After a careful analysis of students' academic language learning needs (Dudley-Evans, 2001, p. 131), we identified two essential skills for students' academic and disciplinary studies to focus on in our ED courses, namely, research report writing skills and academic presentation skills. To better understand and respond to students' needs in these two areas, enrich our disciplinary knowledge (Shulman, 2018) and develop suitable learning and teaching materials, we regularly attend students' final year project presentations and faculty seminars.

We maintain contact with faculty teachers so that these ED courses can align with the students' program curriculum. Since ED courses are designed to help students master the linguistic conventions of their own discipline, any curriculum changes are likely to alter the academic literacy skills needed (Dudley-Evans, 2001, p. 131). A few years ago, we were informed of a major change in the curriculum of Speech and Hearing Sciences to which we had to respond by prompt revision of content. Had we not established a close working relationship with faculty teachers, we probably would not have been able to do so.

Informed by research on using corpora as useful databases of authentic language use for ESP teaching and learning (Belcher, 2006, p. 138; Dudley-Evans, 2001, p. 134), we built a database of research articles for each of the four disciplines. To ensure that the database contains research articles suitable for students to join their target academic community (Duff, 2010, p. 169), we approached the program coordinators for a list of key journals in their field. Although we could use other means to obtain this list, for example, via Web of Science, this purposeful involvement of faculty teachers is likely to enhance the credibility of the courses and demonstrate their relevance to students' learning experience. Based on the suggested lists, we selected over 50 articles for each discipline to build the database, which forms the basis for developing materials to teach research report writing. The articles for the database were chosen carefully, following the criteria recommended by Tomlinson (2012, p. 145) and Krashen (2011), including (1) relevance, (2) level of difficulty (in terms of argumentation and language use), and (3) teachability (as good examples of language use, features, and structure). Since their development, the four databases, which are updated regularly, now contain over 200 research journal articles and have been employed for both in-class and independent learning. These four databases can be accessed via the links presented below:

- Applied Child Development
- https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0IQTlnsqlLlNFRsNVZUcG1NLTg
- Speech and Hearing Sciences
- https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0IQTlnsqlLlX0lDelhxNm1QWTA
- Education
- https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0IQTlnsqlLlUVBDT1ZjemlIckk
- Information Management
- https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0IQTlnsqlLlUVNwbk1hYm5ISEU

2.1.2 Genre Approach

In various academic and professional contexts, the term *genre* refers to the recognizable and recurring patterns of texts (Hammond & Derewianka, 2001, p. 186) or the way writers typically use language in a particular culture (Hyland, 2018, p. 2359). Genre approach has been used extensively for analyzing and teaching specialized communication patterns. The genre that students of these four disciplines frequently engage with for both comprehension and production purposes is research reports. A research report documents the complex enquiry process of the researchers in understanding a phenomenon, with typical structural and rhetorical characteristics. Pedagogically, we have adopted move analysis (Swales, 1990, p. 141) in delineating the structure of a report or a section of a report such as introduction, methods, findings, and discussion. Table 1 presents an excerpt of a text that we use for students to identify the moves in discussing findings.

We have also analyzed other integral elements that define a research report such as lexis, grammar, and register. Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 show samples of text analysis demonstrating different linguistic features for presenting and interpreting research findings in the area of speech and hearing sciences. When discussing these sample texts with students, we also highlight some commonly used formulaic expressions specific to a particular section of a research report and discuss their functions, such as the use of “this is consistent with the previous study that …” in the discussion section to show comparison.

Table 1 Sample text for move analysis

[Sentences are numbered for ease of reference]
Some parents reported that, particularly in relation to autism advisors and medical doctors, they saw the information provided as accurate but of limited use because it lacked detail about how the interventions would relate to their child [S1]. This was consistent with the data collected in the recent evaluation of the HCWA package, where it was reported that although the majority of families were satisfied overall with the advice and support provided by the autism advisor service, a large proportion of families also reported that even with advice from the autism advisor it was difficult to understand what service would be best for their child/children (ARTD Consultants, 2012) [S2]. This indicates that the information provided to parents regarding interventions may be too general and lacking specific guidance [S3]
Move analysis
S1: Summarize the main research findings
S2: Relate the findings of the current study to previous studies
S3: Account for the findings

Table 2 Referring to interview data

Parent L *explained* that other parents were reliable sources of information: "… simply because they have tried it, and if they say that it's worked for their child it might work for my child, and they have actually tried it so that rates quite high for me". …

Parent C, for example, described that the information provided by autism advisors, while accurate, lacked the detail to make it useful

> … they give you all of this information and it's like, ok, you've got to go and pick what the best treatment is for your child and there's not really enough help to tell you **"this treatment does this", "this treatment does that"** … you've got to do a lot of the research yourself, and it's really lacking in that area. It's like, "Here's your money, you just go and spend it", but they don't tell you, "This would suit your child" or "That would suit your child".

Parent E *held* a similar opinion: "I think they gave us very broad information. …." Some parents also *reported* that medical sources provided information of limited use. Parents F and I both *stated* that they needed to advise their doctors about what to do …

KEYS

Reporting verbs in simple past tense

Short direct quotes

Skip the part that is unnecessary in a quote

A brief overview/summary of the essence of the quote

A long quote (of 40 or more words) → a standalone block of text; do not use quotation marks

Use double quotation marks to enclose any quoted material within a block quotation

Table 3 Using hedges in interpreting findings

In the present study, parents who had first-hand experience with interventions were seen as trustworthy sources by a number of participants. This *appeared to* be linked to the feeling of reassurance offered to participants by knowing that somebody else had been in a similar situation to them, which *may* have provided a sense of hope for the future outcomes for their child. It *may* also be related to the power of anecdotal stories over scientific evidence, which was described by Newman (2003) in reference to decision-making in general … This *indicates* that the information provided to parents regarding interventions *may* be too general and lacking specific guidance. With regard to information provided by medical practitioners, Lynch (2004) and Loomis (2007) both reported that parents felt frustrated that some medical professionals did not provide them with information about CAM interventions for ASD. This is *one possible reason* that the information provided by medical professionals *may* be seen as limited in its usefulness

Table 4 Comparing results with specific examples

A number of parents identified the fact that sources were parents of children with ASD who had first-hand experiences of interventions as reasons for trusting or believing them. *Parent L* explained that other parents were reliable sources of information… *Parent A* identified the fact that her service provider was also a parent of children … *Not all parents, however*, appeared to trust a source simply because they were a parent of a child with ASD. When asked to rate the reliability of other parents, *Parent G* commented … *Many parents* commented on the limited use of information provided by sources, particularly autism advisors and medical sources. *Parent C, for example,* described that the information provided by autism advisors, while accurate, lacked the detail to make it useful… *Parent E held a similar opinion*: 'I think they gave us very broad information … *Some parents* also reported that medical sources provided information of limited use. *Parents F and I both* stated that they needed to advise their doctors about what to do. Parent I saw this as related to the nature of general practice, noting "You need a specialist nowadays for anything that's wrong with you." Other sources that were identified by parents as providing information of limited use were media programs (*Parent F*), service providers (*Parent J*), and the Raising Children Network website (*Parent L*)

Table 5 Relating findings of the study to previous research

Themes emerged regarding why parents trusted certain sources more than others. *This topic has not been explicitly examined in previous research* on parent decision-making regarding ASD interventions. In the present study, parents who had first-hand experience with interventions were seen as trustworthy sources by a number of participants. ..... *It may also be related to the power of anecdotal stories over scientific evidence, which was described by Newman (2003) in reference to decision-making in general …* Parents' views of the usefulness of sources, again, are *an issue not commonly explored in previous research*. Some parents reported that, particularly in relation to autism advisors and medical doctors... ***This was consistent with*** *the data collected in the recent evaluation of the HCWA package …* (ARTD Consultants, 2012). ... *With regard to information provided by medical practitioners, Lynch (2004) and Loomis (2007) both reported* that parents felt frustrated that some medical professionals did not provide them with information about CAM interventions for ASD... Parents described feeling that they had inadequate information to make decisions, yet were expected to do so. *Valentine (2010),* in a study focusing on choice and engagement of parents…, ***also*** *identified* that parents in her study felt that they were forced to make decisions. *Another theme* ***common*** *to both the present study and Valentine (2010)* was that some parents felt overwhelmed with the amount of information provided to them

Table 6 Using words for thematic unity

Factors related to impressions of *reliability and trustworthiness* of sources
A number of parents identified the fact that sources were parents of children with ASD who had firsthand experiences of interventions as reasons for *trusting or believing* them … Parent A identified the fact that her service provider was also a parent of children with ASD as a reason for *trusting the information* she provided about other interventions and services. … When asked to rate the *reliability* of other parents, Parent G commented: "… people like to talk a lot and they like to believe in some imaginary things" … Parents identified that their perception of the intentions of the person providing the information were important in *establishing trust*. When Parent L was asked to identify *reliable sources* she stressed the importance of the source not appearing biased toward a particular approach or type of intervention

2.1.3 Use of Authentic Texts

Instead of creating our own, we use authentic texts to help students understand the discourse conventions of their discipline because these texts familiarize students with their target academic community (Belcher, 2006, p. 138) and showcase the kind of discourse that professionals use for communication in real contexts. Since our ED courses focus on research report writing, we have selected authentic journal articles as source texts for teaching. The majority of the articles we adopt in class come from the databases we specially develop for these ED courses. They provide meaningful exposure to language and therefore have a motivating effect on learners toward the learning of a language (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 161). With the principle of *compelling* comprehensible input (Krashen, 2011), we have selected articles that are interesting and engaging to students contextually, cognitively, and linguistically. They also demonstrate the lexico-grammatical and discursive patterns that we aim to teach. We recognize the fact that there are variations and stylistic differences among writers; therefore, instead of presenting students with only one text, we have deliberately included several texts for analysis. From these articles, we have extracted relevant content and designed instructional tasks to support students' learning, for example,

1. Research designs illustrating how to plan small-scale research projects (Table 7), and
2. Verb choices to state objectives of a study (Table 8).

2.1.4 Experiential Learning

One distinctive feature of HKU's undergraduate curriculum is experiential learning as the University offers both credit bearing and non-credit bearing courses to students and provides opportunities for diverse learning experiences such as overseas exchange, internship, and real-life projects in and outside Hong Kong (University of Hong Kong (HKU), 2018). To give our students the best learning experience possible, these ED courses integrate an experiential learning component which allows students to make sense of the theoretical knowledge that they have acquired from,

Table 7 Research design—outlining a research plan

Authors	David Carless and Ricky Lam
Topic	Assessment
Issue(s) to focus on	The perspectives on assessment of lower primary school students in Hong Kong
Project title	The examined life: Perspectives of lower primary school students in Hong Kong
Main points and arguments of existing literature	• Testing exerts power over students' behaviors and experiences, and how they are perceived or classified as individuals. It can not only lead to feelings of satisfaction or achievement but can also prompt anxiety or generate threats to self-esteem
	• Reay and Wiliam (1999) show the powerful impact of standardized tests on children's lives in Britain. Drawing on classroom observations, individual and focus group interviews with year 6 students, they develop a picture of strong currents of fear and anxiety related to testing, with students expressing a perception that a test can make a single definitive statement about the sort of person they are
	• High school students in Queensland revealed that they were mainly positive about their assessment experiences in primary schools but over the course of secondary schooling, they became increasingly negative about the nature of assessment and concerned about its impact on their lives (Moni, Van Kraayenoord, & Baker, 2002)
	• Students in Hong Kong do indeed generally work hard, but they seem to do this in order to obtain good examination scores and appease significant family members, more than due to interest in learning for its own sake (Pong & Chow, 2002)
	• Internal school assessments are generally taken very seriously by schools, teachers, students, and parents in Hong Kong. It has been claimed that there is an almost religious fervor surrounding examinations in Hong Kong (Kennedy et al. 2008)
Research gap(s)	• The modest literature in relation to assessment in Hong Kong primary schools has mainly focused on teacher implementation of formative assessment (e.g., Carless, 2005; Tang et al. 2010), with little quality research on the student response to assessment
	• Few studies have focused on lower primary school students
Research objectives	• To identify the perspectives on assessment of a sample of lower primary school students in Hong Kong
Research significance/ justification for the study	• Individuals are defined and dominated by tests (Hanson, 1993). In view of trends internationally for more accountability and more testing (Black & Wiliam, 2005), the issue of how students respond to tests is highly relevant to the international educational community
	• How lower primary school students react to testing is particularly important because if early experiences of assessment or schooling are negative, this can impede young learners from developing the capacities and dispositions required for a successful school career
	• There is a consensus that assessment can afford students a sense of success in that high levels of achievement often lead to positive self-esteem (Black, 1998). However, despite performing well on international tests of achievement, such as TIMSS or PIRLS, students in Hong Kong seem to carry perceptions of low self-efficacy (House, 2003; Shen & Tam, 2008). This potential disjunction between high achievement and a low sense of self-worth makes the perspectives of Hong Kong students particularly worth exploring

(continued)

Table 7 (continued)

Authors	David Carless and Ricky Lam
Research questions	• How does a sample of lower primary school students in Hong Kong perceive their experience of assessment?
Research methods	• Semi-structured focus group interviews
	• Picture drawing

Table 8 Writing research objectives: Choice of verbs

Examples of research objective statements
• The purpose of this study was to examine an insider's perspective on communication in multiple sclerosis (MS), a disease of the central nervous system in which scattered lesions or plaques produce varying combinations of motor, sensory, and/or cognitive impairments
• The aim of this grounded theory study was to explore adult patients' experienced meaning of living with CIs. The aim was also to gain a deeper insight into the subjective experiences of the effects of CIs on the quality of life
• The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe and understand the communicative impact of perceived experiences of laypersons listening to one of six speech samples of an adult male reading the first paragraph of the Rainbow Passage. Further, this study was designed to discover and understand how perceptions were generally encoded as well as changed across various levels along a fluency-disfluency continuum
When developing purpose statements, avoid using biased verbs such as ***demonstrate***, ***prove*** and ***show***. Use unbiased verbs such as ***compare***, ***describe***, ***develop***, ***discover***, ***explore***, ***test*** and ***understand***.
✓ The purpose of the study was to ***explore*** the effects of music therapy on speech recovery in …
✗ The purpose of the study was to ***prove*** that music therapy improves speech recovery in …

Examples of research objective verbs	
Qualitative methods	Quantitative methods
Ethnographic Assess, describe, examine, understand	***Correlation*** Determine, examine, identify, understand
Grounded theory Develop, extend, identify, validate	***Descriptive*** Compare, contrast, describe, identify
Phenomenological Describe, develop, generate, understand	***Experimental*** Determine, examine, investigate, measure

Houser, J. (2015). *Nursing research: Reading, using, and creating evidence* (3rd ed.). Burlington: Jones & Bartlett Learning

for example, their major courses and examine it from a real-world perspective. This provides them with an opportunity to see things in a practical light by conducting a small-scale research project and listening to the stories of information-rich professionals in their field (see the project description in Table 9).

In the 2017–2018 academic year, students conducted empirical research on a wide range of disciplinary topics by interacting with professionals such as teachers, parents, speech therapists, and web designers to gain valuable insight on how theory is integrated with practice. Titles of some research projects conducted are presented in Table 10.

Table 9 Project description in ED for Information Management Students

Individually or in groups of two to four, you will conduct a small-scale research project in the field of Information Management. You may want to identify an interesting, important, and/or controversial issue relevant to your interest, learning, and/or personal experience. Here are some areas you may work on:
✓ E-textbooks and e-learning
✓ Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
✓ Online social networking sites
✓ Mobile applications
✓ Database systems
✓ Digital libraries
✓ E-commerce
✓ Data-mining
∗For more research ideas, please refer to the journal articles in our online database (https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0IQTlnsqlLlUVNwbk1hYm5ISEU)
You will explore the issue by interviewing two or more information-rich people related to your chosen topic, for example:
✓ Students and teachers in primary or secondary schools
✓ Researchers and academics in tertiary institutions and other organizations
✓ Graduates of BSc (IM)
✓ Librarians
✓ Designers of mobile apps
✓ Online shoppers
✓ IT specialists and security administrators
Individually, you will analyze the information you collect and present your findings in an oral presentation and in a formal report

It is worth noting that during the process of conducting these investigative projects, students manage their own learning, evaluate their own efforts and devise further plans. These projects have considerable potential to enhance students' meta-cognitive skills by giving them an opportunity to conduct a qualitative study from the beginning to the end, thereby providing them with an experience that helps build their knowledge.

Experiential learning generally refers to "learning by doing." Kolb, in his book, "Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development" (1984), defines learning as the process whereby "knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it" (p. 41). According to Kolb's cyclical process of experiential learning, concrete experiences, such as the ones students engage in during the process of their research—identifying and reaching out to interviewees, drafting interview questions, conducting interviews, recording and transcribing interviews, adhering to research ethics, etc.—provide the linguistic (e.g., language of interviewing) as well as non-linguistic information (e.g., about independent learning or time management) about their ED course that serves as a basis for reflection.

Table 10 Titles of selected student research projects (2017–2018)

Education	• Assisting newly-arrived students from mainland China in Hong Kong schooling effectively: Teachers' perspectives
	• The power of proximity: Peer influence on students' learning in the classroom
	• English as medium of instruction: Difficulties encountered in content subjects by secondary school students in Hong Kong
	• Will teaching passion decay—fresh teachers' and experienced teachers' perspectives in Hong Kong
	• Effects of expectations of teachers and parents on students' academic performance
Information management	• The impact of the use of telegram on friendship
	• Hong Kong students' perceptions on massive open online courses
	• Experience of researchers in the use of Scopus vs web of science
	• Order via screen: Exploring the perceptions and factors influencing customers' intention to use self-service kiosks in catering service
	• Hong Kong university students' perceptions on WeChat pay
Speech and hearing sciences	• Perceptions of students with hearing impairment in Hong Kong mainstream and special secondary schools
	• Parents' perspectives on dyslexia treatment and intervention in Hong Kong
	• Impacts of sign language on academic studies and social engagement of deaf adolescents: An educator's perspective
	• How do parenting styles affect the effectiveness of social skills interventions for children with autism spectrum disorder?
	• Hong Kong adolescents who stutter: What hampers the treatment process?
Applied child development	• Attributes of good kindergarten teachers in Hong Kong
	• Kindergarten teachers' reflections on their interaction with children after introducing a tablet into the classroom
	• Therapeutic value of art on children with autism
	• Parents' strategies in handling children's behavioral problems
	• The practice of empathy and global citizenship in Hong Kong kindergartens

Students often reflect on these experiences not only on their own but also while discussing their project with their teacher and peers, and even while formally presenting their research. From these reflections, they can assimilate the information they gain and consequently form abstract concepts about language, their discipline as well as the world at large, which are not identical to what is taught in the classroom but tweaked with their own particular experience-based outlook. Students then use these to develop their own unique theories, which they test through other activities in different situations. Hence, the experiential learning dimension of these ED courses provides the conditions where students can explore new knowledge in a safe environment, reflect on their learning, and get guidance from their teachers and peers to integrate experience with reflection.

Table 11 A summary of the assessment tasks

Research project					
Written report			Oral presentation		
Research plan	Draft	Final	Practice task	Rehearsal	Final
(500 words)	(1250 words)	(2500 words)	(10 min/pair)	(6 min)	(6 min)
(Week 3, 0%)	(Week 7, 20%)	(Week 12, 50%)	(Weeks 1–6, 0%)	(Week 11, 0%)	(Week 12, 30%)

Table 12 Oral presentation practice task

This task is designed to help you
1. Identify your strengths and weaknesses in academic oral presentation;
2. Understand the grading criteria for the assessed oral presentation in Week 12; and
3. Enrich the knowledge of your audience about a particular topic in your discipline
You will work in pairs and **present a research article in your discipline**. You shall talk about
1. What was the purpose of the research?
2. How was the research conducted?
3. What were the major findings?
4. What are the major conclusions and implications?
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the research?
You can choose **one article** the database of articles in your discipline at https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B0IQTlnsqlLlNFRsNVZUcG1NLTg
Each pair has **10 min** for this presentation and **5 min to answer questions** raised by the audience. You may use **visual aids**

2.1.5 Assessment for Learning

Good practices in assessment, such as aligning assessment tasks in an ED course with students' academic language needs in their disciplinary studies, form an important basis for effective teaching and learning (Dudley-Evans, 2001, p. 135). With a focus on research report writing and academic oral presentation skills in the course learning outcomes, these four ED courses assess students' performance in a range of writing and speaking tasks. These tasks include writing a research plan, a draft report, and a final report as well as oral presentation practice, presentation rehearsal, and presentation assessment (see Table 11 for an overview of the assessment tasks).

To assist students to produce quality work and achieve the necessary standards in the assessed components of the course, we have designed many reading, writing, and speaking activities which target the course learning outcomes to support students' learning throughout the course. Examples include formulating researchable topics related to the discipline, practicing techniques for researching the topic, analyzing linguistic and stylistic features of academic reports, strengthening arguments through in-text citation and referencing, and presenting academic ideas coherently in spoken discourse. Table 12 presents an oral presentation practice task that prepares students for their assessed oral presentation at the end of the one-semester course.

Table 13 Research report (draft) checklist

Preliminary matter			
Title	Research area + research focus + research context/participants	Yes	No
	An informative and concise title	Yes	No
The main body			
Sections	All sections have clear headings and sub-headings	Yes	No
Introduction (and literature review)	Background of the research topic—a significant, meaningful, interesting, problematic, and/or controversial topic	Yes	No
	Definition of key terms (using in-text citation)	Yes	No
	Rational/need for the project (Previous research → Research gap)	Yes	No
	– Up-to-date literature reviewed	Yes	No
	– Both local and international studies reviewed	Yes	No
	Purpose of the project/Research questions	Yes	No
Methods	Sources of data	Yes	No
	Interview: *format, language used, duration, recorded?*	Yes	No
	Profile of the interviewee: *who and how they were selected, relevant information such as years of working experience and qualifications*	Yes	No
	Major questions/issues covered	Yes	No
Findings and discussion	Major findings organized logically (themes or research questions)	Yes	No
	Relevant information and representative examples (e.g., quotes) from the data presented to illustrate arguments	Yes	No
	Voice of researchers (analysis and interpretation of findings with reference to subject knowledge, including previous literature and the research context) – Linking, comparing, confirming, refuting, explaining	Yes	No
End matter			
References	APA format (Surname, initials of names. (Year)… Publisher/Journal (vol. issue, page no.)	Yes	No
Appendix	Interview guide	Yes	No
Language			
Accuracy	Carefully proofread	Yes	No
Style	Academic/formal	Yes	No

Following the principle of assessment for learning, we provide formative feedback (in several stages for each assessment) before the summative assessment. For example, we read students' draft reports and provide extensive constructive feedback as to how they can improve the quality of their work. We also organize face-to-face consultations with them either individually or in pairs to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their work. When reading the drafts, we use a checklist that displays the key features of a research report (see Table 13). While discussing students' work with reference to this checklist, we often address individual student's specific questions about these features. Information gathered about students' strengths and weaknesses in report writing in these meetings are then taken into

Table 14 Student evaluation of course quality

Course quality questions	Mean
Learning outcomes:	
After completing this course I am better able to-	
• Communicate an argument to an academic audience in report writing with appropriate organizational and rhetorical skills	78.2
• Identify, evaluate, and synthesize appropriate academic sources in an academic report	79.4
• Articulate coherent ideas with appropriate linguistic devices in an academic oral setting	79.7
Activities:	
The following course activities were useful in helping me to learn-	
• The online database of research articles in Education is useful	76.5
• The oral presentation practice task is useful	77.0
• The materials for research design are useful	78.4
• The materials for report writing are useful	80.4
• The materials for oral presentation skills are useful	76.5
• Conducting a small-scale project is helpful for my disciplinary studies	78.2
• Writing a research plan is helpful	78.2
• Writing a report draft is helpful	80.1
• Consultation with the teacher is useful	87.3
• Teacher's feedback on my work is useful	88.2

consideration for subsequent instructional decisions, supporting teaching, and learning in a natural and engaging way (Black & Wiliam, 2009, p. 9).

2.2 *Student Evaluation of Courses*

Student evaluation of course effectiveness, which takes into account learning outcomes and activities, written and online materials, assessment tasks, relevance of courses to the subject areas as well as transferability of the skills taught in these courses to their disciplinary studies, has been consistently high at approximately 80% (cf. around 70% for CAES average for all English courses offered to students of HKU in an academic year). As an example, student evaluation of the ED course for Education students, taken by 117 students in the first semester of the 2016–2017 academic year, is presented in Table 14.

The following qualitative feedback from students illustrates their views on key aspects of the course.

1. **Overall course design and teaching approaches**

   - *Comprehensive and useful course materials. Useful research report checklist.*
   - *Very good and useful research samples in the course booklet.*

- *The database is well organized and easy for us to search for articles.*
- *Can enhance our writing and presentation skills.*
- *Useful report writing skills.*
- *A lot of opportunities for us to speak English and discuss our academic writing with the course teacher. I like the report writing skills taught in this course.*
- *This course does effectively enhance students' ability to write an academic report by teaching very specific academic English skills. I really appreciated it.*
- *The course was well-developed and I got so much improvement in report writing and oral presentation.*
- *Good training on our critical and logical thinking.*
- *Learned to conduct a small-scale study.*
- *Gained more knowledge about doing research.*
- *The assessments of this course were highly related to the content covered in class, thus giving us the opportunity of applying our knowledge and skills.*
- *We are given specific guidance and instructions throughout the course for further learning.*
- *The course has given clear and thorough guidelines in guiding the students to complete the required tasks.*

2. **Course design/content in relation to disciplinary studies**

- *Providing an insight for students to conduct a small-scale educational project.*
- *The content is very specific to our major, so everything learnt will be useful in the future.*
- *The overall contents are specific to education students and highly relevant to our disciplinary studies.*
- *Very useful content. Can immediately apply to other courses.*
- *I learn how to use different techniques to do a report which I can apply in different courses.*
- *The opportunity to investigate something related to Education was also helpful in our roles as prospective teachers.*
- *Rich and helpful materials. The topics are related to speech and hearing sciences and interesting.*
- *Preparing me to write a research paper later in my chosen major.*
- *The strategies and mechanism taught were useful to my final year project.*
- *I was able to research on a speech-related topic of my own interest.*
- *It helps me to explore more in the speech and hearing fields.*

3. **Teacher feedback and consultation**

- *There are many feedback sessions from the teacher, which improved my writing.*
- *Consultation sessions offered by the lecturer helped me spot my weaknesses.*
- *The drafts and rehearsal were useful for collecting feedback. The draft, being a kind of formative assessment, provided students with useful feedback.*

- *Feedback provided before the final assessment prepared us for the final presentation and report.*

Students have also identified a few areas for improvement in these courses. A recurring suggestion is the provision of examples of student work in addition to the sample journal articles analyzed in class (which are written by scholars and expert writers). This suggestion is highly sensible, given that student work can demonstrate the reality of language use in the genre of *student* research report that they are expected to produce. We have accordingly annotated some A-grade student reports and made them available to students (see one such example in Table 15).

3 Course Developers' Reflections

Since the launch of these ED courses in September 2012, it has been observed that although they could provide sufficient language support to students, there are significant challenges in developing and running these courses. The challenges center on the issue of specificity in disciplinary communication, collaboration with faculty teachers, and language teachers' expertise.

3.1 Fostering Specific Academic Literacy for Disciplinary Studies

The four ED courses introduced in this paper aim to develop students' research report writing and academic oral presentation skills using authentic disciplinary research articles as sources of input. Although research reports and oral presentations are two essential genres that students of these four subject areas need to master, this focus also means that these courses are not fully able to address issues of discipline specificity (Hyland, 2017a, p. 5) as conventions of academic communication in language patterns and discourse practices differ considerably across disciplines. Other types of genres, for example, reflective journals and classroom English in education, reports on quantitative research in speech and hearing sciences, and acquisition of specialist terms in information management, are not covered in these courses. Even in the teaching of research report writing itself, finer features specific to a particular discipline, such as the use of self-mentions, boosters, and attitude markers are often not analyzed. We plan to include these features when we next revise the courses while bearing in mind the packed schedule and intense nature of these courses.

Table 15 A-grade student report with teacher comments

Title of the report:
Significant internal factors leading to the success of academically high-achieving high school students in Hong Kong: from students' perspective
1. Introduction
[Para 1] A great deal of research has been carried out to investigate the relationship between students' high academic performance and internal factors [S1]. The internal factors which the current article focused on are academic self-concepts, personality and learning attitude, which are the major and controversial ones (Ayodele, 2016) [S2]. Finding out the internal factors is pivotal as it well predicts students' academic achievement so that different teaching strategies can be developed (Gian, Michele, Guido, Maria, & Claudio, 2011), while understanding how these factors lead to students' academic success helps students to improve their performance [S3]
[Para 2] Although the topic has received a lot of attention, there is no consensus among scholars on the significant internal factors that affect students' academic achievement [S4]. A number of previous studies found that academic self-concepts (e.g. Williams & Williams, 2010), students' personality (e.g. Mari & Satu, 2015), and learning attitudes (e.g. Li, 2012) significantly correlate with their academic achievement by affecting their behavior (Dramanu & Balarabe, 2013), self-regulation (Komarraju & Karau, 2005), and academic aspiration (Gian et al., 2011) [S5]. Yet, some researchers do not regard these internal factors as significant predictors of students' academic performance (e.g. Otunuku & Brown, 2007) [S3]. This has sparked a heated debate on the major internal factors that contribute to high academic achievement and thus further research is needed [S6]
[Para 3] The aim of this paper is to identify what the major internal factors leading to students' high academic achievement are and how they lead to students' academic success by interviewing Hong Kong students who got 30 marks or above in their best 5 subjects in HKDSE [S7]. They are regarded as high achievers as only approximately 1.5% candidates could get 30 marks or above in HKDSE (e.g., HKEAA, 2013) [S8]. Despite the fact that the three major personal factors were well investigated overseas, there is still disagreement among the various studies and the situation in Hong Kong is under-explored [S9]. This study therefore focuses on Hong Kong context so as to contribute to the current studies by filling these gaps [S10]
Teachers' comments:
• Title is clear but could be more concise, for instance, 'Hong Kong High Achievers, Academic Success and Role of Internal Factors: A Students' Perspective'. Try to use nominalization
• S1 serves as the background showing how much research attention this topic has attracted and consequently its significance. Note that the writer highlights the significance of the research in several sections, and often several times in one section. This is expected but has to be done without seeming repetitive. The introduction section of this report succeeds in doing so
• S2 clarifies the meaning of 'internal factors' and in doing so also implicitly defines the term
• S3 highlights the significance of the research
• Use 'plenty of' or 'much' rather than 'a lot of' in S4. Academic writing is formal.
• S5 overviews existing literature while presenting competing perspectives on the issue
• S6 explains the controversy/debate in the field emphasizing the importance of the topic
• Para. 3 is extremely well written. Note how the writer presents the research aims, methods, selection criteria of participants, significance of the research as well as the research gap, i.e. the area that has been relatively neglected by scholars. As the last paragraph of the intro section it simultaneously provides a brief overview of the report to inform readers about the scope of the study and what's coming next

3.2 Collaboration with Disciplinary Teachers

The input of disciplinary staff is clearly central to the development of these ED courses, and we will continue to strengthen the collaboration with them and seek their input into course objectives and content that serve to reflect subject area needs. Researchers (e.g., Dudley-Evans, 2001, p. 135), however, have reminded that we, as ED or more generally ESP teachers, should not only interpret the way that faculty teachers communicate information in lectures or interpret their expectations and practices when marking assignments. Instead, we could advise disciplinary teachers on the effectiveness of their communication and also enable students to clarify/question points that lecturers have not made clear (135). More importantly, ED/ESP courses should not be regarded by the University and faculty teachers as subordinate to content courses or subordinate to research in light of the worldwide tendency to attach excessive importance to research in tertiary institutions. We have taken measures to promote the value of our courses by visiting faculties and showing the centrality of academic literacy to teaching and learning in university.

3.3 ED Teachers' Expertise

In writing about the kinds of knowledge and skills that distinguish teachers from other professions, Shulman (2018) has recently proposed the notion of *pedagogical content knowledge* and *pedagogical context knowledge*. Both kinds of knowledge are essential for teachers to acquire, analyze, and teach the conventional discourse patterns used in academic and professional communities. They also exert profound influence on the supervision of students' experiential learning projects where teachers are expected to guide students in conducting a small-scale research study in their subject area, including identifying a researchable topic, collecting information from participants, writing about data and making claims. Although as developers and teachers on these courses we are mostly trained and experienced in the field of education, our modest knowledge of the other three disciplines, i.e., information management, early childhood education, and speech and hearing sciences, point to the urgent need for active teacher learning in these areas with appropriate institutional support.

4 Conclusion

The development of these four ED courses exemplifies how faculty teachers contribute to needs analysis and material production, and how the genre approach with text analysis assists students in learning the ways of structuring and presenting discourse in a particular discipline. It also illustrates how the project-based experiential approach enriches students' learning in the target communities. In order to increase the language support made available to students for their socialization into academic and professional communities, we will further explore features of other genres (e.g., reflective writing, classroom English, and lab reports) and interactive devices (e.g., self-mentions, boosters, and attitude markers) that students need to master for comprehension and production purposes. We will also continue to seek constructive feedback and input from subject teachers and help language teachers develop expertise in teaching these ED courses. Future research can examine the effectiveness of these ED courses on students' learning at university with a focus on students' abilities to transfer the skills they have learnt in these courses to their disciplinary studies.

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Exploratory Practice in an Intensive English Language Bridging Course for Foreign Nursing Students: Thinking in English

Irene Khng

Abstract This chapter presents the background and language learning experience in an intensive language program conducted for Asian students offered a scholarship to undertake their training in nursing before they begin their core nursing program in their School of Health Sciences in the institution. With the intensity of such programs, these classrooms are akin to living laboratories, and one can only gain insights and a greater understanding of the processes that the students undergo as they acquire their target language, their strategies, weaknesses and so forth. As the students will ultimately be working in the hospitals and health-related institutions, there is an urgency that the students' language learning experience is effective. This chapter proposes that students could work on a fifth skill, i.e. **thinking in English**, as they draw on the four skills in language acquisition, that is, listening, speaking, reading and writing. The chapter also covers the basic structure of the program in this class which immerses students in their target language where the four skills are integrated in a content-appropriate instruction. Data to date is drawn from an analysis of students' writing, observation of students in class and excerpts of their sharing of their personal experience with the language learning experience. Research here explores what is meant by thinking skills.

1 Introduction

In her article, 'Current Perspectives on Teaching the Four Skills', Hinkel (2006) discusses one development in the teaching of a second language (L2), that is, 'integrated and multiskill instruction' (110) which embraces the communicative approach but places a greater emphasis on the integrated instruction of what has traditionally been taught as discrete skills, such as L2 foundational skills, i.e. listening, speaking,

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reading and writing (113–126).[1] However, this approach has to meet certain challenges such as improving accuracy in language production despite fluent communication (Hinkel, 2006, 2010). The issues of integrated instruction and its challenges resonate with the experiences of learners in a classroom conducted for Asian students offered a scholarship to pursue a nursing program. Lessons in this class had evolved over time into one that integrated instruction of L2 skills through the use of more content appropriate materials. This chapter explores if learners could harness a fifth skill, i.e. **thinking in English**, to facilitate language acquisition. It will describe the classroom's immersion experience where L2 skills were taught through the medium of content. It will explore what it means **to think in English**. The chapter also presents the research methodology from which data was drawn and a discussion of the findings.

1.1 Background

The English Language Bridging Course (ELBC) in this study is held once a year. It began first as an ESL program for the foreign Asian students who had been offered a scholarship in Singapore to undertake a 3-year Diploma in Health Sciences (Nursing) course at the institution. The objective was to prepare these students for their mainstream core program at the institution. All the students went through the same selection criteria when they were first offered a scholarship.

There are three to five classes each year with a maximum of 20 students in a class. Classes are conducted at the same period of time each year. The course is intensive and a class would run daily for 8 hours (6 days a week) for 14 weeks. These students come more specifically from mainland China, Myanmar, Vietnam and Indonesia, where English is a foreign language rather than a second language. Students attend this program before they begin their core program in the School of Health Sciences at the institution. Thus they move from an environment where English was taught as a foreign language (henceforth referred to as EFL) to a classroom where English is taught as a second language (ESL). Here they are prepared for a transition from an ESL environment to the mainstream core program in the educational system where English is the first language and the language of instruction.

In the ELBC for the nursing scholars, all the classes work with the same course materials and they have the same syllabus. In the course, there is an emphasis on verbal communicative skills as well as interpersonal skills. When the students begin their nursing program, they should be ready for lectures, group discussions, research assignments and class presentations. They are assessed on their assignments, presentations and examinations. Finally, the students begin their first clinical attachment

[1] For a more comprehensive discussion on how the four language skills came to be taught as separate skills, see Hinkel (2010).

8 weeks after they begin their core program where they are assigned to elder care centres and polyclinics. Eventually they will be attached to the hospital which sponsored them. Clinical attachments (between 2 and 4 weeks) take place during their vacation between academic semesters at the institution until they graduate.

1.2 Research Questions

(a) What is meant by 'thinking in English'? What does thinking in the target language involve?
(b) How does 'thinking in English' facilitate language learning?
(c) How is 'thinking in English' reflected in students' communication?

2 The Theoretical Framework of the Study: The Classroom

This study was conducted in only one research-oriented class in the midst of three to five classes in the ELBC program in a year. Research in this class has been ongoing and the course in this class as such moved from an essentially ESL focus using mainly communicative language teaching to the current situation when the study integrated the foundational L2 skills in a content-appropriate environment. Apart from the course materials and common syllabus that all the classes in the ELBC program share, this research-oriented class was conducted first and foremost as an immersion program working with integrated L2 instruction in a content-oriented class. Thus this section will review the core principles of immersion and integrated L2 instruction in a content-appropriate language learning classroom. Finally, the proposed skill in 'thinking in English' will be explored.

2.1 An Immersion Experience

Amidst the multitude of theories in second language (L2) teaching and learning, the first decision in this program for the class was to create an environment where learners would be immersed[2] in the target language. The term 'immersion' was first used in bilingual education in Canada referring to a situation where the second language was used as a medium of instruction for learners who have the same linguistic and cultural background (Cummins & Swain, 1986, p. 8). Since then, however, the term 'immersion' has led to variations in the program, such as total immersion, partial

[2] See Genesee (1991, 1994) and Cummins and Swain (1986) for a more comprehensive discussion on immersion issues.

and dual language programs which vary in design and delivery. Found principally in Canada and the United States, these programs also provide education in second languages such as French, Japanese and Chinese immersion (Genesee, 1994; Snow, 2001).

When the immersion programs were first introduced, they introduced considerable changes in an effort to make bilingual education effective. Hence the initial description of the term ‘immersion’ needs to be revisited when it is used in the teaching of a second and foreign language, such as the context that learners have to have the same linguistic and cultural background. The idea of ‘immersion’ was appealing and the immersion model appeared in second and foreign language education as well with the principle idea that the second language was used as a medium of instruction in the classroom (Genesee, 1994; Luan & Guo, 2011, p. 152). The success of immersion programs was contagious as students in the immersion programs were known to be more functionally proficient in L2 compared to those students who were receiving L2 instruction in any other form, such as learning L2 as a separate language (Genesee, 1994). However, further intense assessments of the immersion programs also revealed that there were weaknesses in terms of the students’ weak linguistic performance because the programs did not focus specifically on language skills, for example.[3]

Unlike the standard observations made of the drawbacks of the immersion program that language development is disregarded, there was a great effort in the classroom under study to focus on linguistic forms as well. Errors were allowed and corrected along the way. ‘Errors in language production are not seen as bad … the learner is seen as progressing through a series of interlanguage stages toward full target language proficiency’ Genesee (1991, p. 185). Errors were highlighted to learners who corrected them and reproduced the written discourse again with the corrections.

According to Genesee (1991, 1994), implicit in the immersion model is the integration of L2 instruction with instruction in academic or other content matter. Research has shown that this is a more effective approach than teaching L2 as a subject on its own or in isolation. Thus L2 is a means to participate in academic discussions, for example, and to achieve academic goals. ‘Proficiency in the target language is not seen as a prerequisite to communication or academic development but rather as a co-requisite. It is a means to an end’ (Genesee, 1991, p. 185).

In a further example, Luan and Guo (2011) conducted a 1-year study in an institution of higher learning which used the traditional grammar-translation approach that eventually led to L1 being used as the working language in English lessons. The immersion model was applied in an experiment involving 70 EFL learners. Students in the experimental group were found to be highly motivated after the program ended and continued with reading extensively as well as using the English language

[3] See extensive literature on form-focused instruction in L2 acquisition, e.g. Doughty, Catherine, and Williams, Jessica (eds) (1998) Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition; Ellis, R. (2001) Form-Focused Instruction and Second Language Learning: Language Learning Monograph.

to communicate. They were more confident in their use of the English language and ‘the English way of thinking’ (155).

2.2 Integrating the Four Language Skills in a Content-Appropriate Class Instruction

The immersion model is often used synonymously with content-based teaching. Prior to the immersion approach, the word ‘content’ would have referred to the grammatical structures or vocabulary taught in the traditional EFL/ESL classroom, for example, or language learning activities in another language program. In this study, content in the immersion program refers to ‘the use of subject matter for second/foreign language teaching purposes’ (Snow, 2001, p. 303). This may include topics or themes in an EFL/ESL classroom. In a content-based program in school, math, science or social sciences for example, could be conducted through the medium of an L2 (Crandall & Tucker, 1990, p. 86). Hence the content-based approach is particularly popular in English for Specific Purposes (ESP)[4] for occupational fields such as the health sciences, business and management studies, where the instructional goal to prepare students for the academic tasks they need is more clearly defined (Snow, 2001, p. 303).

There are several models of content-based instruction,[5] but this study was conducted in a class using content as a vehicle to teach language. Mets (1999, p. 7 in Snow, 2001, p. 305; Howard, 2006, p. 70) suggests that content-based instruction could also be viewed as a continuum with ‘content-driven’ courses on one end and ‘language driven’ courses at the other extreme end with the other models indicating different levels of language and content-driven instruction located along the continuum. In line with the principles of this approach, this course was organised with a core subject matter, i.e. the health sciences. The class used a standard language course book for nurses which proposed 14 themes drawn from the medical field. Prepared as a standard ESL course book, the ESL activities supported the four L2 skills. This ensured that there was a standard framework in terms of medical expressions, specific language structures, vocabulary and issues that all the students in the ELBC had to cover.

The use of the course book took only about 10% of the overall class time in the class under study. Apart from the course book, a principal activity in this class that was content-oriented, for example, was the news presentation. Each learner had to select an article from the newspapers, read, summarise and present it in class. There were two sets of local newspapers, one of which was in simpler English. The articles

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[4] See Grabe, W. & Stoller, F.L (1997, p. 17) on the success of content-based instruction in ESP programs. See Johns (1997, pp. 363–366) on the relationship between ESP and content-based instruction.

[5] See Snow (2001, pp. 305–310, 2010, pp. 294–701) for a more comprehensive review of these models.

were on health/medical issues or the environment. Allowing the learners to select the article was an attempt to give them room to select an article of their interest and their language proficiency. A schedule was drawn up where three learners would present their news every day. Within this time slot, learners could choose their preferred date. The idea behind this was that the learner who needed more time would choose to present at a later date while those who were comparatively more proficient and up to the challenge of completing their assignment sooner could opt to present earlier. Preparation for the news presentation was done as homework to allow learners to work on their own time as much as possible. Reading takes time. This exercise ran throughout the program when the study was conducted.

This course, however, was content-oriented rather than content-based as other activities supporting the four language skills did not draw specifically from the health sciences for content, such as the field trips and the movies. Most of the materials used in the class were authentic and specific to the needs of the learners who were preparing to join the mainstream program in the health sciences. The ultimate goal was to keep a fine balance between acquiring language skills appropriate for their studies and at the same time acquiring communication skills so that they would be functional outside the environment of the school and workplace.

Thus in this study, content in the health sciences and medical issues was accessed and practised through the medium of the four skills as shown in the matrix below. Content provided a substantial platform which offered a meaningful discussion, motivation for learners to want to know more, meaningful vocabulary, relevant grammar and experiences that might be helpful to them in their near future. In the process of engaging with the content, learners exercised the four L2 skills.

In second or foreign language instruction and learning, the teaching of the four L2 skills is the basis on which classroom curriculum, materials, activities and so forth are organised.[6] When this study first began, there was an effort to integrate the instruction and use of the four language skills in language learning so that when there was a focus on one skill, one or two of the other skills were also in use. The teaching of integrated skills is defined as 'the teaching of the language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking in conjunction with each other as when a lesson involves activities that relate listening and speaking to reading and writing' (*Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*, 1988, p. 44, in Hinkel, 2010). The rationale behind this decision was that it was helpful to begin language instruction and learning with these four language skills which have been identified as foundational in the acquisition of L2 at the basic level, but in the longer term, 'language comprehension and production does not in fact take place in discrete "units" ' (Hinkel, 2010). Hence these foundational skills needed to be integrated and not taught indefinitely as discrete skills.

[6] See Hinkel (2010) and Oxford (2001) for further discussion on how the four L2 skills were segregated in the first place.

2.3 Thinking Skills in L2 Teaching and Learning and from the Perspective of Cognitive Psychology and the Educational Sector

Marzano (1991, p. 3) proposes that 'learning involves the construction of meaning' particularly in the initial stages of acquiring information. This resonates with Jones, Tinzmann, Friedman, and Walker's (1987) study that learners construct meaning when they communicate, and it is part of the process of thinking. Vygotsky (1986, p. 7, 212) states that 'real communication requires meaning … A word without meaning is an empty sound; meaning, therefore, is a criterion of 'word,' an indispensable component'. As the word 'meaning' is a 'phenomenon of thinking' (212), it is inevitable that language teaching and learning will lead learners to 'think' in a matter of time as they are being equipped with the tools to express themselves. However, the L2 language classroom has often stopped short of taking learners the one step further that they need to go to utilise fully the skills that they have been acquiring. Perhaps Hinkel's (2006, p. 110) comment that recent trends show a 'decline in methods' could be revisited, and if the material and classroom experience is made meaningful to the learner, these methods may be revisited.

At the very basic level, as learners acquire their L2, they attempt to articulate their target language, and listen, read and write as discrete skills. Each of these activities needs to be processed as the skill develops. At this point, 'thinking' starts. Thus when a learner is asked a question, such as 'How are you?', the response could be 'Fine'. The act of listening to the question in the target language, and responding in the target language, having listened to the question, requires some form of 'thinking'. The learner's response could also have been considered a learned automatic response that did not require any 'thinking' at the point of response, so this is not 'thinking' but a learned rote response.[7] So when teachers request learners to 'think' in English, it is a request to generate a response in English or to plan a speech or a piece of writing in English. Thinking is a natural cognitive process or we would be machines that have been computed to respond to certain linguistic cues and so our response would have been mindless.

Looking beyond the foundational language skills, educational and cognitive psychology posit that language learning involves cognitive processes such as 'perceiving, reasoning, remembering, understanding, judging, problem solving and inferring … Learning, producing, comprehending, and remembering language are cognitive processes' (Taylor, 1990, p. 19; Snow, 2001, p. 304). In Benjamin Bloom's well-known hierarchy of thinking skills, most of these cognitive processes just cited are considered lower order thinking skills and some reflect higher order thinking skills. Ideally, in the educational setting, students would move from the lower to the higher order thinking skills as part of their learning process.

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[7] Taylor explains the term 'automaticity' as follows: "Rote does not involve analysis and is a quick and easy way to acquire linguistic items. Even patterned and rule-governed items, such as phrases and sentences, may be rote memorized by toddlers" (1990, p. 234).

Table 1 Bloom's revised taxonomy

Higher order thinking skills	
Creating	Making, designing, constructing, planning, producing, inventing
Evaluating	Checking, hypothesising, experimenting, judging, testing, monitoring
Analysing	Comparing, organising, outlining, finding, structuring, integrating
Applying	Implementing, carrying out, using
Understanding	Comparing, explaining, classifying, exemplifying, summarising
Remembering	Recognising, listing, describing, identifying, retrieving, naming, finding, defining
Lower order thinking skills	

From Brewster (2009) Thinking Skills for CLIL, Onestopenglish

Kendall et al. (2008, p. 4) identify the thinking and learning skills that 'students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate from high school and what they need to accomplish along the way to meet these goals'. Examples of these skills have been tabulated below (Kendall et al., 2008, p. 2). These skills are comparable to Bloom's hierarchy of cognitive skills listed in Table 1.

In another context, for example, the revised National Curriculum (DfEE, 1999) in England, 'includes thinking skills in its rationale, stating that thinking skills are essential in learning how to learn. The list of thinking skills contains: **information-processing, reasoning, enquiring, creative thinking and evaluating'** (Klimova, 2009, p. 98). Thus in the educational field, thinking is a result of learning processes that have been activated.

The cognitive skills cited in Tables 1 and 2 resonate with the skills learnt in the L2 classroom, '[T]he development of language and content knowledge, practice in using this knowledge and strategy training to promote independent learning' (Snow, 2001, p. 304). As the foundational language skills are taught and used in class, they would naturally enhance the cognitive processes in learning. Learning the foundational language skills is not the goal of the learners. The language skills are tools of communication. If learners would begin to 'think' about the content they are engaged in in their class activities and assignments, they would be encouraged to move into higher order thinking as a natural process of learning.

3 Research Methodology

This research is qualitative as it seems the best way to explore a phenomenon that is as yet difficult to define, and it involves describing or observing a process. Drawing from Allwright's description of an 'exploratory practice', the study arose in the effort to understand language learning and processing in the midst of integrating L2 foundational skills in a content-oriented language learning environment. It did not begin with the intention of a research study on thinking skills per se. Class activities became 'investigative tools', for example, and later data collection emerged from

Table 2 Some levels of cognition required for post-secondary work

Cognitive skills	Includes
Retrieval	Recognising and recalling facts, executing simple procedures
Comprehension	Integrating information or symbolising relationships
Analysis	Identifying similarities, classifying, forming generalisations, making predictions, identifying errors
Knowledge utilisation	Decision making, problem solving, experimenting, investigating

Extracted and tabulated from Kendall et al. (2008, p. 2)

the participants' output and the teacher's observations. The participants themselves became 'generators of understanding not just consumers of it' (Allwright, 2000).

Next this is a case study bounded first and foremost by the fact that the study was carried out in one class out of between three and four classes each year in an educational institution over a period of 4 years. This case study created a privileged experience where time and space allowed the participants to be observed closely, and they 'generated' information that contributed to the study (Bromley, 1986, in Merriam, 1998, p. 32). Thus the phenomenon is studied in 'its real-life context … when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (Yin, 1989, in van Lier, 2005, p. 196).

Finally, this case study is phenomenological research as it draws its data from the learners' 'lived experiences' in the intensive language learning program (Cresswell, 2009, p. 13). Themes and patterns emerged from the data, and these are explored and discussed.

3.1 The Site

This study was conducted in only one classroom where research in second language acquisition has been continuous. This analysis/observation is a culmination of teaching in this program over a period of 9 years though the data for this study was only drawn much later from 2013 to 2017. Data was drawn from one class comprising a different group of participants each year over 4 years from 2013, 2014, 2016, and 2017. Data came from different class activities comprising recordings of participants' language learning experience in 2014, journal reflections, post-test essays; observation during class interaction and participants' personal remarks during class conversation/discussion. Observations of participants and their statements made ad hoc during class, an intense environment, provided data which would have otherwise been unavailable. This was a unique opportunity in time and space. Finally stakeholders' feedback was also included in the data display. This is an attempt to triangulate the data collected in terms of the data being collected from different sets of participants over a number of years. Data also came from the observation of the researcher in her interaction with the class and the comments of stakeholders.

The class was learner-centred, and learners were encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, in their newspaper presentations, each person chose an article that s/he would like to present in class. The weaker learners could choose simpler, more accessible articles while the more proficient learners would select longer, more challenging or more complex articles. In extensive reading, learners picked a novel initially from a library of books ranging from graded readers to full text novels. These books had been preselected to assist learners at varying levels of reading ability. At a later stage when they were ready, they helped themselves to the library at the institution.

3.2 Participants

3.2.1 General Student Profile over 9 Years from 2009 to 2018

The participants in this study came from mainland China, Myanmar, Vietnam and Indonesia. They were between 16 and 24 years of age. They would have completed either high school or the university or were attending the first or second year medical college in their home country. In terms of English proficiency, they were generally classified as being at pre-intermediate level though lately over the last few years, their English language (EL) proficiency when they joined the intensive EL program could range from a more elementary to pre-intermediate level.

3.3 Matrix of the Program in the Classroom in a Week

A cross-section of the program in the classroom is presented in the matrix below. This matrix serves to highlight that the language skills were taught and learnt within the theories of L2 teaching and learning. Building on the 'stepping-stones' of preceding theories, such as natural acquisition vs instruction/form-focused learning, some learners grew at an exponential rate while others struggled initially in the intensive EL environment. New insights surfaced in this pressurised setting of activities and assignments working within L2 teaching and learning theories sharing a common goal that learners communicate in the target language. This matrix highlights that the acquisition of the foundational skills were not achieved through methods alone but were supported by the theories of L2 teaching and learning and the dichotomous nature of some of these theories, e.g. implicit or explicit learning. Hence there was a need to keep a balance between content-based and form-focussed instruction, for example, so that opportunities for learning are enhanced.

Four skills	Methods + course book	Underlying theories	Outcome
Listening	Teacher talk; stories read aloud; news/ project presentation/ class discussion; listening to recording; news; songs; field trips; movie worksheets	• **Immersion** → create the environment • **Learner-centred approach** • Input/output → Comprehensible → Meaningful input • Intentional focus on **output** (Swain, 1995) • Natural acquisition vs instruction/form-focused learning • Implicit vs explicit learning • Interaction/output • Automaticity (vs **spontaneity**) • L1 transfer ≠ translation → Thinking in EL	Distinguishing phonemes; decoding texts; comprehension of words; interact and discuss; listening comprehension → **to understand**; respond when spoken to/spontaneous response
Speaking	Reading aloud; asking questions after news presentation/research project presentation; practise dialogues from transcripts in coursebook; role play; class discussion + movie worksheets; field trips; surveys/interviews; closing ceremony performance		**To be understood/to communicate**/clear speech/ coherence/delivery of discourse/ response when spoken to
Reading	Books (abridged → full novels); news articles; research; reading aloud; field trips		Words → in a sentence for its sense; comprehension of extended text; show their understanding, vocabulary; sentence structures; extended texts; variety of structures; figures of speech
Writing	Journals; reflective essays (field trips); expository essays; assignments; reports		spelling, words → sentences → expository texts, narratives → to write an extended text; sentence structures; grammar exercises; paragraphs; coherence; cohesion
Culture	Content/background; idioms, figurative speech		
Time	DIY: building habits/ practice in the long term		

As the program progressed through the day, the learners would be using all the four L2 skills at some point or other. These skills **overlapped** and in fact supported the learners' acquisition of grammar and vocabulary. Time was also set aside for the teaching of selected forms of grammar, sentence structures and so forth. This emphasis was a necessity as learners would need to read their specialist training materials and write academic assignments and research papers.

4 Findings

4.1 The Interrelationship of Skills

Over the history of L2 teaching, the four foundational skills have often been referred to as discrete skills to the extent that they are taught as distinct skills. In the past, some approaches such as the grammar-translation approach or the audio-lingual approach used only one or two of these skills and dispensed with the others. However, these skills overlap in the outcome expected for each specific skill. For example, learners may speak well but they need to be understood. This means the listener needs to understand what has been said to him/her.

An example of this disconnect in the four L2 skills was seen in some EFL learners who first joined the ELBC. They might speak, but they could not understand when they were spoken to. They might write an essay, but they could not understand a piece of text that they read. Reading comprehension was their weakest skill after speaking. So the question of teaching skills as discrete components would have only limitations for the acquisition of the L2. As Nord stated, '…reception should precede production because reception enables production. While it is possible to learn to understand without speaking, it is not possible to learn to speak without understanding' (1981, in Peterson, 2001, p. 88).

In the quiet of reading a text, learners focused completely on words held together by grammar, sentence structures and punctuation in order to access meaning. They needed to work through the idiomatic and figurative language beyond the basic level of reading a simple text as well. Thus while reading for content, learners were exposed to vocabulary, grammar and sentence structures **repeatedly** in order for them to access meaning. The same vocabulary, grammar and sentence structures might reappear in their listening activities and learners might be required to use them when they spoke or wrote on another occasion. In this sense, this chapter proposes that this continued exposure reinforced the learning experience in the target language, not just vocabulary, but in the way information was presented in the sentence structures. Not only did learners broaden their vocabulary and remembered simple sentence structures, they were also exposed to a variety of structures and samples of writing and hence built a repertoire in their writing skills from which they could draw to produce a more varied and enriching text.

Furthermore, access to reading widened their horizon and exposure to issues in their specialised field as well as to world issues. It built up their knowledge base in their specialised field, in the health sciences, for example. Class discussions developed around these issues. As learners were entering an academic institution, they needed to learn to develop higher order thinking.

In the research on literacy development, Jones et al. (1987, p. 10) proposes that there are 'parallel concepts shared by research on reading, writing, listening, and speaking'. In both reading and writing, learners seek 'to construct meaningful messages'. Learners would seek to 'construct meaning from the text' while reading and would be constructing meaningful messages in the process of composing and writing. Thus the integration of the four skills in language learning each day, intentionally, supported and reinforced learners' acquisition of L2.

4.2 The Common Interface of Skills: Grammar, Sentence Structures and Vocabulary

Though the immersion program in principle places the acquisition of content over language acquisition and focused instruction does not take priority in the program, overlap in the areas of grammar, vocabulary and sentence structures in these foundational skills, for example, serves as repetition which occurs in natural authentic ways. It reinforces the new word, phrase and so forth and exposes the learners to the varying contexts in which they appear. In this sense, they both facilitate the acquisition of grammar, sentence structures and vocabulary apart from form-focused instruction (Fig. 1).

Thus in this study, learners had ample practice at the end of the day. Besides their excitement in achieving communication, e.g. being understood when they gave a presentation and they were able to respond to the questions the class asked, they also found that they needed to work on sentence structures to access the complete meaning or content of what they were listening to or reading about. They also needed these structures to communicate well when they spoke and when they wrote even if they managed to achieve communication in error-ridden discourse. It was on this linguistic platform that they worked through their knowledge of form to enable them to access and express themselves in higher order thinking. Finally, they might not produce a form perfect piece of discourse at this stage, but communication was achieved. They needed more time to allow the formal linguistic structures to settle in the acquisition process.

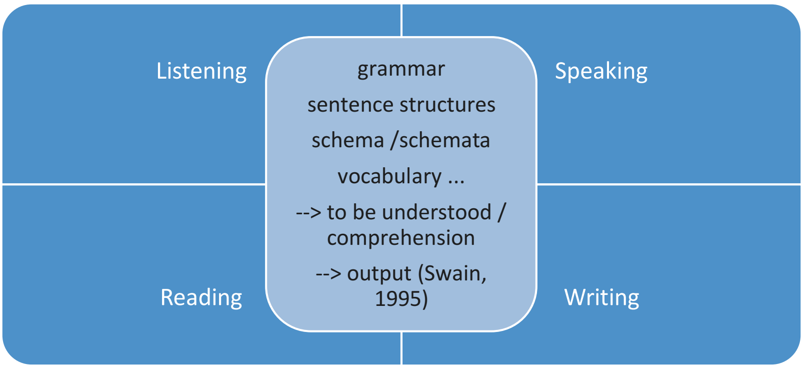

Fig. 1 The four L2 skills interface on grammar, sentence structures and vocabulary

4.3 Thinking in English

In the intense environment in the ELBC classroom, learners listened and spoke not as two discrete skills, but they communicated to acquire information. They read to prepare a presentation of the news and to prepare for questions that they would be asked after the presentation. In another activity, they wrote reflections for example, on a field trip. On these occasions, inevitably, they would be drawing on thinking processes. All these activities moved towards getting learners to speak and write in extended discourse. In the table below are some examples of learners' experience in their engagement with the English language.

4.3.1 Data Display

Data was drawn from a class of between 15 and 20 participants each year. Samples of extracts have been selected from recordings of 13 participants' language learning experience in 2014. The next display consists of observation during class interaction and participants' personal remarks during class conversation/discussion and an extract from a post-test essay. The final display comprises the stakeholders' unofficial feedback.

DD 1: Extracts of transcripts taken from participants' description of their language learning experience in class

Participant	Extracts of transcript of recording
A	I remember the first time I came here, I couldn't listen, I couldn't speak. When my classmates talked to me, I was really surprised, 'What, what are they talking about? Were they speaking English?' I couldn't understand. But now I can. They were speaking English … I think the other important point is **group discussions**. We … **share our ideas and listen to others**. Sometimes we have to **argue with others** but I think arguments are necessary and also interesting. **When we argue with others, we have to speak more, we have to explain our ideas clearly to make others understand us**. I think it is a **good choice to practise us**. We **can't find any situation like this to speak so much**
B	… I also **improved in thinking skills**. … we need to **present health news or science news** every day. Our news time is totally different from others' news time because it is **not just reading the article** from the newspaper. We **need to think beyond the news**. For example, if my topic is 'Why are Singaporeans faced with hearing loss?' This time I cannot just read the article. I **need to do research** everything about the hearing loss. Because at the end of my news time, there is a **Question and Answer session**. In this session, everybody needs to ask at least one question and mostly they ask very difficult questions. For example, if I said there is no cure for Alzheimer's disease, sometimes they ask 'Why there is no cure?' Sometimes we **cannot answer the question**. At this time, Ms T asked us to **do more research** and then next time we **need to get back** the answer. So, in this way my thinking skills improved

Participant	Extracts of transcript of recording
C	… I would like to share about my **reflection journal** every day. Every day we write reflection journal but I try to write my reflection journals in a very very good way. I **try to use higher thinking skills**, not only **write description but also try to express my feelings and emotions** about the field trip, about everything we did

DD 1: Discussion

Participants saw an improvement in their language ability from the time they first began the course and at the end of the course. In their self-assessment, they identified these as their ability to speak more easily and achieve some form of communication and their ability to comprehend others often enough to get excited, to be motivated and to further communicate for an indefinite length of time. Moreover, participants had gained confidence and were highly motivated to move on to their core program where they would be meeting the regular students with whom they needed to interact and work with in group and class discussions and assignments and so forth.

The reference to group discussion where they had to share ideas, listen to others and sometimes 'argue' and put forward their ideas called for interaction that required thought and engagement beyond a simple question and one-word/phrase/sentence answer response. In the class presentation, the speaker needed to be prepared to respond to questions on the subject that she had presented and do further research if she did not have an answer to give. Finally, the thought put into writing a reflective journal to describe and to express feelings requires interaction and a thought process. These engagements reflect Bloom's and Kendall et al.'s thinking skills in Tables 1 and 2 (p. 15 and 16). Participants made an extraordinary effort to express and describe their language learning experiences from having to remember and retrieve content in the target language, understanding/comprehending their audience to analyse how they could respond to their situation and predicament. The complete process was done in the target language.

DD 2: Observations from class activities: conversation, presentation and an extract from an essay in the post-test

Participant	Extracts from conversation, activities and reflective journals in class
D (conversation before class started, in the eighth week)	8–9 weeks into the program (14 weeks): D recounted how she called home and her family **couldn't understand** her. She was worried that **she might lose her L1**
E (during a presentation in class)	She **stopped her speech mid-sentence to restructure**, stopped again, and **restructured** (3 times)

Participant	Extracts from conversation, activities and reflective journals in class
F (from a post-test)	1. In China when we studied in class, we only listened what teacher say and know how to do exam 2. … [Teacher] has a very good time arrange ability I remember the start of the class. We also complained with our friends. We met such a crazy teacher. We admire your freedom. But now we do not think like that at all, because we have seen our improvement. We know we cannot arrive here without my teacher, even here is not enough. Now, everytime, we talk about teachers, they always say they want to go to our class because we have realized the importance of English speaking gradually. I know I have not made a big progress. My English is still poor, but **I can feel the difference** that I do not know where it is. **I am getting used to the English environment and I like it**. I want to join it. **Even now, I still confused in structure when I talk, but I still want to talk**. Another thing is my **poor vocabulary**. Not only poor in Medical field but also in daily life. Everytime, I listen to others speaking, how wonderful it is, if I can also speak like this! My life must be more colorful and full of laughing
G (sharing her experiences in her nursing program after the ELBC ended)	She **struggled with speaking** at the beginning of the program but looked like she **was trying hard to listen and understand** In one incident where the class celebrated a student's birthday if the day fell during the period of the program, we 'missed' a birthday. When the class tried to make amends a few days later, a classmate commented that we 'had forgotten' the birthday. G **replied immediately** that we had not forgotten the birthday but there was a misunderstanding! → *Observation: I was amazed that she understood the remark and was able to* ***reply spontaneously****!*

DD 2: Discussion

This observation from a conversation with the participant is one example of an experience that some of the participants go through. Ongoing research in this classroom is on language processing and, in more visible terms, sentence structures. In the first few weeks, many of the participants could not communicate well. Often sentence structures presented one of the most difficult problems to correct. Structures often reveal L1 interference or transfer which appear in their writing when they first arrived. Much of the time involved restructuring sentences to render a text coherent. When Participant D shared that her family could not understand her when she called home, she clarified that she was beginning to speak Burmese using English sentence structures. Hence she was worried that she might forget her L1.

In the particular incident cited, Participant E was stopping short and actually reorganising her sentence structure till she felt she got the structure right. This attempt to 'self-correct' (Wigglesworth, 2005, p. 104) showed an engagement with the target language. In this instance the focus was on sentence structure. This was not an episode where a learner was talking about language per se but was in the midst of communicating her topic but realised that she needed to 'correct' how she was going to say what she was going to say or she would not be understood.

Participant F was one of 20 participants. She wrote an essay for the post-test which finally provided the data for this study. Her experience was similar to the first three participants, A, B and C, reflecting a positive language learning experience. She was highly motivated, even exuberant, and confident even if her discourse was error-ridden. There was an awareness of errors in her written discourse, but she was able to communicate how she felt.

In another instance, participant G's spontaneous response displayed language development after the initial period where she showed little improvement in her listening and speaking skills. The spontaneous response was in context to the situation. She heard, understood and responded in context. The answer could not be attributed to an automatic response because the speaker had to understand what was being said to her.

These are just three examples showing that participants in class engaged with language in what would be considered as a 'language-related episode' (Wigglesworth, 2005, p. 104). The immersion program generated an environment where participants received input in the target language, described in this study, which would also lead them to reflect and take 'notice' of the language that was serving as a vehicle to understand content. There was ample opportunity for interaction and output where 'language mediates cognitive development as well as reflects the processes taking place' (Wigglesworth, 2005, p. 103).

DD 3: Comments from institutional stakeholders

Commentators	Remarks
The director of the School of Health Sciences in her speech to the foreign students when they first arrived (2013)	Some doctors in the hospitals were surprised that these **students asked very good questions**!
A lecturer from the School of Health Sciences made an unofficial visit and observed the class (2015)	She said, 'No wonder they asked such questions! **I wondered how they knew what I was going to teach**, if they had reviewed the lecture notes before they came to class … but **how could they know what questions to ask? How could they have prepared these questions** ... They started in this class …!'
A lecturer's comment in G's class (after the ELBC ended) (2017)	Students in a class for a Health Sciences module had to present in small groups on the subject given to them. The lecturer's comment for the particular group of ELBC students: 'For the last 20 mins I've been listening to the BBC News …'

DD 3: Discussion

These comments made were noted as unofficial feedback after the ELBC ended, and they would have referred to the participants of the preceding year. The comment about 'questions asked' implied that the participants could focus on what the speaker (either the doctor or lecturer) was saying. A lecture and possibly even a doctor's discourse is seldom short so the fact that the participants were able to concentrate on their speech, process what had been said and respond was a good indication of language development. This was positive feedback on how the participants' L2 was helping them in their studies.

The final example is a follow-up on G's experience in her core program. The lecturer could have said that she had not understood a word of what they had been saying or that she was unintelligible. She was encouraged that she could communicate to a wider audience outside her language learning class.

4.3.2 No Translation in Class

Thus in the ELBC class, where participants would have varying language proficiency from a low pre-intermediate to intermediate, they were encouraged to engage in English every day. Whether they spoke in casual conversation or discussion groups or gave presentations, they would need to engage for an extended period of time. This would involve thinking in English. Inevitably, many of these participants would translate from L1 to L2 and vice versa initially. However, they were not encouraged to do so in the longer term to reduce L1 interference. L1 interference here is defined as 'the dynamic phenomena which are elements of the other language which slip into the output of the language being spoken (or written) and hence interfere with it' (Grosjean, 2011, p. 15). Resorting to L1 may help the language learner 'outperform his competence' (Krashen, 1995, p. 27) to solve his/her immediate problem in completing an L2 task because an L1 rule may seem to substitute for an L2 rule and even if it does not make a perfect substitution, communication is still achieved (Krashen, 1995, p. 28). However, this is like playing a game of chance. In this study, those participants who opted initially to translate underwent a period of confusion till they decided that they needed to commit themselves fully to the study of the target language as it was prescribed in the immersion program. This meant only the target language was used all the time during class. Of course, there were the occasional lapses when participants slipped into L1.

L1 interference appeared most often in the participants' construction of sentences. A sentence could be put together in English, but the words and the sense were actually L1. Not only did L1 interference produced incoherence in a participant's sentence construction, but it also slowed down his/her reception and response as s/he translated from L1 to L2 and then L2 to L1. Errors accrued in sentences that could not be translated literally. Encouraging participants to use only L2 would lead them in a matter of time to think in English as they began to develop their spoken and written discourse. Falling back on L1 'may temporarily enhance production, but may not be real progress in the second language. The real cure for "interference" … is real language acquisition' (Krashen, 1995, p. 29).

4.3.3 Public Perception of 'Thinking in English'

'Thinking in English' has been a term that has appeared increasingly in discussions on public blogs, for example, as some teachers use the term spontaneously and unconsciously with their students while others refute the idea as being 'impossible' when language learners are still at an elementary stage or preliminary stage of learning the second language. Perhaps one difficulty with this idea is where do we begin with the idea of 'thinking'? In an average L2 class, if a teacher encourages learners to 'think in English', it would probably be simply to begin to communicate more often in the target English, to use the target language so that the learners 'think' in the language. At any point when a learner uses the receptive skills, e.g. listening or reading, s/he would need to process the information. When s/he is speaking or writing, the information needs to be thought through before it is produced.

An investigation of public websites revealed some general but insightful comments about thinking in English. Even commercial websites offer attractive headings, such as:

'How to Develop Your Ability to THINK in English' (http://englishharmony.com/think-in-english/)
'Learn How to Think in English—Espresso English' (*https://www.espresso**english**.net/learn-how-to-think-in-**english/***)
'3 Ways to Start 'Thinking' in English' (http://www.englishandculture.com/blog/bid/98152/3-Ways-to-Start-Thinking-in-English)
'How to THINK in English EASILY!—How to Get Fluent in English Faster' (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIgUDORjwvA)
'Quick Tip—Thinking in English' (http://www.ecenglish.com/learnenglish/lessons/quick-tip-thinking-english)

On Blog Posts

- What does it mean 'thinking in English?'
- How can anyone think in English if s/he can't even string a sentence together?
- … How are they going to think in a language that you don't know? I believe that translation is an unconscious process of the mind, and unless they have a repertoire of utterances in the second language they won't be able to 'think in English'. *Juan Hernandez* (2016)

Comments

'I'm not a native speaker but I think in English. English has just become a part of my life: I wake up listening to CBC Radio, I read Metro News, I use English every day at work, I chat with my friends and my boyfriend in English, I watch English movies, and I even *dream* in English.

Thinking in a foreign language is essential. It *increases fluency* and allows you to connect with people from different cultural backgrounds. You don't necessarily need to move to an English-speaking country like I did but *putting your brain in "English only"* mode will definitely help'. *Alena Khabibullina (24.9.2016)*

'When I started university I started practicing more English than ever on my own. After a while I even dreamt in English. People told me I was speaking in English at night…'. *Merry Barrios (2015)*

'The technique does work though it encounters a lot of psychological resistance simply because few think it's possible to think in another language. The students who do give it a try tend to see improvements in *fluency and spontaneity*—they can react faster because they are not translating every single word'. *Alex Roe, English teacher in Italy (2013)*

'Thinking in a foreign language is an important step in the long road that is *fluency* in a foreign language … thinking in a new language is a **decision that you can make, and that you should make from Day 1'**. *Lingholic (accessed 24 September 2016)*

'Thinking in English' is almost the next natural stage that learners and teachers would be considering. Though the comments on the public blog posts cannot be considered data, but they resonate with data acquired in the study. Terms such 'fluency and spontaneity' and dreams are associated with 'thinking'. Commercial language schools are maximising the use of this skill as a teaching tool.

4.4 Meaningful Practice

Learners in this ELBC classroom have given feedback that they found their lessons meaningful. They could have struggled when they first began their core nursing program but they were functional in a matter of time. Each year, the 'senior' students would advise the newcomers to the program to do as they were told in this class because everything 'is meaningful' and they would understand when they began the core program. Learners were highly motivated by content that contributed to their longer term goals and helped them acquire the skills that they needed to achieve these goals. Furthermore, they felt more secure that they were learning what they needed to know to prepare them for their choice career. In this sense, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has much in its favour as compared to the more general English classes.

Research of the past two decades has often called for practice that is meaningful (Ortega, 2007, pp. 183–185; Genesee, 1991, p. 186). According to Ortega, research has shown that meaningfulness is essential in L2 learning and is the 'optimal condition for learning' in the educational sector for example (Ortega, 2007, p. 184). Thus this study would like to reiterate that learners respond most to a meaningful language learning experience and to meaningful content.

However, the L2 language classroom has often stopped short of taking learners the one step further that they need to go to utilise fully the skills that they have been acquiring. Perhaps Hinkel's (2006, p. 110) comment that recent trends show a 'decline in methods' could be revisited, and if the material and classroom experience are made meaningful to the learner, these methods may be refreshing change.

4.5 The Element of Time: Time Management

Though the ELBC was conducted for 14 weeks, this may seem excessive as many L2 and EFL programs do not seem to have the luxury of time. Some programs preparing foreign students for the mainstream program in the university may conduct half a day courses running 5 days a week for 6–12 months, for example. Overall the learners in this study spent a little more than half the time with the researcher. However, they have the benefit of spending time with other teachers of English and so will be exposed to more varied listening and learning experiences. Yet is this enough? As we all know, 'language development takes place over time' (Genesee, 1991, p. 194; Taylor, 1990, p. 323). When the ELBC first began, a huge effort was made to hurry the process of acquisition as often the stakeholders would be saying 'They [the learners] should have achieved this level of competence yesterday!' Research to date has indicated that learners would need at least 6 months to 2 years to achieve communicative competence and 5–7 years to communicate in an academic setting.[8]

Thus taking into account that language development takes time, this class managed the use of time in two ways. Learners used all four skills in integrated instruction every day. In the initial stages, reading took up considerable time and reading is a process that cannot be hurried. So learners would do their intensive and extensive reading as homework where they could work on their own time and at their own pace. Their reading period was also a time to work on vocabulary and eventually on idiomatic expressions and figures of speech.

Next, learners built habits: habits of picking up a newspaper and reading it every day, speaking to their classmates in English, watching a movie in English with subtitles in English (subtitles would be put aside when they were confident), listening to the news in English and any other available listening activity, vocabulary

[8] In the Army Specialised Training Program (ASTP) in the US conducted during WW2, successful learners were able to achieve competence (even native speaker proficiency) in a year with an average of 25 hours per week (Spolsky, 1995).

building, and so forth. Learners were reminded that they needed to practise every day, that is, they should be speaking, listening, reading or writing in the English language in some way or other. Furthermore, they learnt how they could and needed to help themselves (DIY as in Do It Yourself) when the ELBC ended. These activities were used in the integrated instruction of the four skills and had been particularly selected as they were 'doable' when the learners would have a very tight schedule with the core nursing program at the institution. This would be considered language learning practice in the long term for at least 2 years. This component of building language learning habits was introduced intentionally with the view that language development needed time, and individual learners achieve language proficiency at different rates. Some learners in this study showed a sudden steep learning curve during the period of the ELBC and others took a while. An informal follow-up on some learners 2 or 3 years later showed that they were able to speak fluently and they were able to communicate well, confidently and comfortably.

5 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to share a language learning experience in an intensive EL bridging program where an immersion environment had been created for the integrated instruction of the four skills in a content-oriented course. This study attempted to explore if language learning can be optimised through the integrated teaching of the four skills in a content-oriented class which would facilitate thinking in English. Thinking in English is a natural consequence in the language learning process but currently, this term seems elusive and vague in the EFL/ESL class. If this skill can be harnessed and the L2 learning experience made meaningful, learners' acquisition of L2 is exponential in terms of speed and time. The activities conducted in the study to integrate the instruction of the four skills in a content appropriate class elicited the thinking process in the participants seen in their ability to understand, respond and act on the information they received in the target language. Thus this study found that the foundational language skills interrelate and they activate the 'thinking' process. If this can be capitalised on, it will facilitate the acquisition of L2. Finally this study proposes that there is an urgent need to reconsider the element of time in language development. Learners need time to acquire L2 so the learning of the five skills, for example, needs to work around the time factor. None of these factors should be dispensed with to fit into a time-tight program.

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"Revenge of the Schwa": A Metaphor for Teaching English Word Stress in Academic Vocabulary

Eileen Boswell

Abstract Academic vocabulary presents myriad challenges for English learners (ELs), including the phenomenon of word stress alternations when derivational affixes are added to change the lexical category or "part of speech" of a word. Adjectives ending in –ic, based on one of these rules for instance, always exhibit word stress in the syllable just before the adjectival ending. For example, when the adjective *academic* is derived from the noun *academy* by addition of the –ic suffix, an English word stress rule requires that the stress now fall on the penultimate syllable. Unstressed vowels are often reduced *schwa*, which some pronunciation experts regard as "the most important sound in English" (Kenworthy J, Teaching English pronunciation. Longman, Harlow, 1987). Knowing word stress rules improves learners' pronunciation, as well as their listening comprehension in academic lectures and other situations where multisyllabic words and scientific terminology are spoken. One way to ease the cognitive burden on learners is to create and implement metaphors for abstract concepts that can aid in presenting simple explanations of complex phonological processes. Teaching through metaphor has enormous benefits in the classroom for both learners and teachers, provided that certain cultural conditions obtain. After a brief history of metaphor and its application in teaching, this chapter establishes the phonological processes governing English word stress and then presents a metaphor for teaching some of these rules. Cultural considerations about the metaphor proposed are also addressed. A discussion of how to leverage classroom-based metaphors in order to boost ELs' metaphorical competence is included.

Keywords Metaphor · Metaphorical competence · Pronunciation · Phonology · Vowel sounds · Vowel reduction

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1 Introduction

Since the time of Aristotle in the fourth century BCE, metaphor has been an object of much study. It is of interest to philosophers, rhetoricians, poets, novelists, linguists, educators, and now to neuroscientists and cognitive psychologists. Whereas metaphor was once considered a phenomenon of language, it is now regarded as a way of thinking. Owing to its new status as a cognitive structure, metaphor is an attractive pedagogical tool for teachers of all disciplines—from science, to mathematics, to the second/foreign language classroom.

This chapter reviews a brief history of metaphor, its utility in the classroom in general, and its value in the language classroom in particular. Next, a phonological problem that poses great challenges for English learners (ELs) is presented—namely the problem of mastering English word stress patterns and vowel reductions. This problem is especially felt among ELs studying academic vocabulary due to the complex morphology of scientific and other technical terms. The burden of learning abstract information in any subject can be eased by presenting the information in the form of a metaphor. Metaphors help students to see new, complex information in terms of something else that they already know and understand.

Teaching through metaphor is a helpful technique for both teachers and students, and one that increases student engagement and retention of new material (Wormeli, 2009, p. 22). In the second/foreign language classroom, metaphor can be particularly facilitative in ushering students through the learning process. "Because we are physically built the same," writes Wormeli (2009), we develop similar ways of interacting with the world outside our skin through metaphors" (Wormeli, 2009, p. 51). Teaching ELs through metaphor—whether in their language classroom or in any other discipline—reaches them at the core of their understanding and helps them make connections to prior knowledge and universal principles.

Much work has been done on using metaphor to build vocabulary (Boers, 2000 and others, as cited in Hoang, 2014) but not on its role in pronunciation instruction. This chapter presents a brief history of metaphor and its application to classroom teaching in order to motivate and contextualize a specific metaphor, referred to herein as "Revenge of the Schwa." This metaphor can be used to teach English word stress rules and their associated *vowel reductions* that surface as the mid-central vowel sound known as *schwa*, which some pronunciation experts regard as "the most important sound in English" (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 51). Cultural considerations for using this metaphor are explored, as well as cultural constraints for using other metaphors in teaching English pronunciation to speakers of other languages and members of diverse cultures. Finally, a discussion of how to leverage classroom-based metaphors in order to enhance ELs' metaphorical competence is included.

2 A (Very) Brief History of Metaphor

For much of history, metaphor was seen in its most basic form as a comparison between two entities—often one physical and one abstract entity. Some historians pinpoint the first use of metaphor as being Aristotle's contention that "Life is a stage" (Danesi, 2004, p. 10) in the fourth century BCE. Metaphor has historically been seen as a linguistic phenomenon—a way to put words together to express an idea or comparison. In the early 1970s, philosopher Terence Hawkes conveyed this strictly linguistic definition by asserting that "'Metaphor' only exists because metaphors do" (Hawkes, 1972, p. 5). Hawkes' categorization reinforced the thinking at the time that metaphors are ornamental features of language, noting that "charm comes from the intellectual pleasure afforded by the new resemblances noted in the metaphor" (Hawkes, 1972, p. 9).

Beginning in 1980, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson forever changed the landscape of how metaphor (and metaphors) would be viewed, not only by philosophers such as Aristotle and Hawkes, but by linguists, cognitive scientists, educators, and researchers in many other fields. With their game-changing book *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), Lakoff and Johnson demonstrate through a wealth of examples that metaphors are conceptual in nature, rather than merely clever ways of putting words together, and that the metaphors we employ to describe quotidian experience reveal conceptual structures. They inventory conceptual metaphors such as LOVE IS A JOURNEY[1] as the basis for many turns of phrase that we use to describe our love relationships in terms of the idea of a journey. "Given that metaphor is conceptual in nature rather than a matter of 'mere language,'" they suggest, "it is natural for us to conceptualize situations in metaphorical terms" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 171–172). To be sure, the words that assemble a metaphor remain a critical component in our understanding, but the words themselves are not the metaphor—the metaphor exists first as a conceptual structure. "It is the metaphorical linguistic expressions" Kövecses (2010) explains, "that reveal the existence of the conceptual metaphors" Kövecses, 2010, p. 7).

Lakoff and Johnson followed up *Metaphors We Live By* in 1999 with *Philosophy in the Flesh*, in which they diagram their theory of *embodied reasoning* wherein conceptual metaphors are posited as having evolved from our physical bodies (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999), thus telegraphing Wormeli's notion above that teaching through metaphor activates universal knowledge and basic human senses (Wormeli, 2009, p. 51). Metaphor, therefore, is a form of "dark matter" (itself a metaphor): an unseen force guiding many conversations and explanations in the classroom.

[1] One convention in the literature of conceptual metaphor is to display the metaphor in small caps or all caps. To the left of the word "is" you find the *target domain* of the metaphor—in this case, love—and to the right you find the *source domain*—journey, in this case.

2.1 Using Metaphor in the Classroom

Helping students navigate new concepts—abstract ones in particular—requires that the instructor first assists students in identifying the basic components of a new theory or idea (Wormeli, 2009, pp. 23–24). Two primary reasons that metaphor is believed to enhance students' understanding of new concepts are: (1) the notion outlined above that metaphor is conceptual in nature rather than purely linguistic; and (2) the unique ability of a metaphor to bridge students' understanding of new content while grounding an explanation in their established understanding of something that aligns through a (metaphoric) similarity with the new topic being studied.

"Creating metaphors isn't just for Shakespeare" asserts Pitler (2012) in the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)'s *Handbook for Classroom Instruction That Works*. The ASCD recommends teaching through metaphor as one of four main strategies that help students "extend and apply knowledge" (Pitler, 2012, p. 237), alongside comparing, classifying, and creating analogies. This recommendation spans the curriculum, as metaphor has been touted as a way to enhance understanding in the sciences, as well as in mathematics, history, and many other content areas. "These strategies help move students from existing knowledge to new knowledge" Pitler asserts, "[…] from the concrete to the abstract, and from separate to connected ideas. Students use what they already know as an anchor for new learning" (Pitler, 2012, p. 239).

Metaphors help to build students' conceptual understanding of new information so they do not have to resort to boring repetition or memorization of novel information. Older approaches to teaching, particularly in language teaching, may have relied on rote memorization of prescribed rules, such as grammar and diction rules. When metaphor is added to a language teacher's toolbox, students make connections between the familiar and unfamiliar, have fun while learning, and are able to ground their understanding of abstract linguistic patterns in more concrete images. Not only is metaphor useful in the second language classroom, but it can accelerate learning for ELs in all content areas. In the following section, the value of teaching through metaphor is considered first for its general application in the content areas in classrooms where all or some students speak a first language other than English, next for its special application in the language classroom, and finally for its direct benefit to ELs in strengthening their ability to process and produce figurative language.

2.2 Using Metaphor to Teach English Learners

Renowned metaphor scholar Andrew Ortony attributes the pedagogical import of metaphors to their compactness, their ability to express the inexpressible, and their vividness, proclaiming that "metaphor is an essential ingredient of communication and consequently of great educational value" (Ortony, 1975, p. 45). Although his

1975 manifesto *Why Metaphors are Necessary and Not Just Nice* predated Lakoff & Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By*, Ortony's short piece goes a long way in establishing that metaphors are part of ordinary language because our everyday experiences are continuous, rather than discrete. Therefore, he argues, "[W]ords have to be sufficiently flexible" for them to adequately describe our experiences (Ortony, 1975, p. 46).

All students can learn better when new information is presented through metaphor, but especially those coming to an American classroom from other countries. Kövecses (2010) explores whether conceptual metaphors vary across cultures and concludes that some "appear to be at least near-universal" (Kövecses, 2010, p. 13). He concludes that "many cultures with completely different linguistic rules and structures often generate the same metaphors" (as cited in Wormeli, 2009, pp. 50–51). This has great practical benefits, as teachers serving ELs can tap into students' cultural knowledge in order to contextualize a metaphorical explanation of new content. Hill and Flynn (2006) offer guidance to teachers stating that "Because [ELs] cannot rely solely on linguistic ability to learn and retain knowledge in a new language, nonlinguistic methods of learning are particularly important for them" (Hill & Flynn, 2006, p. 36). Given that metaphors are considered conceptual in nature, they constitute an invaluable "nonlinguistic" method of learning and teaching. By activating cultural universals, concepts, or emotional states experienced by all learners, teaching through metaphor "gives EL students who have strong abilities in other subjects (math, for example) the chance to use that knowledge to improve their English skills" (Wormeli, 2009, p. 58).

Metaphor is especially useful in the second/foreign language classroom. In a series of articles in the online journal *Humanising Language Teaching*, Mumford (2005a, 2005b) recommends using metaphor in the second language classroom to teach grammar. "When learning English" he reminds us, "students are faced with the task of remembering a huge number of unfamiliar rules, many of which are full of exceptions and irregularities. However, there is much in the world that students are familiar with" (Mumford, 2005a, 2005b, para. 1). In addition to building new knowledge out of familiar ideas, teaching through metaphor can boost students' competence in recognizing and using metaphors and other forms of figurative language including idioms, similes, and poetics.

Teaching through metaphor helps build ELs' competence in processing and using figurative language, a measure referred to as Metaphorical Competence (MC). Marcel Danesi, who coined the term in 1992, found that "the 'literalness' of learner discourse … seems to bear witness to the fact that students have little or no opportunity to access the metaphorically structured conceptual domains inherent in [second language] discourse" (Danesi, 1992, p. 491). Danesi's coinage—intended to parallel the terms "grammatical competence" and "communicative competence"—spurred a great deal of research into second language learners' acquisition of metaphor. While experimental results vary, most scholars agree that regular exposure to figurative language in class is essential to raising students' MC quotient (see Hoang, 2014 for a comprehensive list of MC research).

3 English Word Stress Rules and Academic Vocabulary

Many students of English encounter the problem of mastering word stress patterns and vowel reductions. This problem is experienced among ELs studying academic vocabulary and arises from the complex morphology of scientific and other technical terms. As English words get longer through the addition of prefixes and suffixes that result in more specificity of meaning, their pronunciation possibilities increase—leaving students at a loss as to which syllable gets the primary stress. One cannot prevent this problem simply by avoiding words with more than a few syllables, as much of the *Academic Word List* consists of multisyllabic words (Coxhead, 2000). Wormeli (2009) highlights the importance of learning these word families: "Active pursuit of academic language is paramount to the success of English language learners" (Wormeli, 2009, p. 52).

Some may concur with Wormeli's assertion that learning the *Academic Word List* is "paramount" but overlook the pronunciation challenges the *List* poses. Kenworthy (1987) details the numerous ways in which English word stress is complex and potentially confusing—both for teachers and learners of English. "If the learner doesn't stress one syllable more than another, or stresses the wrong syllable" she proposes, "it may be difficult for the listener to identify the word" (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 18). She adds that learning accurate pronunciation and word stress is critical to good listening as well: "Correct word stress patterns are essential for the learner's production *and perception* [emphasis added] of English" (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 28).

An aural familiarity with word stress patterns in English is a critical component of students' listening comprehension in academic discourse. Rost's (1994) study of academic listening comprehension considers student self-reports of vocabulary misheard during lectures, including words such as "hierarchical" and "hierarchy," a stress alternation which surfaces with a different pronunciation that could tax an English Learner's cognition during listening. McLaughlin (as cited in Rost, 1994) shows that during academic lectures, "non-native speakers expend much of their cognitive resources on syntactic and lexical processing that [native speakers] can devote to processing the gist and creative construction" of academic content (Rost, 1994, p. 97).

The need for accurate perception and production of stressed and unstressed syllables is not limited to students' communicative competence, but to their listening as well. "There is a great deal of evidence that native speakers rely very much on the stress patterns of words when they are listening" says Kenworthy (1987), citing research indicating that when fluent speakers of English mishear words spoken by ELs it is due to incorrect stress placement (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 18). She emphasizes that "Many other cases of misunderstanding reveal upon analysis that the listener is paying as much attention to stress patterns as to the individual sounds" (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 19).

3.1 Word Stress in English Phonology

Word stress in English is both variable (in contrast to most languages) and mobile (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 59): the stressed syllable alternates as derivational affixes are added to a root to create new parts of speech. "Each English word has one of its syllables singled out as the stress carrier" explain Roca & Johnson (1999, p. 296). Many of the words that change pronunciation are derived with suffixes that move the word stress to a new syllable, as word suffixes are never stressed in English (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 63). The suffixes –ic, –ical, –ity, –ous, and many others that change the part of speech do not ever surface as stressed syllables. Morphology might determine the suffix to be added, but mobile stress leaves a phonological vacuum, as it were, that is filled by the reduced vowel, schwa. In deriving its adjectival form, the word "ridicule" (n./v.), for example, becomes "ridiculous" (adj.), and the vowel in the first syllable has now been reduced to schwa, following the phonological rule described below:

$$\underset{\text{-stress}}{\text{V}} \quad \rightarrow \quad [\text{ə}]$$

which can be written in prose as, "An unstressed vowel is realized as schwa" (Finegan, 2015, p. 137).

Vowel reductions are imperative in the sound system of English. "The reduction of stressless vowels [to schwa] is one of the most characteristic traits of English" according to Roca & Johnson (1999, p. 315). Kenworthy (1987) insists that it is "absolutely vital" that learners use accurate English word stress patterns when speaking and that "there must be an alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, with the stressed syllables occurring on a regular beat, and the unstressed syllables must have a less-than-full vowel" (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 19). The less-than-full vowel referred to surfaces in most cases as a mid-central vowel sound denoted by the symbol *schwa*, or /ə/.[2] This alternation must be taught as both a speaking skill and a listening skill.

4 The Metaphor in Action

Revenge of the Schwa is a metaphor for presenting English word stress rules in a way that is easy for learners to grasp and remember. Once teachers understand the stress patterns well enough themselves, they can have students imagine that the reduced vowel schwa is "taking revenge" upon the stressed vowel when a new form is derived. In the best examples of Revenge of the Schwa, the stressed vowel and the reduced vowel actually trade places when the part of speech changes. Students can easily notice this pattern when presented with a good list of examples, such as those

[2] Symbols in slanted brackets refer to phonemic transcription.

listed below. When an adjective is derived, the additional syllable now poses a quandary for learners: does the stress placement move? In many cases, the answer is yes.

In each case in Table 1 above, the stressed vowel and the reduced vowel have traded places. When the word "ridicule" becomes an adjective, it loses the stress that was placed on the first syllable and that syllable gets reduced; simultaneously, the second syllable which was previously a schwa is now surfacing as a stressed vowel: the schwa has taken its revenge. Note that the words "academic" or "strategic" could feasibly be pronounced without moving the stress—as "əCADəmic" and "STRATəgic," respectively. In some varieties of English, particularly in South Africa, this would be the pronunciation of a fluent speaker; in American English and other varieties, the stress placement on the second syllable of the word "academic" would pose a listening challenge for the speaker's interlocutors. It is therefore critical to teach learners the stress pattern(s) of the dialect they intend to use most frequently, and to inform them that stress patterns vary regionally. Compare, for example, the British and American pronunciations of the word "controversy." Additional examples of this alternation appear in Appendix 1.

In the conversion of the noun "politics" to the adjective "political," not only has the stress moved from the first to the second syllable, but the stressed syllable is now surrounded on both sides by reduced syllables, or syllables with schwa as the only surfacing vowel sound. The syllable that was previously reduced to schwa now surfaces with a stressed vowel, and vice versa: the schwa has taken its metaphorical revenge by asserting itself as a powerful vowel sound where once it was powerless. Imagining the schwa sound as taking its revenge is an example of a *metaphor of personification* (one of the most common forms of metaphor) whereby abstract entities are endowed with human characteristics, often to facilitate pedagogical explanations. Metaphors of personification occur in many languages and attribute "animate or human qualities to nonliving entities or events" (Bonvillain, 2014, p. 62). Vowel

Table 1 Samples of academic vocabulary exhibiting word stress alternation(s) and vowel reductions to schwa

Word and part of speech	Pronunciation[a]	Derivation	Pronunciation	Type of stress alternation
Ridicule (v./n.)	RIDəcule	Ridiculous (adj.)	rəDICulous	*Single revenge* (stressed vowel and schwa trade places)
Academy (n.)	əCADəmy	Academic (adj.)	acəDEMəc	*Double revenge* (stressed vowel is "surrounded by" two schwa syllables)
Analyze (v.)	ANəlyze	Analysis (n.)	əNALəsis	*Cascading stress* (stress is mobile and continues rightward as new derivations are added. Both the primary and secondary stress have been replaced by schwa, and the schwa has been replaced by a stressed vowel.)

[a]In all tables and appendices, the stressed syllable is indicated in all caps. Words are represented in their orthographic form except for reduced vowel sounds, which are represented by the schwa symbol (ə)

sound behavior is thus understandable in terms of struggle, competition, or war between two entities.

While the moniker "Revenge of the Schwa" is a convenient shorthand to describe this teaching tool, the metaphor can also be expressed in a more technical way adhering to conventions in the literature of conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 1986, 2010; and others). In traditional metaphoric denotation, the Revenge of the Schwa scheme would map to the conceptual metaphor of Vowel Sounds are Opponents, with vowel sounds acting as the *target domain* and opponents as the *source domain*—a metaphor befitting the struggle for stress alternation that is typical of English pronunciation.

4.1 Presenting the Metaphor

Initially the Vowel Sounds are Opponents metaphor can be presented in two-syllable nouns and verbs that share orthography but differ in pronunciation. Most English pronunciation textbooks include a standard list of these word pairs such as "rebel," "contract," "conflict," and others that follow the pattern of having the word stress on the first syllable when used as a noun and on the second syllable when used as a verb (see Appendix 2 for a sample list from Gilbert, 2012). "Rebel," for instance, is pronounced REbəl when used as a noun and rəBEL when used as a verb. This first step typifies one of the simplest word stress rules for ELs to remember: stress usually falls on the first syllable in two-syllable nouns and names.[3] Later the metaphor can be extended to words that are longer than two syllables—ideally in academic word families such as POLitics/poLITical/poliTIcian, which involve multiple stress movements. This second step should coincide with the introduction of more formal word stress patterns, such as the rule that stress falls on the syllable preceding the suffix in words ending in -ic, -ical, -ity, and any of the spellings of the sound /ʃən/ including –tion as in "nation," –sion as in "tension," and –cian as in "statistician."

Alternate ways of presenting this material include the metaphors of Vowel Sounds are Magnets or Vowel Sounds are Competitors, with one vowel always the strongest, overpowering the others and the stress alternation represented by an exchange of—or struggle for—power. Students quickly see in words such as "concentrate," "photograph," or "telephone" that following a stressed syllable is a reduced syllable that is barely audible. These examples come from Gilbert (2012) who depicts the stressed vowel as a figure dancing and taking up a lot of space while the reduced vowel is crouched down and covered with its arms, as if hiding (Gilbert, 2012, p. 28).

Such evocative images quickly underscore the phenomenon of variable stress; its mobility must still be accounted for, and Revenge of the Schwa, or the Vowel Sounds are Opponents metaphor is a prime candidate for this job. It is also pos-

[3] This rule is easily demonstrated with items found in the classroom such as TAble and PAper, or names such as CATHy or PATrick before presenting more complex stress patterns.

sible for learners to imagine that the Vowel Sounds are Riders on a See-saw, always alternating in strength (stress) and audibility. Only one syllable can be the "most powerful" at any given time and its power in a derived academic word often comes from reducing the vowel sound that was previously stressed, as the datas in Table 1 above establish.

5 Discussion

Because of the nature of English word stress patterns, the metaphors employed above are a subclass of all possible conceptual metaphors: *relational metaphors*. Instructors teaching word stress through the Revenge of the Schwa metaphor are proposing to students that the relationship between vowel sounds is akin to the relationship between rival parties seeking revenge. The metaphor can therefore be assessed along the dimensions of (1) whether or not the vowel sounds actually behave as opponents seeking revenge upon one another—with no single opponent holding all the power at any given time—and (2) whether the concept of revenge as a relational action can be universally understood by English Learners the world over. With regard to the first dimension, Roca and Johnson's (1999) discussion of word stress patterns leaves no question that "English and languages with similar metrical systems strongly resist stress clash" (Roca & Johnson, 1999, p. 304). With regard to the second dimension, exploring whether revenge is a universal concept may be germane, as a relational metaphor will work cross-culturally only with learners whose cultures experience the same types of relationships.

5.1 Cultural Dimensions of Relational Metaphors

Evidence of revenge as a behavior has been documented since biblical times, and references to revenge in literature abound since Homer (Pinker, 2011, p. 529). This surfeit of information on revenge as a universal human drive bodes well for the use of the Vowel Sounds are Opponents metaphor in a classroom of ELs from a wide variety of countries and cultural traditions. Pinker (2011) proposes that revenge "may have been programmed into people's brains by evolution, cultural norms, or both in order to deter opponents from carrying out bad behavior" (Pinker, 2011, p. 325). A revenge metaphor—provided that it does not adversely trigger learners' affective filters—could therefore be a useful teaching tool to access emotional states shared by all learners.

Many emotional states are ripe for transformation into metaphors that call forward students' universal knowledge. Kövecses (1986) investigates whether anger is a common experience across cultures and he poses the question of whether emotions are "just amorphous 'feelings'" or whether they have some cognitive content that may point to their universal nature (Kövecses, 1986, p. 11). He discusses metaphors of anger and demonstrates that a sense of struggle or opponent is common in metaphors that help us to understand emotional effects as physical effects because it "produces undesirable physiological reactions" (Kövecses, 1986, p. 22). These emotive components make for great teaching and learning, echoing Ortony's sentiment that it is the vividness of metaphors, above all, that is responsible for their educational value. Ortony (1975) offers that "the vividness of metaphor is not restricted to visual aspects alone; it extends to all sensory modalities as well as to emotive power" (Ortony, 1975, p. 51). This emotive power makes metaphor resonate in the classroom and long after the lesson is over, as the emotional nature of a metaphor, when held in check, can also help students remember an explanation longer.

5.2 Other Metaphors in the Pronunciation Classroom

Many other metaphors can be used in the pronunciation classroom to help introduce students to the English sound system. Speakers of Japanese who are studying English face enormous difficulty distinguishing the sounds /l/ and /r/—both in their listening comprehension and their speech production—because these sounds are allophonic in Japanese. To master the distinction, Japanese learners of English must focus on producing the /l/ sound near the front of their mouths and the /r/ sound farther back, in addition to some other fine-tuning that can help distinguish the two sounds. This distance is tiny inside the mouth and often unmanageable for an untrained speaker, but the concept is simple enough that it lends itself to many teaching metaphors that can double as mnemonic devices for students to remember which sound is which. An instructor could frame this as a metaphor for American individualism—exaggerating the point that the /l/ and /r/ sounds each want their own identity rather than coalescing in the middle. Another metaphor to use to represent the phonetic difference between these two sounds is to have students imagine the /l/ and /r/ sounds moving East to West on a map in order to create more distance between the two sounds when they produce them, as if the two sounds were metaphorical Travelers on Divergent Paths.

The /r/ sounds itself, because it inordinately colors the sounds of preceding vowels more than other post-vocalic consonant sounds, has been described as a "troublemaker" (Gavruseva, 2004), and because it can be syllabic and often acts as a vowel itself, /r/ can be described through metaphors of personification that help to describe its behavior in various phonological environments. Finally, when teaching vowel sounds, many instructors will describe vowels "spreading out" as do people in an elevator to take up as much space as is available (Winkler, 2012, p. 264).

5.3 Implications for Metaphorical Competence

Metaphorical competence is found to be of increasing importance in the second/foreign language classroom to develop learners' ability to use and recognize figurative language. Hoang (2014) presents a comprehensive list of studies that delve into the nature and function of metaphor awareness in the second language classroom. She reviews research suggesting that metaphor awareness-raising activities can aid in the interpretation of literature as well as enhance cross-linguistic awareness, learner autonomy, and critical thinking (Sacristán, 2009, as cited in Hoang, 2014, p. 3). Teaching through metaphor and having students create their own metaphors for the abstract concepts they encounter affords students a golden opportunity to enhance their metaphorical competence in real time during the course of a lesson such as Revenge of the Schwa.

6 Future Directions

Action research in the area of teaching pronunciation through metaphor could guide students to craft their own comparisons of what the stress variability and mobility remind them of. Additionally, a researcher might explore whether the positive connotation of friendship and cooperation in the Vowel Sounds are Riders on a See-saw metaphor is more memorable than the negative connotations inherent in Vowel Sounds are Opponents. Another avenue of future research on the application of these teaching techniques would be to collect and analyze student data establishing baseline measures of both metaphorical competence and pronunciation of complex suffixation and then assess the value of teaching English word stress through the metaphors described above. Finally, an immediate follow-up project to the present study would be to offer teachers a reorganization[4] of the *Academic Word List* that groups words in such a way as to facilitate the teaching of pronunciation and word stress patterns. Because grammar and speaking instruction are often separated in English language programs, an emphasis on helping learners navigate the connections between part of speech and pronunciation in academic vocabulary is crucial for scholastic success.

7 Conclusion

Revenge of the Schwa and other metaphors described in this chapter add to a rich body of literature on using metaphor in the classroom, specifically to help ELs learn abstract concepts—linguistic or otherwise. Education reformer Lisa Delpit has visited hundreds of high-performing schools where she finds that some of the best teachers are "using metaphors to connect the knowledge students brought to school with the new content being introduced" (Delpit, 2012, p. 75). Teaching through metaphor kindles learning by activating ELs' universal sensory experiences and established content knowledge. Revenge of the Schwa and other metaphorical rep-

[4] In preparation by the author.

resentations ease the daunting phonological work to be done by ELs, their teachers, and students of English linguistics. Once in the realm of metaphorical thinking, several other comparisons will readily come to mind for both instructors and their students.

Appendix 1: Derivational Affixation Leading to One or More Alternations and Vowel Reductions in Academic Vocabulary Samples

Word/Part of Speech	Pronunciation	Derivation	Pronunciation	Type of Alternation
ridicule (v. /n.)	RIdəcule	ridiculous (adj.)	rəDICulous	*Single revenge* (Stressed vowel and schwa trade places)
emphasis (n.)	EMphəsis	emphatic (adj.)	əmPHATic	
ontology (n.)	onTOLəgy	ontological (adj.)	ontəLOgical	
economy (n.)	eCONəmy	economic (adj.)	ecəNOMic	
geometry (n.)	geOMətry	geometric (adj.)	geəMETric	
strategy (n.)	STRATəgy	strategic (adj.)	strəTEgic	
hypothesis (n.)	hyPOTHəsis	hypothetical (adj.)	hypəTHETical	
labor (n.)	LAbər	laborious (adj.)	ləBORious	
drama (n.)	DRAmə	dramatic (adj.)	drəMAtic	
image (n.)	IMəge	imagine (v.)	əMAgine	
rapid (adj.)	RApəd	rapidity (n.)	rəPIDity	
academy (n.)	əCADəmy	academic (adj.)	acəDEMəc	*Double revenge* (Stressed vowel is “surrounded by” two schwa syllables)
psychology (n.)	psyCHOLəgy	psychological (adj.)	psychəLOGəcal	
method (n.)	METHəd	methodical (adj.)	məTHODəcal	
illustrate (v.)	ILLəstrate	illustrative (adj.)	əllUSstrətive	
demonstrate (v.)	DEmənstrate	demonstrative (adj.)	dəMONstrətive	
minor (adj.)	MInər	minority (n.)	məNORəty	
exhibit (v.)	əxHIBit	exhibition (n.)	exhəBItion	*Cascade* (Schwa becomes secondary stress; primary stress becomes schwa; secondary stress becomes primary stress)
specific (adj.)	spəCIFic	specificity (n.)	specəFIcity	

Appendix 2: English Word Stress in Two-Syllable Nouns and Verbs

Word	Part of speech	Pronunciation	Part of speech	Pronunciation
Address	Noun	ADDress	Verb	əDRESS
Compound	Noun	COMpound	Verb	cəmPOUND
Conduct	Noun	CONduct	Verb	cənDUCT
Conflict	Noun	CONflict	Verb	cənFLICT
Contrast	Noun	CONtrast	Verb	cənTRAST
Convert	Noun	CONvert	Verb	cənVERT
Detail	Noun	DEtail	Verb	dəTAIL
Escort	Noun	EScort	Verb	əsCORT
Produce	Noun	PROduce	Verb	prəDUCE
Progress	Noun	PROgress	Verb	prəGRESS
Project	Noun	PROject	Verb	prəJECT
Protest	Noun	PROtest	Verb	prəTEST
Refund	Noun	REfund	Verb	rəFUND
Present	Noun	PREsənt	Verb	prəSENT
Rebel	Noun	REbəl	Verb	rəBEL
Record	Noun	REcərd	Verb	rəCORD

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Interpersonal Interaction of Metadiscursive Nouns in Academic Discourse: Comparative Study on Native English and Chinese Writers

Ping Huang and Shuai Xu

Abstract Metadiscursive nouns (such as *fact*, *belief*, *analysis*) are frequently utilized in academic discourse to encapsulate chunk of information and make prediction on what is going to be present. However, less discussed is the interpersonal interaction made by metadiscursive nouns employed by scholars from different cultures. In this chapter, we explore interpersonal function (for example, stance construction) of metadiscursive nouns present in "metadiscursive nouns + *that* complement" structure with 60 research articles written by Chinese and English writers.

The results reveal that Chinese writers tend to use less nouns of almost each category to construct discourse due to their inadequacies of English knowledge and the following of local academic community. Native writers show preference to use nouns of quality to enhance their propositions and win credibility for the research using positive quality nouns. At the same time, some pedagogical implications can be applied to promote L2 academic writing.

Keywords Metadiscursive nouns · Academic discourse · Complement structure · Interpersonal interaction

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Academic writing, which is an objective and impersonal kind of discourse designed to deal with the presentation of facts, has been thoroughly examined in the past two decades. However, it is the nature of academic discourse that persuades readers and

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engages with them as well. Social interaction in academic discourse has attracted considerable attention. Features such as citation, hedges, first person pronouns boosters and attitude markers are investigated from differenct perspectives (e.g., Hyland, 2004, 2005a, 2005b; Biber, 2006). There is one feature that gains less attention. It is the use of nouns to promote writers' persuasive goals. Some studies concern nouns' cohesive function in organizing discourse (e.g., Flowerdew & Forest, 2015; Francis, 1986).

Research on metadiscursive nouns has gained considerable attention in the past decades. It is Francis (1986) who firstly presents the term metadiscursive nouns interchangeably with "anaphoric nouns," referring to the cohesive function of nouns. Various names have been labelled to illustrate these nouns, for Halliday and Hasan (1976) *general nouns*, for Ivanič (1991) *carrier nouns*, for Schmid (2000) *shell nouns,* and for Flowerdew (2003, 2015) they are *signaling nouns*.

As most of these names suggest, however, authors have mainly concerned with the discourse-organizing functions of these nouns, focusing on the role they perform as a cohesive device by reviewing or previewing the previous or upcoming discourse. They fail to give systematic exploration of the stance-taking characters of these nouns. In this chapter, we cast our eyes to a less mentioned interpersonal function of metadiscursive nouns that express writers' attitude to propositions and stance taken by them.

The interpersonal functions of metadiscourse are investigated in presenting attitudes or stance towards propositions in 52 research articles written by both Chinese and English authors. We also attempt to investigate the similarities and differences on the employment of noun use and conclude some patterns of use in different cultural backgrounds.

2 Metadiscursive Nouns

2.1 Definition of Metadiscursive Nouns

The term metadiscursive nouns is firstly present by Francis (1986) interchangeably with "anaphoric nouns," referring to the cohesive function of nouns. They are frequently used in academic discourse (Charles, 2003, 2007; Gardner & Davies, 2013; Flowerdew & Forest, 2015). However, different names are employed to illustrate their interactive functions based on different research angles.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) refer metadiscursive nouns to *general nouns* because they play roles in establishing lexical cohesion through the generalized reference within the major noun classes such as *idea* and *business*. Francis (1986) describes the anaphoric features of what she names *anaphoric nouns*. In contrast, Tadros (1993) investigates *enumerable nouns* that predict upcoming discourse. Ivanič (1991) used *carrier nouns* to show their organizing function from in-clause as well as across clause. Schmid (2000) describes *shell nouns* as "conceptual shells" mainly from cognitive viewpoint. Flowerdew (2003) and Forest's (2015) *signaling nouns* regard this types of nouns as cohesive signals from discourse perspective.

Despite a spate of interests have been distributed to the understanding of abstract nouns, it is Schmid (2000) who first carried out systematic study of them based on large corpus. His pioneering works identify *shell nouns* using objective criteria and describe their semantic features and multi-functions in detail. According to Schmid (2000), *shell nouns* play three functions simultaneously, i.e., "characterization" and "linking" (pp. 14–20). Semantically, *shell nouns* characterize what they refer to and give readers an idea of the shell content. Textually, *shell nouns* phases bear the function of linking shell content.

However, previous definitions delineate metadiscursive nouns in terms of their function in making cohesive discourse and organizing proper propositions, and their stance-taking (interactional) roles receive less attention.

Thus, Jiang and Hyland (2017) make further refinement on the basis of previous research and define *metadiscursive nouns* as "those which refer to the organization of the discourse or the writers' attitude (interactional roles) towards it" (p. 2). For example, this research examines the **notion** that guilt, the negative emotion stemming from a failure to meet a self-held standard of behavior, leads to preferences to the original source of the guilt. [Marketing]

> "Notion" is metadiscursive nouns and their vagueness is remedied by immediate reference. To explain it is unclear what "notion" refers to in (1) until it is specified cataphorically in the subsequent complement clause. (Jiang & Hyland, 2017, pp. 2)

Previous studies on metadiscursive nouns focus on their disciplinary variation. For example, Jiang and Hyland (2018) once explore the function of metadiscursive nouns in eight disciplines from interactional dimension and interactive dimension, respectively. Further study has been conducted on these nouns from both hard and soft science in abstract moves, investigating how they frame and manage arguments as well as claim disciplinary legitimacy (Jiang & Hyland, 2017). Less interests have been arisen in variation on the employment of metadiscursive nouns by Chinese and English writers.

In this chapter, we will compare the pattern of nouns use in Chinese and English native writers in the field of applied linguistics. Some findings on the different performance in same disciplinary community across cultures will be noticed and implications could also be offered to promote Chinese writers' ability in constructing knowledge and publications.

2.2 Categorization of Metadiscursive Nouns

The classification on metadiscursive nouns has experienced a long process of rectification in the past 20 years (Schmid, 2000; Flowerdew & Forest, 2015; Jiang & Hyland, 2015). Different models of metadiscursive nouns cover various perspectives in terms of different emphasis. Schmid's (2000) classification pays much attention to their function semantically but ignores their functional characteristics. As a result, overemphasis of semantic meaning on classification would "fail to distinguish the clear rhetorical options that stance nouns make available to authors (Jiang & Hyland, p. 6).” Additionally, Flowerdew and Forest’s (2015) six-category model on metadiscursive nouns is regarded as unreliable because of its ambiguity in differentiating epistemic judgements of status and assertions of actualities (Jiang & Hyland, 2015). After taking previous studies (Labov, 1972; Thompson & Hunston, 2000) on exploring the ensured function of *the fact that* structure into consideration, Jiang and Hyland (2015) make refinement on the issue and produce the model in Table 1.

This more water-tight classification shows that metadiscursive nouns are used to mark ***entities***, describe ***attributes*** of entities and discuss the ***relations*** between entities.

Nouns that characterize ***entities*** refer to present writers’ judgement or assessment of object, event, discourses, and cognition (Jiang & Hyland, 2015). Nouns representing ***object*** refer to something concrete, for example, *texts*, *papers,* and *extract* are the member of this category. Nouns concerning ***event*** indicate actions, processes, and status of affair. *Change*, *processes,* and *evidence* are normal in the category. ***Discourse*** nouns take a stance to verbal propositions and action of speech, for example, *argument*, *claim,* and *conclusion*. ***Cognition*** nouns refer to beliefs, attitude that writers take, and factor of cognitive decision, such as *decision*, *idea*, *belief,* and *doubt*.

Nouns that concern to ***attribute*** indicate writers’ evaluation of quality, status and formation of entities. ***Quality*** nouns convey the attitude and emotional judgement toward entities. *Advantage*, *difficulty,* and *danger* are frequently used in providing positive or negative evaluation on propositions. Metadiscursive nouns relating to ***manner*** describe circumstances of actions and state of affairs, for example, *time* and *method* and *method* describes the way that they are carried out. ***Status*** nouns make judgement of epistemic, deontic, and dynamic modality. *Possibility* and *trend* could be the representative in the category.

Table 1 Classification of metadiscursive nouns (Jiang & Hyland, 2015, p. 535)

Entity	Description	Examples
Object	Concretizable metatext	Report, paper, extract
Event	Events, processes, status of affairs	Change, process, evidence
Discourse	Verbal propositions and speech acts	Argument, claim, conclusion
Cognition	Cognitive belief and attitudes	Decision, idea, belief, doubt
Attribute	**Description**	**Examples**
Quality	Traits that are admired or criticized, valued or depreciated	Advantage, difficulty, value
Manner	Circumstances of actions and state of affairs	Time, method, way, extent
Status	Epistemic, deontic, and dynamic modality	Possibility, trend, choice, ability
Relation	**Description**	**Examples**
Cause-effect, difference	Cause-effect, difference, relevance	Reason, result, difference

Nouns relating to ***relations*** are concerning with the ways of which writer perceives relationships and relevance in the viewpoints. Nouns such as *reason*, *result,* and *difference* bear the role of speculating the corresponding relationships between the nouns chosen and the proposition expressed.

2.3 Nouns Complement *Construction*

Nouns Complement construction is a grammatical structure in which a head noun takes a nominal complement in following four forms including *that* clause, *to-infinitive, of-prepositional* and *preposition –wh*-clause. Schmid (2000) indicates that syntactic patterns such as *metadiscursive nouns* + *that complement* allow speakers to introduce their attitude towards something "in a highly subtle way" (p. 310). After putting the noun as topic information, the writer suggests that its meaning can be taken for granted (Schmid, 2000).

However, few writers have examined the interpersonal roles of *Noun Complement* clauses. Biber et al. (1999), Biber (2006), and Hyland and Tse (2005a, 2005b) have explored complement clauses and taken it as an important way that writer can syntactically mark their attitude or stance by putting nouns before accompanying propositions. It is Biber (2006) who first recognizes the interpersonal function of *Noun complement* and gives some instructions of so-called epistemic, attitude and communication nouns with focus on frequently used verb and adjective complement clauses. Charles (2007) also realizes the stance-making function but she restricted it to *Noun that* pattern. Her classification of nouns provides a possibility for the further exploration on the issue.

To sum up, the *Noun Complement* construction ensures writers to construct a clear stance by providing a range of stance choices and pre-modification. This stance could fit into the perspectives and conventions of particular discipline and achieves a set of rhetorical practices. We will first describe our method and analysis procedures, then go on to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do Chinese and English writers differ in their choice of metadiscursive nouns? Why?
2. What stance options are available to academic writers through choices of metadiscursive nouns?

3 Methodology

The study aims to explore the employment of metadiscursive nouns by native English writers and Chinese writers and study their stance taken in the impersonal academic writing. Thus, two self-built corpora are constructed to make comparisons between writers from different cultural backgrounds. We will present our procedures on corpora construction, data analysis, and the methodology employed on guiding analysis respectively as follows.

3.1 Construction of Corpus

To carry out a contrastive study of abstracts written by English native and Chinese authors, we constructed a corpus of 52 articles around 40,000 tokens published in two applied linguistics journals: an international journal—*Journal of Second Language Writing* (*JSLW*); a Chinese journal—*Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics* (*CJAL*). The first journal published in the USA is selected as a leading journal of applied linguistics because of its high impact factor present by Incite Journal Citation in 2017. The second journal *CJAL*, serving as a channel to study for the international community, seems to be the only applied linguistics journal published in English in Mainland China. The decision on selecting the top-tier journals was based on the assumption that research articles written by top-tier researchers could be regarded as the modeling paper in academic community.

To ensure the study was conducted with least variables, the number tokens in two corpora must be strictly controlled to get relative equal tokens. First, we selected 30 research articles of each journal and compared their overall tokens using *AntConc*. However, we found that the total number of tokens in *JSLW* has enormously outnumbered that of *CJAL*, which could negatively influence the results as the inequality in tokens may indicate the difference on employment of metadiscursive nouns could be attributed to the different length of articles rather than what we plan to compare. After reducing the *JSLW* to 22 articles, we found that the number of two corpora are relatively equal.

Additionally, all the articles were selected from issues published between 2012 and 2017 because sampling articles published in recent period was to reflect the features of "present-day" academic research writing (Biber & Gray, 2016).

Another important consideration in this study was the identification of authors' L1 status. It was more straightforward to determine Chinese authors publishing in *CJAL* as their Chinese names and affiliations to institutions in China were highly indicative. To identify the native English-speaking writers, names concerning Anglophone origin were first identified, and then institutional affiliations were examined to look into their personal information available at the homepage. The articles whose author's name appear to be vague will be excluded from our corpus.

3.2 Data Analysis

First, all the PDF format article will be converted into TXT format using AntFileConverter (), which is an automatic file converting software with relatively high accuracy. To wipe out all the messy codes in the conversion, we further clean and edit the materials by TextEditor, a simple and user-friendly file editing software allowing people to process disorder materials in piles. Since we plan to search metadiscursive nouns at syntactic level, especially *Nouns Complement Construction*, we would tag the materials using *Treetagger 2.0*, an automatic tagging software with correction rate higher than 95% which means there still exist 5% possibilities of having errors on tagging. Biber and Gray (2011) also admit that the automated tagging system is not completely accurate.

Thus, after uploading all the tagged materials into AntConc (), we will input

NN∗ to_TO#VV for *Noun to do*
NN∗ that for *Noun That*
NN∗ of_IN#VVG for *Noun of doing*
NN∗ # IN #WP/ WDT/WRB for *Noun preposition how/what/which*

to search for the four types of *Noun Complement Construction* and extract metadiscursive nouns. Due to the possible wrongly tagged occurrences, we will read the results line by line and manually remove those disqualified occurrences. The software sometimes may identify some of the fixed collocations as *Noun Complement Construction* as they share some common structure, for example, "in order to" and "in terms of" could be recognized as *Noun to do* and *Noun of doing* structure, respectively, which are also removed to guarantee the accuracy of findings.

Finally, all the qualified nouns will be categorized in terms of the classification of metadiscursive nouns established by Jiang and Hyland (2015). The nouns that may be controversial in their classification will be re-examined by another disciplinary insider. All the frequencies will be counted and interpreted on the basis of statistical results.

4 Results and Discussion

We identified 1322 occurrences of metadiscursive nouns in *Noun Complement* clauses in the corpus, an average of 18 cases per article. Metadiscursive nouns occurred significantly more often in research articles written by native English writers than Chinese writers, with 780 in discourse of English writers and 542 in Chinese writers' discourse. Table 2 illustrates the overall frequency of different types of metadiscursive nouns. In other words, 59 percent of all metadiscursive nouns occur in English writers' articles.

The relative absence of the use of metadiscursive nouns in the Chinese writers suggests a less discursive and overtly persuasive discourse (Jiang & Hyland, 2018). Nouns tend to be more technical and disciplinary specific, fully lexicalized within each field and with fixed meaning and no general purpose counterparts (Flowerdew & Forest, 2015). We turn next to expand on our discussion of different appearance of metadiscursive nouns from each functional category of metadiscursive nouns and try to answer the following research questions:

Table 2 Overall frequency of different types of metadiscursive nouns

Entity	English writers	Chinese writers
Object	91	43
Event	189	136
Discourse	54	38
Cognition	122	112
Attribute	**English writers**	**Chinese writers**
Quality	15	18
Manner	135	80
Status	142	106
Relation	**English writers**	**Chinese writers**
Cause-effect, difference	32	9
Total	780	542

1. To what extent do Chinese and English writers differ in their choice of metadiscursive nouns? Why?
2. What stance options are available to academic writers through choices of metadiscursive nouns?

4.1 Choice of Metadiscursive Nouns in Chinese and English Writers

4.1.1 The Use of Entity Metadiscursive Nouns

Entity metadiscursive nouns refer to those conveying writers' judgement of texts, events, discourses, or aspect of cognition. English writers, however, show preference to use entity nouns than Chinese nouns in every aspect with 456 to 329, respectively. We will present examples to illustrate how English writers and Chinese writers project their judgement and take stance respectively and explore the reasons.

The difference of employment of entity nouns concerning concrete metatext is salient in Chinese and English writers. Chinese writers demonstrate reluctance to entity metadiscursive nouns. It is likely that describing and defining information and knowledge using second language is a difficult task for Chinese writers. Our finding is in accordance with Jiang's (2015) research results concerning argumentative writing between Chinese and English writers. The absence of *cognition*, *text,* and *event* metadiscursive nouns is not benefit for writers to construct viewpoints and achieve communicative purposes. In contrast, English writers are more familiar with the way of expressing academic knowledge and strengthening their propositions using *cognition*, *text,* and *event* metadiscursive nouns, for example,

1. Further criticisms might include the *fact* that students had relatively few opportunities to practice drafting and incorporating feedback.

(English Writer)

2. This tends to strengthen the *argument* that feedback is having an effect on the gains informal accuracy and appears, indeed, to be a prerequisite for gains in for malaccuracy to be made.

(English Writer)

Event nouns, as the most frequently used metadiscursive nouns in entity category, are closely related to real-world activities, or empiricism, and cognition types to interpretative rationality, indicating different modes of knowing and sources of knowledge in the disciplines (Chafe & Nichols, 1986). Linguistics, a typical soft science, highly relies on cognitive interpretation and the construction of theoretical modes of understanding. Hyland (2015) found out applied linguistics stand out in taking stance toward events, which reflects the preference of this discipline for empirical research with real-world focus. It may partly explain the situation that both Chinese and native English writers employ a great number of event nouns like *fact*, *interaction,* and so on.

Additionally, Jiang and Hyland (2018) point out that entity metadiscursive nouns play interactive functions to express willingness to "step into their texts to explicitly organize their discourse and set up expectations for the readers of what is to come" (p. 13). The positivity of this authorial intervention to guide readers through the argument shows English writers' confidence and activeness in initiating a discussion and shares the possible promising research results. Chinese writers, in contrast, may still be constricted to cultural conservativeness in China and rarely make strong certainty on what is being discussed. For example,

3. These findings challenge the *belief* that L2 writers plagiarize more frequently than L1 writers due to cultural and linguistic inadequacies.

(English Writer)

4. My role in this study, as a peer-tutor, was thus to provide feedback on linguistic issues of Lu's writing, with the *possibility* of touching upon content issue.

(English Writer)

The author here actively engages the reader, exercising agency by informing readers of "how information can be tracked in the text" (Dahl, 2004). Becher and Trowler (2001) illustrate that linguistics is a relatively "loosely knit academic community." Thus, the use of metadiscursive nouns in the above examples helps to establish a frame of reference and guides readers regarding the grounds for and interpretation of further claims. On the other hand, English writers' activeness could further get readers involved in the communities and persuade them with a strong evidence-based propositions.

Entity metadiscursive nouns also help to create logical coherence from discourse cohesion, shaping texts to what readers will find most familiar and persuasive. If we look back example 3, the authors' *belief* set up perspective reference to the information that follows in the post-nominal clause, creating a cohesive discourse. Due to the unfamiliarity to second language, Chinese writers still need to make promotion in constructing cohesive and water-tight logic in presenting propositions.

4.1.2 The Use of Attribute Metadiscursive Nouns

Attribute metadiscursive nouns concern judgement and evaluations of the quality, status and formation of entities. Within the attribute category, author's judgement always concerned the status of referents, commenting on the certainty or necessity of something. We can see from Table 2 that status and manner attributes take a great proportion of the whole category with only 33 quality attributes.

It is a common sense that academic discourse is an impersonal and objective genre that demands less emotional expression. Thus, writer should deprive of much of their personal bias or judgements to the information subsequent to metadiscursive nouns. However, nouns characterized quality attributes to assess whether something is admired or criticized, valued or depreciated. The less preference of employment of them may indicate that both Chinese and English writers are conscious of academic principles and find their way to follow it as much as possible.

Furthermore, our findings show that both Chinese and English writers display their willingness to positive quality attributes rather than negative ones. Positive judgement could express epistemic certainty of writers' statements and gain credibility for their own research. For example,

5. Regardless of the reason for their different values, this finding points to the *importance* of examining teacher beliefs and values regarding the content that they teach and assisting novice teachers in developing coherent and appropriate pedagogical content values.

   (English writers)
6. Many researchers have realized the *significance* of investigating the relationship between foreign language anxiety and other learner variables.

   (Chinese writers)

Status metadiscursive nouns indicate the author's judgements of epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality (Palmer, 2001). However, Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) describe that authors in applied linguistics frequently add a "descriptive gloss" because of disciplinary characters that subject to contextual and human caprice. As the examples below show, this propositional elaboration may specify an alternative possibility of events.

7. Therefore, there is *possibility* that the relationship between the two constructs is non-linear.

   (English writers)

Chinese writers, however, are not comparable to native English writers in employing status metadiscursive nouns. We would attribute this phenomenon to the English capability gaps in such serious presentation of uncertain disciplines.

4.1.3 The Use of Relation Metadiscursive Nouns

Relation metadiscursive nouns refer to demonstrate how a writer understands the connection or relationship of information to information in a proposition. It functions as the tools to extend the content under discussion and enlarge discourse space

(Jiang, 2015). Chinese writers fail to use relation metadiscursive nouns in present propositions and make connections among them. Native English writers show expertise on developing relationships among propositions and appropriately describe the condition of upcoming content.

8. Even though these factors were identified as influential in oral activities, there is every *reason* to believe that they may also impact upon learner engagement with written tasks and consequently mediate the effectiveness of written CF.

(English writers)

9. A number of researchers have focused on the *effect* of rating experience on rating results.

(English writers)

4.2 Stance Expressions Through the Choice of Metadiscursive Nouns

Current conceptions of stance have encompassed a wide variety of terms to serve the function that convey a speaker or writer's personal attitudes and assessment. In this section, we will analyze what stance has been taken in academic writing by native English writers and Chinese writers.

As we noticed in Table 2, the employment of *entity* metadiscursive nouns, especially nouns concerning *object* and *event*, by English writers has exceedingly outnumbered that of Chinese writers. Nouns which characterize entities do so by either conveying writers' judgement of object, events, discourse, or aspects of cognition (Jiang & Hyland, 2018). The less employment of *entity* by Chinese writers may suggest that making definition on *object* and *event* and describing knowledge territory in a second language could pose challenges to them since a more advanced proficiency of language level is required to delineate knowledge boundaries that may overlap with neighbor community. However, academic discourse requires writers to construct their disciplinary community and try to persuade readers by clearly showing their personal evaluation and judgement. English writers are excel at positioning themselves in the academic discourse and giving clear attitudinal stance to express their evaluation to propositions. For example,

10. Despite the *fact* that writing the monitoring of the output does not need to be carried out in parallel with producing the output, L2 writers might experience difficulties in heeding both linguistic accuracy and the discourse structure in the monitoring process.

(English Writer)

Additionally, English writers also use more *attribute* metadiscursive nouns than that of Chinese writers. Nouns referring to *manner* and *status* are attributed to the gaps between Chinese and English writers.

Manner metadiscursive nouns mainly deal with the circumstances and formation of actions and states of affairs. English writers employ different *manner* nouns to articulate how the experiments or propositions are constructed and show their well-organized steps while drawing conclusion. In contrast, Chinese writers fail to use enough *manner* nouns possibly due to their limited number of vocabularies. For example,

11. This study has shown that conceptual mapping is a useful *means* for advancing students development of genre knowledge, and for providing them with opportunities for reflection.

(English Writer)

Status nouns relate to the judgement of epistemic modality, deontic modality, and dynamic modality (Jiang & Hyland, 2015). Epistemic modality deals with possibility and certainty; deontic modality demonstrates obligation and necessity; and dynamic modality describes ability, opportunity, and tendency. The wide cover of *status* nouns displays *epistemic stance* which marks certainty (or doubt), actuality, precision, or limitation or indicates the source of knowledge or the perspective from which the information is given (Biber et al., 1999). The more employment of *status* nouns by English writers may suggest the fact that they avoid making absolute statements to propositions and leave space for further discussions on disagreement. For example,

12. Therefore, raising the possibility that instrument variability might have had an effect on the findings.

(English Writer)

As for the *relation* nouns, our finding is similar to that of Jiang (2015) about the use of *relation* in Chinese students writing. *Relation* nouns could be helpful in extending content and enlarging discourse space (Jiang, 2015). For example,

13. There is every *reason* to believe that they may also impact upon learner engagement with written tasks and consequently mediate the effectiveness of written task.

(English Writer)

However, Chinese scholars, who share some common points with Chinese students, are also unfamiliar with the function of *relation* nouns and relatively do not create enough space for a further discussion on viewpoints. We suggest that the reason may lie in the difficulties for Chinese writers to unfold a long logic sentence in their second language.

To sum up, compared with Chinese writers, English writers may be much bolder to make personal judgement and evaluations to propositions in academic writing. Meanwhile, they still withhold their commitment to viewpoints by taking epistemic stance. An appropriate extent of stance was taken to gain credibility for what the writers want to convey in a more persuasive manner. Due to the constraints of language proficiency, Chinese writers, however, display insufficient employment of metadiscursive nouns in projecting personal voice and starting a further negotiation of underexplored area. Their authorial visibility could be weakened, which may lead to a less favorable mean on persuasion. Appropriate stance-taking could be a delicate rhetorical craft that requires deep perception of discipline community and skillful display of personal voice in academic writing. To understand the specificity of discipline may provide scholars a more comprehensive perspective to convey their message in a disciplinary approved way.

5 Conclusion

Academic writing is a dynamic form of textual interaction where writers make research claims, express a stance, and get their voice heard. Interpersonal interaction is the means by which academics take ownership of their work: making epistemic and evaluative judgement concerning entities, attributes, and the relations between materials to persuade readers of their right to speak with authority and to establish their reputations. The *Noun Complement* construction is one instrument to achieve this: a constructive way to build stance choosing metadiscursive nouns that can define and characterize the proposition in the complement. We hope to display that the syntactic structure provides writers a powerful way of gaining credit for their ideas.

Our study has sought to establish the frequency and significance of this construction and show how writers from different countries use them to manage their definitions of the world and construct knowledge. The nouns that writers choose are reflection of the thinking patterns and personal capability.

Native English writers are excel at constructing cohesive discourse and take more positive stance in presenting propositions. They show strong ability to make connections between disciplines and real world using relation nouns. When confronting with the topic that carries uncertainties, they will select the nouns with cautiousness and avoid making over definite statements.

Chinese writers, however, display a disadvantage compared to native writers. It is a difficult task for them to define or describe entities using second language. Thus, some rhetorical strategies are employed in an inappropriate way but it is understandable. Additionally, Chinese writers are relative conservative in expressing propositions. We suggest that cultural background may play a role in causing the differences between these two types of writers.

Chinese writers, therefore, should arouse their attention on focusing the specificity of academic writing. Hyland (2002) suggests that the success of ESP approach in equipping writers with writing in a disciplinary approved way supports the specificity of ESP, which could be acquired by catching up linguistic features and informing themselves with community conventions. However, some Chinese writers are exceedingly influenced by the rigid and stiff writing skills acquired at high school or university level for the sake of passing examination. To follow the "standard" way of writing has been a habit of them as soon as they encounter with English writing task. Ignoring the specificity of disciplinary writing would lead to the disqualified writing style that fails to convey propositions approved by community. Thus, it would be necessary for Chinese writers to take disciplinary specificity as a useful tool to manage their process of knowledge construction. Additionally, writing with native English disciplinary counterparts would also be a practical way to improve academic writing without distributing extra time on the correction. Instead, the simulation and immersion to native tones may create a more natural writing style as well as disciplinary writing manners.

Our analyses show that interpersonal interaction is not only a grammatical phenomenon, but also a demonstration of cultural and personal capability. This study contributes to map both the functions and distribution of these nouns across nations, and to apply the functional classification to a wide range. The classification reveals how they can be understood as performing interpersonal interactions and encourages others to include metadiscursive nouns in their research of academic writing.

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A Comparative Study of Attitude Resources in Business News Items from the BBC Homepage and the China Business News Website

Mei Zhou and Zhendi Shang

Abstract Among the three subsystems of the appraisal theory, the attitude system is concerned with the evaluation of people's attitudes and therefore can be useful in detecting the underlying feelings and opinions of authors of different written discourses, such as business news, an effective channel for business communication and interaction. However, until today, compared with other written discourses, relatively few studies have been made to compare and contrast the use of attitude resources in English and Chinese business news items. This chapter aims to compare and contrast the use of different attitude resources in the two small corpora compiled from 30 business news items from the BBC Homepage and the China Business News Website respectively and explore the possible reasons underlying the similarities and differences. The results show that in both the English and the Chinese business news items, the most commonly used attitude subcategory is Appreciation and the social esteem resources within the subcategory of Judgment are favorably employed. As for the differences, there are more un/happiness resources employed in the English news items than those in Chinese. However, the percentage of in/security resources in English is smaller than that in Chinese. In order to contextualize the findings and explore the possible reasons behind these similarities and differences, some examples are provided and elaborated on. Hopefully, this study can not only provide a new insight into the comparative studies on English and Chinese business discourses but also bring some enlightenment for Business English teaching and learning.

Keywords Attitude resources · Business news items · The attitude system · The appraisal theory

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1 Introduction

With the development of globalization, the prosperity of a country or a business organization depends much on their ability to carry out business activities in efficient and innovative ways. Business news, which is essential to business activities, is a good way for business people to obtain the world economic information and get to know the rules and arts of business administration and practices. Although writers of business news items may claim that they are unbiased and objective, it is virtually impossible to avoid interpersonal positions which are brought about by different social and cultural factors in these news items. To understand the information conveyed by writers better, it is worthwhile to investigate the hidden attitudes and interpersonal positions behind business news.

The appraisal theory is one of the theories applied to study the interpersonal position and relationship in news. It was developed within the general theoretical framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in the 1990s and aimed to evaluate the interpersonal meaning, mainly including the attitudes and stances conveyed by language users (Martin & White, 2005). It was not until 2000 that the appraisal theory started to be formally concerned by the world. And the publication of Martin's two books, *Working with Discourse: Meaning beyond the Clause* and *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English*, marked the maturity of the theory.

According to Martin and White (2005, p. 34), "appraisal is one of three major discourse semantic resources constructing interpersonal meaning." It covers three interacting domains, that is, attitude, engagement, and graduation. The attitude system provides the theoretical framework for the present study. Martin and Rose (2003) believe that attitude is concerned with evaluating people's feelings, people's characters, and the value of things. In a word, attitude is closely related to emotions or feelings, and it is a kind of human beings' reaction to the outside stimulation.

There have been many studies on different discourses based on the attitude system. For example, Tian and Wang (2016) chose the statements of defense in Chinese criminal trials as research materials and explored the attitude resources and their distributional features in these statements. Through the analyses, it was found that the most-widely used attitude resource type in these statements was judgment, with appreciation and affect following it. And the distributional features were that in thesis and conclusion, judgment was compulsory; in argument, judgment affiliated by appreciation was compulsory. Moreover, Li and Jiang (2017) used 30 Chinese and 30 English forewords of academic monographs as their research data and made a contrastive analysis of these treatises based upon the attitude system to investigate the resource types and the realizations of attitude. Their findings were as follows: there was no significant difference in affect; for judgment, there was significant difference in the resource types, but no significant difference in the realizations of attitude; as for appreciation, both resource types and the realizations showed significant difference.

Despite the important findings of the previous research, compared with other written discourses the comparative analyses of business news items of different cultural sources based on the attitude system have received relatively little attention from researchers. Therefore, the present study aims to compare the use of different attitude resources in the two small corpora compiled from 30 business news items from the BBC Homepage and the China Business News Website, respectively. By comparing the similarities and differences in the use of the attitude resources in these two corpora of business news items, and uncovering the social cultural reasons underlying these similarities and differences, hopefully, this study can not only provide a new insight into the comparative studies on English and Chinese business discourses but also bring some enlightenment for Business English teaching and learning.

2 Literature Review

2.1 The Theoretical Framework of the Appraisal Theory

The appraisal theory includes three interacting domains—attitude, engagement, and graduation (Martin & White, 2005, p. 35). Since the focuses of the present study are attitude resources in business news items, our emphasis will be put on the attitude system, while engagement and graduation systems will be introduced very briefly.

Attitude refers to a framework of mapping feelings as they are construed in texts with the emphasis on the emotion of interlocutors (Martin & White, 2005, p. 42). That is to say attitude is concerned with people's emotions and feelings. According to Martin and White (2005), attitude has the following features: (1) it can be explicit or implicit; (2) it can be positive or negative; (3) it is gradable in terms of force of attitude; (4) it can be different in aspects of ideology and culture towards a same thing.

Specifically, attitude has three subcategories: affect, judgment, and appreciation, which are concerned with the range of emotional reactions (Martin & White, 2005). Affect concerns with how people identify and express their positive and negative feelings (Martin & White, 2005). And it can be expressed directly or implied, for instance, a person may describe his/her emotion as "I am sad" directly; or his/her unusual behavior—"sits motionless" can be an indirect sign of sadness. Furthermore, Martin and White (2005) point out that affect is gradable. A case in point is that "like, love, adore" differ in degree for the expression of happiness. In the same way, "dislike, hate, detest" can be used to show degree of unhappiness. The realizations of affect can be divided into three subsets: un/happiness, in/security, and dis/satisfaction (Martin & White, 2005). The un/happiness deals with feelings about the state of mind, be happy or sad; the in/security means how we feel about the environs and people who share the environs with us, be peaceful or anxious; and the dis/satisfaction mainly focuses on feelings of achievement and frustration aroused by the activities we are engaged in as either participants or spectators (Martin & White, 2005).

Judgment refers to the fact that people's behavior is evaluated positively or negatively in line with some moral or legal values (Martin & White, 2005). To be specific, it deals with the attitudes towards actions, deeds, sayings, beliefs, motivations of human individuals and groups, and so on, which will be admired or criticized, or be praised or condemned. Judgment can be subdivided into two groups: social esteem and social sanction (Martin & White, 2005). Social esteem is concerned with normality, capacity, and tenacity, among which normality refers to whether the behavior of a person conforms to the norm; capacity is about the evaluation that if a person is capable, and tenacity is related to whether a person is dependable (Martin & White, 2005). Social sanction is relevant to veracity and propriety, the former concerns how truthful someone is, and the latter concerns how ethical someone is (Martin & White, 2005).

Appreciation focuses on the assessment of "things," including things and performance made by people like TV shows, paintings, buildings, plays, and parades; as well as natural phenomena like sunrise, sunset, and stars (Martin & Rose, 2003). As with affect and judgment, appreciation can be positive and negative, for instance, "a beautiful relationship" is described positively while "a broken relationship" is expressed negatively. The realizations of appreciation include three subsets—reaction, composition, and valuation (Martin & White, 2005). Reaction deals with the question: does this thing catch our attention, and does it please us (Martin & White, 2005)? Composition is concerned with things' balance and complexity, and valuation refers to the evaluation of objects' social value and worth (Martin & White, 2005).

Besides attitude, the other two interacting domains of the appraisal theory include engagement and graduation (Martin & White, 2005, p. 35). Engagement deals with sourcing attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse (Martin & White, 2005). That is to say, it concerns how speakers or writers get their meanings and stances across, and how they persuade their audiences and readers. Graduation is relevant to grading the evaluations involved—how strong or weak the feeling is (Martin & White, 2005). It refers to the strength and degree of evaluation, and as Martin and White (2005) proposed, it is a feature of attitudinal meaning and engagement values, which can be applied to modify attitude and engagement.

The framework of the appraisal theory is shown in Fig. 1 below.

2.2 Relevant Research Based on the Attitude System of the Appraisal Theory

Since the appearance of the appraisal theory, the attitude system has drawn more and more attention from researchers both in China and abroad. An example worth mentioning is Don's study (1997), which analyzed the attitude resources in e-mail discourses. Through the analysis, Don found that the attitude resources can convey writers' stance and the complex relationship between register and stance. In 2000,

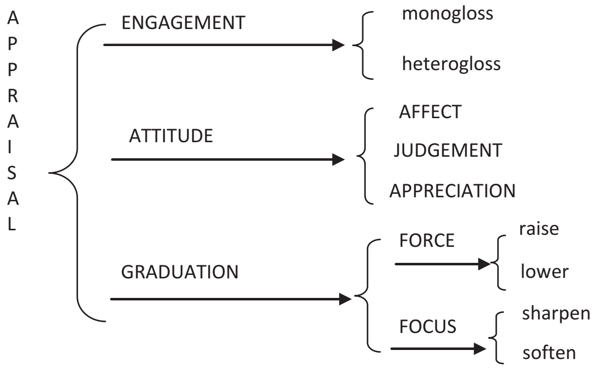

Fig. 1 The framework of the appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005: 38)

Rothery and Stenglin (2000) conducted a study to explore the attitude resources used in literary comments by Australian students. They found that the comments which contained more explicit judgment resources scored higher than those with fewer or no explicit judgment resources. It was also found that few appreciation resources were used in students' literary comments. Rothery and Stenglin attributed these facts to the Australian education, which they claimed to have attached great importance to cultural values and moral behaviors of students. Birot (2008) analyzed news focusing on the same issue of the fifth anniversary of the Iraq war but from different agencies (BBC, CNN, and Alijazeera), from the aspects of attitude resources. His study showed that in media reporting the occurrence of appreciation pattern was much more than that of judgment pattern, and the occurrence of judgment was slightly more than that of affect pattern. And the "Iraq war" was reported from different levels of negative perspectives in different reports. Given that, he concluded that different media agencies' perspectives of reporting were different because of various social cultural reasons.

In China, many scholars and researchers have explored attitude resources in various discourses such as news discourses, book review discourses, business discourses, and so on. Drawing on the attitude system, especially the judgment subcategory, Tian (2011) analyzed economic hard news (50 in English, 46 in Chinese) and found that social esteem resources were more favorably employed than social sanction resources in both Chinese and English hard news. Also in 2011, Lan (2011) conducted a study to dig out the evaluation strategies of English academic book reviews based on the attitude system. Through the analysis of the attitude resources in ten sample book reviews, the research showed that the appreciation resources exceeded the resources of judgment and affect, and the usage of judgment was more than that of affect. In 2013, Xu and Xia (2013) collected 20 Chinese and 20 English company profiles, and probed into the layout of the attitude resources and their realizations in those company profiles. The research showed that both Chinese and English company profiles contained many judgment and appreciation resources, but English company profiles contained more affect resources than those in Chinese company profiles.

As we can see, the previous research has explored the attitude resources in different written discourses. However, relatively few studies have been conducted to compare and contrast the use of attitude resources in English and Chinese business news items. It is worthwhile to embark on such an effort to explore the issue because business news items are important channels for business communication and interaction in this age of globalization.

3 Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

The two small corpora used in this study consisted of 30 pieces of Chinese and English business news, respectively, which were selected based on the following two principles.

First, for the representativeness and reliability of the data, the English news items were collected from the official website of BBC News, and the Chinese news items were collected from China Business News Website (www.comnews.cn). Both of the two websites are influential, which bring domestic and foreign business information and provide world business service to people who are interested in business dealings. Second, to minimize the selection bias, the targeted news items were limited to those focusing on the topic of trade and published from January, 2017 to August, 2017. Based on these two criteria, the news items for analysis were randomly chosen from the two websites. The main information of the collected data was shown in Table 1. More details including the titles and word number of each news item can be found in Appendices 1 and 2. The gap in the word number between English and Chinese may result from the differences in word counting. For instance, though "trade" in English has the same meaning as "贸易" in Chinese, the former counted as one word while the latter counted as two words.

3.2 Research Procedures

To conduct the research, both the qualitative method and the quantitative method were adopted. Specifically, the qualitative method was applied to identify and mark the attitude resources in the Chinese and English business news according to Martin and White's categorization (2005), and then it was adopted to probe into

Table 1 Information of the collected data

	English Business News	Chinese Business News
Number	30	30
Total words	22,890	42,365
Time duration	January 2017–August 2017	January 2017–August 2017
Sources	http://www.bbc.com/	http://www.comnews.cn/

the possible social cultural reasons behind the similarities and differences. As for the quantitative method, SPSS 22 software was employed to analyze the attitude resources in the collected news items, including the descriptive analysis and the chi-square tests. The former reveals the frequencies and occurrences of the attitude resources in the Chinese and the English business news items and the latter aimed to check if there were significant differences in the usage of attitude resources between these two corpora.

The research procedures of this study mainly consisted of the following phases. First, the business news items saved in TXT format were analyzed word by word by the authors twice to identify and label the attitude resources according to the categorization of attitude resources put forward by Martin and White (2005) (see Appendices 3, 4, and 5). Second, two of the authors' friends who also had a sound understanding of the appraisal theory did a favor to identify and mark the different attitude resources in the two small corpora again, to ensure the accuracy of the identification and marking. Third, differences in the identification and annotation were discussed in detail to make a final decision. All these efforts were made to minimize subjectivity as much as possible. Fourth, the frequencies and occurrences of the different attitude resources used in the collected business news items were calculated. Last but not least, the chi-tests were carried out to check if there were significant differences in the usage of different attitude resources between Chinese and English. After that the similarities and differences were discussed, and possible social cultural reasons for them were explored.

3.3 Research Questions

The present study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the similarities and differences in the overall usage of attitude resources in English and Chinese business news items?
2. What are the similarities and differences in the usage of the three subcategories of attitude resources in English and Chinese business news items?
3. What might be the causes for these similarities and differences?

4 Results

4.1 Overall Analysis of the Attitude Resources in the Selected Business News Items

The overall results of the usage of the attitude resources in the selected English and Chinese business news items are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Attitude resources used in the selected English and Chinese business news items

	Affect		Judgment		Appreciation		Total					
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	$\chi 2$	df	Cramer's V	Sig. (2-tailed)
E	56	23.7	51	21.6	129	54.7	236	100	0.90	2	0.044	0.64
C	61	23.6	65	25.1	133	51.3	259	100				

Table 2 indicates that firstly, English and Chinese do not demonstrate a significant difference in the overall usage of attitude resources: χ^2 (2, $N = 495$) = 0.90, Cramer's V = 0.044, $p > 0.05$. Furthermore, it can be seen from the table that the most commonly used attitude resources are appreciation in both English and Chinese business news. To be specific, in English business news, the occurrence of appreciation is 54.7%, and in Chinese business news, it takes up 51.3%. In terms of differences, in English, the percentage of the affect resources is larger than that of the judgment resources (23.7% vs. 21.6%), However, in Chinese, the percentage of the affect resources is less than that of the judgment resources (23.6% vs. 25.1%).

4.2 Affect Resources

Affect concerns with how people identify and express their positive and negative feelings. According to Martin and Rose (2003), it covers three subsets: un/happiness, in/security, and dis/satisfaction. The results of the usage of the affect resources are displayed in Table 3.

From the Table 3 above, we can see that in general the three subsets of affect show a significant difference between English and Chinese news: χ^2 (2, $N = 117$) = 8.391, Cramer's V = 0.268, $p < 0.05$. First, in terms of the most commonly used subset, in English, it is un/happiness, and it accounts for 50.0%, while in Chinese, the in/security takes the dominant position with the percentage of 42.6%. Second, the percentage of un/happiness in English is much higher than that in Chinese (50.0% vs. 24.6%). Third, with regard to the occurrence of in/security, there is a big gap between English and Chinese. In English, it is 25.0%, but in Chinese it is 42.6%. Fourth, in the aspect of the frequency of dis/satisfaction, in English it accounts for 25.0%, while in Chinese it is higher than that in English with the percentage of 32.8%.

4.3 Judgment Resources

Judgment is concerned with the attitude towards people and their behaviors. And it can be subdivided into two groups: social esteem and social sanction (Martin & White, 2005). The results of the usage of social esteem and social sanction resources are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 3 Affect resources used in the selected English and Chinese business news items

	Un/ happiness		In/security		Dis/ satisfaction		Total					
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	$\chi2$	df	Cramer's V	Sig. (2-tailed)
E	28	50.0	14	25.0	14	25.0	56	100	8.391	2	0.268	0.02
C	15	24.6	26	42.6	20	32.8	61	100				

Table 4 Judgment resources used in the selected English and Chinese business news items

	Social esteem		Social sanction		Total					
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	$\chi2$	df	Cramer's V	Sig. (2-tailed)
E	31	60.8	20	39.2	51	100	0.007	1	0.008	0.93
C	40	61.5	25	38.5	65	100				

From the chi-square test results in Table 4, there exists no significant difference in the usage of judgment subcategories between Chinese and English business news: χ^2 (1, $N = 116$) = 0.007, Cramer's V = 0.008, $p > 0.05$. It is shown that in both Chinese and English business news, social esteem resources are more favorably employed than social sanction resources. Specifically, in English news, social esteem resources take up 60.8% while social sanction resources account for 39.2%. In Chinese news, the gap between the two subsets is a bit larger, with 61.5% for social esteem resources and 38.5% for social sanction resources.

4.4 Appreciation Resources

Appreciation focuses on the assessment of "things" and reaction, composition, and valuation are its three subsets (Martin & White, 2005). The results of the usage of appreciation resources employed in the selected English and Chinese business news are presented in Table 5.

As for the comparison of the usage of appreciation resources between Chinese and English business news, as indicated in Table 5, the results do not show a significant difference: χ^2 (2, $N = 262$) = 4.877, Cramer's V = 0.136, $p > 0.05$. It can be seen that in both English and Chinese, the occurrence of valuation exceeds that of reaction and composition. However, in English, the percentage of reaction is 34.9%, and it is much higher than the percentage of composition, which is only 18.6%. However, in Chinese, the percentage of both reaction and composition is the same.

In summary, according to the results of the descriptive analysis and the chi-square tests mentioned above, the similarities and differences in the use of the attitude resources in English and Chinese business news can be concluded as follows. In terms of similarities, there are three points worth mentioning. First, the most commonly used subcategory in the attitude system is appreciation in both English and Chinese business news. Second, as for the judgment resources, it is found that

Table 5 Appreciation resources used in the selected English and Chinese business news items

	Reaction		Composition		Valuation		Total					
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	$\chi2$	df	Cramer's V	Sig. (2-tailed)
E	45	34.9	24	18.6	60	46.5	129	100	4.877	2	0.136	0.09
C	30	22.6	30	22.6	73	54.9	133	100				

social esteem resources are more favorably employed than social sanction resources. Third, within the appreciation resource, in both English and Chinese business news items, the occurrence of valuation resources exceeds those of reaction and composition resources. On the other hand, six major differences have been discovered in this study. To start with, as for the overall difference in the attitude system, in English, the affect resources are preferred to judgment resources, while in Chinese, the affect resources are employed less than judgment resources. Besides, within the affect resources, there are four differences. First, in terms of the most commonly used resources, in English, it is un/happiness, while in Chinese, the in/security takes the dominant position. Second, the percentage of un/happiness in English is much higher than that in Chinese. Third, the occurrence of in/security in English is smaller than that in Chinese. Fourth, the percentage of dis/satisfaction in English is also smaller than that in Chinese. In addition, under the subcategory appreciation, the percentage of reaction is 34.9% in English, and it is much higher than the percentage of composition. However, in Chinese, the frequency of occurrence of reaction and composition is the same.

5 Discussion

Due to the limitations of time and space, two major similarities and two major differences mentioned above will be discussed below to explore the reasons behind them.

5.1 Possible Reasons for the Similarities

Although English and Chinese are two different languages, some similarities in the use of attitude resources are shared by English and Chinese business news items.

The first similarity is that the most commonly used subcategory in the attitude system is appreciation in both English and Chinese business news (54.7% and 51.3%). According to Martin and Rose (2003), appreciation can be supposed as the institutionalization of feeling, in the context of propositions (norms about how products and performances are valued). The reason for this similarity may be due to the globalization trend in today's world. Globalization is a trend of worldwide integration and interaction between different countries and cultures. During this process, English that is more adaptable and flexible in taking in words and phrases from other languages becomes the world language (Hu, 2007) and brings western culture to the world. Furthermore, with the increased global interactions, eastern thinking ways and western thinking ways attract, influence and complement each other, which helps to promote integration and systematicness in modern thinking patterns (Lian, 2002). Influenced by the practices of global business transactions, businessmen all over the world get more and more used to companies' or products' international standardization. Consequently, appreciation—the norms of how "things" around us are evaluated—becomes similar. In this age of globalization, both people at home and those abroad evaluate "things" from all dimensions of appreciation: reaction, composition, and valuation. Two examples are provided below to give a deeper insight into the use of appreciation in English and Chinese business news .

1. Jeep, which celebrated its 75th birthday last year, is considered FCA's *most valuable* (**appreciation**) asset.
2. 这里生产的瓷器会有用于防伪的款识, 在世界各地<u>享有盛誉</u> (**appreciation**).

In the above example (1), "most valuable" is identified as appreciation in the English corpus, as it is related to the evaluation of the value of Jeep. In the example (2) extracted from the Chinese corpus, the phrase "享有盛誉" (which means "enjoy an excellent reputation" in English) is classified into the category of appreciation because it is concerned with the evaluation of the value of a special kind of porcelain. From the examples above, it can be seen that appreciation resources are frequently used in both English and Chinese business news items to evaluate a product or a specific business activity.

The second similarity is that the social esteem resources within judgment subcategory are favorably employed in both English (60.8%) and Chinese (61.5%) business news. Judgment is about how people should and should not behave, and the social esteem involves admiration and criticism, typically with moral implications (Martin & White, 2005). Therefore, this finding indicates that in business activities, both Chinese and western people attach importance to their social status and want to get respect from others. Two examples are provided to deepen our understanding about the use of social esteem resources.

3. "It is clear that *irresponsible behaviour* (**social esteem**) by some lenders is making people's debt situation worse," said Gillian Guy, chief executive of Citizens Advice.
4. 2016 年底, <u>备受争议的</u> (**social esteem**) Twitter 大中华区负责人 Kathy Chen 也主动离职

In example (3), some leaders' behavior is judged as "irresponsible" by the speaker, which can be identified as criticism in social esteem resources. In example (4), the phrase "备受争议的" (which means "much criticized" in English) is also relevant to criticism in social esteem resources. From these two examples, we can see that both Chinese people and western people cherish their reputation and social status, especially in business activities. Irresponsible behaviour and misconduct are not to be tolerated. Therefore, social esteem resources which are related to admiration or criticism of people's behaviors can be easily found in both English and Chinese business news items.

5.2 Possible Reasons for the Differences

First, within the subcategory of affect, there are more un/happiness resources employed in English (50.0%) than in Chinese (24.6%) business news. That is to say, westerners are more likely to use direct expressions concerned with “affairs of the heart”—sadness, anger, happiness, and love. For instance, it is said that there are more direct expressions like “pleased” in English than those in Chinese. Examples below are provided for a better understanding of this difference.

5. PwC said: “We co-operated fully during the FRC’s thorough investigation and are *pleased* (**happiness**) that the FRC has closed it without any further action.”
6. 有些人<u>渴望</u>得到青花瓶.

In the above example (5), a direct expression “pleased” is used to show the speaker’s emotion. However, in example (6), though the phrase “渴望” (which means “eager to do something” in English) may contain a vague meaning of happiness, it is an implicit expression to show people’s feeling and cannot be classified into the category of un/happiness resources categorized by Martin and White (2005). This phenomenon may result from the cultural difference between China and western countries. Guan and Yang (2011) point out that China has a high context culture, yet western society has a low context culture. And this difference leads to the fact that Chinese are used to expressing their feelings and emotions in a more implicit and reserved way, whereas westerners are more likely to communicate explicitly. Therefore, more direct expressions which are related to un/happiness resources are found in English business news items.

Second, also within the subcategory of affect, the occurrence of in/security in English (25.0%) is smaller than that in Chinese (42.6%). The in/security is relevant to emotions that concern ecosocial well-being (Martin & White, 2005). That is to say, the in/security is concerned with how we feel about the environs and people who share the environs with us and it focuses on the situation of people’s relationships. Therefore, the difference in the use of in/security resources may result from the cultural difference between China and western countries. Huang (2001) supposes that each speech community has its particular history, cultural patterns, customs, thinking patterns, morality, and valuation. And the ways and factors reflecting the characteristics of any single speech community form the “cultural context” as mentioned by discourse analyzers (Huang, 2001). And according to Gee (2000), when we read paragraphs or discourses, we should consider such a question, “What is the relevant cultural pattern here?”. Cultural differences are caused by different thinking modes, which are reflected in different languages (Lian, 2002). Influenced by the traditional Chinese culture, especially collectivism and Confucianism, Chinese people are always seeking to keep the harmony and stability of personal relationships. They do their best to maintain harmonious, stable and permanent relationships with others. For instance, in the sentence “乐视在不点名指责后, 又特意声明与京东<u>合作良好</u>” (“*After criticizing JD anonymously, LETV makes a special point of declaring that it collaborates well with JD*”), the phrase “合作良好” (which means “collaborate well with somebody” in English) here is used to show the harmonious and stable relationship between the two companies in business activities and this phrase is regarded as a security resource. Westerners, on the contrary, are affected by humanism, holding beliefs in individualism (Tian, 2011), thus they attach less importance to maintain social and personal relationships than Chinese people do. Therefore, compared with Chinese, there are fewer expressions related to the situation of people's relationships, which are reflected in the use of in/security resources, in their language.

6 Conclusion and Implications

This chapter has explored the similarities and differences in the use of attitude resources in English and Chinese business news items based on Martin and Roses' Framework of the Attitude System (2005) in the appraisal theory. With regard to similarities, it is found that appreciation is the most commonly used subcategory in both English and Chinese business news items (54.7% and 51.3%), and the social esteem resources are favorably employed in both English (60.8%) and Chinese (61.5%) business news. As for differences, there are more un/happiness resources employed in English (50.0%) than in Chinese (24.6%) business news items. However, the percentage of in/security resources in English (25.0%) is smaller than that in Chinese (42.6%).

These findings of the present research are expected firstly, to help to provide a new insight into the comparative study on English and Chinese business discourses. Secondly, the results of the present study may help businessmen to detect the attitude resources employed in business news and understand the underlying messages better. Another contribution, in our view, lies in the value of these findings in Business English teaching and learning. The findings can help students detect the similarities and differences in the use of attitude resources in the business genre as well as understand the social cultural reasons causing these similarities and differences, so that they can have a better understanding of business news in English. The findings can also be beneficial to students' writing.

Nevertheless, there are limitations in this study. First, 30 pieces of Chinese and English business news respectively may not be representative of the language features of all business news items. Furthermore, although great efforts have been made to avoid subjectivity in making the analyses, it is impossible to be completely objective. Therefore, larger corpora of both English and Chinese business news are needed to understand the use and distribution of attitude resources better in future research.

Appendix 1: List of English Business News

No.	Titles	Words
1	BHP Billiton to sell US shale business	348
2	Government runs July budget surplus for first time in 15 years	348

No.	Titles	Words
3	Lidl tops Waitrose to become UK's seventh biggest grocer	134
4	China's Great Wall eyes Fiat Chrysler bid	669
5	Cambridge University Press reverses China censorship move	346
6	Co-operative Group's stake in co-op bank to fall to 1%	366
7	Johnson & Johnson faces $417 m payout in latest talc case	545
8	VW to relaunch Kombi van as electric vehicle	338
9	Cars for cheese—why a free trade deal may not be free	925
10	China's big push for its global trade narrative	1224
11	Why exporting isn't just about shipping	988
12	How Scottish salmon conquered the world	850
13	Sky stops broadcasting Fox News in UK	327
14	Brexit 'risks gaps on shop shelves' says BRC	676
15	Manufacturers seek clarity over EU worker rights	422
16	Citizens advice wants ban on unsolicited credit limit rises	442
17	Euro rises to 18-month high against dollar	398
18	Expedia boss 'to take Uber job'	320
19	What should schools put first? Discipline or creativity?	794
20	What price would you put on a passport?	1297
21	How the 'better burger' is taking over the world	1252
22	The country losing out in the breakfast juice battle	949
23	Would you carry something abroad for a stranger?	989
24	Has this dress been to more countries than you?	1123
25	UK supermarkets: Why don't they sell more British food?	1174
26	Will globalisation take away your job?	1157
27	Is free trade good or bad?	1338
28	All aboard the China-to-London freight train	1024
29	Why this Easter egg is so difficult to sell overseas	1041
30	The people who know what colour you'll like in 2019	1088

Appendix 2: List of Chinese Business News

No.	Titles (the translated version)	Words
1	CNY central parity rates has increased 226 points to a new yearly high	779
2	The European Central Bank calls for more investment in specific areas	298
3	The market expectation for RMB gets more stable	1822

No.	Titles (the translated version)	Words
4	Peer competition forces middle and small scale banks to transit	873
5	New standards for sterilization of delivery-boxes of online-ordering food are introduced: No oil stains & unpleasant smells	1030
6	O2O industry declines from its peak, accelerating diversified competition	1117
7	Retail in Hong Kong recovers? E-commerce may be the key to the dilemma	1801
8	Cross-border e-commerce gets much concern: a golden age for development	1738
9	E-commerce prospects for fast moving consumer goods are promising, especially in Korea	1000
10	Due to secret competition on June 18, brand dealers “rebel”	1724
11	Jingdong’ sales reached 119.9 billion on June 18—the retailing age for consumers is coming	3675
12	Going in the opposite way: VIPS withdraws capital from its e-commerce in France or shrinks its overseas business	786
13	Housing prices plummet in UK—air quality has become the scapegoat	737
14	Chinese tourists’ remarkable purchasing has doubled Japanese cosmetic exports in the past 3 years	657
15	The down-to-earth cooperation between China and USA has proved to be very constructive—the *bilateral trade volume* has reached 500 billion US dollars	1320
16	SAMSUNG seeks breakthrough: Exclusive housekeeper service for Chinese markets	1597
17	Spanish food companies aim at Chinese markets—food exports to China exceed those from Germany	793
18	UK may secede from the first five world economies after 5 years	809
19	Chinese mobile phones prevail in India—local companies call for a boycott	700
20	United airlines plans to compensate the passengers, promising not to force passengers to give away their seats in the future	1001
21	The judgment of Huawei’s first law case to safeguard its legal rights has been pronounced—Sumsung’s infringement has been confirmed and it must compensate Huawei with 80 million Yuan	2149
22	Cheap online ride-sharing in Beijing becomes history—the Didi company will start to check and dismiss non-Beijing cars from April 1	2046
23	How long can Lotte sustain with the company executives charged with crime and 90% of its supermarkets closed in China?	2103
24	The Huarun Beer Company ceased to lose and started to make a substantial profit with yearly sales up 0.3% last year	1338
25	Embarrassing! The founder of microblog Twitter has been overtaken by Sina, its market value plummeting	3700
26	Stylish winter overcoats: The king of down coat brands Canada Goose is on the market	1055
27	Attacking the illegal “Free-of-Charge” tours promotes self-guided tours—tourists to Thailand increase instead of decreasing	912
28	The Chinese porcelain industry begins to recover—Jingdezhen has become the Holy Land of ceramic crafts	1604
29	New power for Sino-British trade in goods: the direct sino-euro railway transportation	1125
30	The Jilin province develops the ice-snow economy and builds the Chinese “Davos town”	2076

Appendix 3: Types of Affect (Martin & White, 2005: 49–50)

	Surge (of behavior)	Disposition
Un/Happiness		
Unhappiness		
Misery	whimper	down
	cry	sad
	wail	miserable
Antipathy	rubbish	dislike
	abuse	hate
	revile	abhor
Happiness		
Cheer	chuckle	cheerful
	laugh	buoyant
	rejoice	jubilant
Affection	shake hands	be fond of
	hug	love
	embrace	adore
In/Security		
Insecurity		
Disquiet	restless	uneasy
	twitching	anxious
	shaking	freaked out
Surprise	start	startled
	cry out	jolted
	faint	staggered
Security		
Confidence	declare	together
	assert	confident
	proclaim	assured
Trust	delegate	comfortable with
	commit	confident in/at
	entrust	trusting
Dis/Satisfaction		
Dissatisfaction		
Ennui	fidget	flat
	yawn	stale
	tune out	jaded
Displeasure	caution	cross
	scold	bored with
	castigate	angry/sick of
		furious/fed up with

	Surge (of behavior)	Disposition
Satisfaction		
Interest	attentive	involved
	busy	absorbed
	industrious	engrossed
Pleasure	pat on the back	satisfied
	compliment	impressed
	reward	pleased/charmed chuffed/thrilled

Appendix 4: Types of Judgment (Martin & White, 2005: 53)

Judgment	Positive	Negative
Social esteem		
Normality	lucky, fortunate, charmed…;	unlucky, hapless, star-crossed…;
'How special?'	normal, natural, familiar…;	odd, peculiar, eccentric…;
	cool; stable, predictable…;	erratic, unpredictable…;
	in, fashionable, avant garde…;	dated, daggy, retrograde…;
	celebrated, unsung…	obsure, also-ran…
Capacity	powerful, vigorous, robust…;	mild, weak, whimpy…;
'How capable?'	sound, healthy, fit…;	unsound, sick, crippled…;
	adult, mature, experienced…;	immature, childish, helpless…;
	witty, humorous, droll…;	dull, dreary, grave…;
	insightful, clever, gifted…	slow, stupid, thick…
Tenacity	plucky, brave, heroic…;	timid, cowardly, gutless…;
'How dependable?'	cautious, wary, patient…;	rash, impatient, impetuous…;
	careful, thorough, meticulous…;	hasty, capricious, reckless…;
	tireless, persevering, meticulous…;	weak, distracted, despondent…;
	reliable, dependable…;	unreliable, undependable…;
	faithful, loyal, constant…;	unfaithful, disloyal, inconstant…;
Social sanction		
Veracity	truthful, honest, credible…;	dishonest, deceitful, lying…;
'How honest?'	frank, candid, direct…;	deceptive, manipulative, devious…;
	discrete, tactful…	blunt, blabbermouth…
Propriety	good, moral, ethical…;	bad, immoral, evil…;
'How far beyond reproach?'	law abiding, fair, just…;	corrupt, unfair, unjust…;
	sensitive, kind, caring…;	insensitive, mean, cruel…;
	unassuming, modest, humble…;	vain, snobby, arrogant…;
	polite, respectful, reverent…;	rude, discourteous, irreverent…;
	altruistic, generous, charitable…	selfish, greedy, avaricious…

Appendix 5: Types of Appreciation (Martin & White, 2005: 56)

Appreciation	Positive	Negative
Reaction:	arresting, captivating, engaging…;	dull, boring, tedious…;
Impact	fascinating, exciting, moving…;	dry, ascetic, uninviting…;
"Did it grab me?"	lively, dramatic, intense…;	flat, predictable, monotonous…;
	remarkable, notable, sensational…	unremarkable, pedestrian…
Reaction:	okay, fine, good…;	bad, yuk, nasty…;
Quality	lovely, beautiful, splendid…;	plain, ugly, grotesque…;
"Did I like it?"	appealing, enchanting, welcome…	repulsive, revolting, off-putting…
Composition:	balanced, harmonious, unified,	unbalanced, discordant, irregular,
Balance	symmetrical, proportioned…;	uneven, flawed…;
"Did it hang together?"	consistent, considered, logical,	contradictory, disorganized,
	shapely, curvaceous, willowy…	shapeless, amorphous, distorted…
Composition:	simple, pure, elegant…;	ornate, extravagant, byzantine…;
Complexity	lucid, clear, precise…;	arcane, unclear, woolly…;
"Was it hard to follow?"	intricate, rich, detailed, precise…	plain, monolithic, simplistic…
Valuation:	penetrating, profound, deep…;	shallow, reductive, insignificant…;
"Was it worthwhile?"	innovative, original, creative…;	derivative, conventional, prosaic…;
	timely, long awaited, landmark…;	dated, overdue, untimely…;
	inimitable, exceptional, unique…;	dime-a-dozen, everyday, common;
	authentic, real, genuine…;	fake, bogus, glitzy…;
	valuable, priceless, worthwhile…;	worthless, shoddy, pricey…;
	appropriate, helpful, effective…	ineffective, useless, write-off…

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Course Design of EPC from the Perspective of Discursive Competences: A Case in Chongqing University

Yan Li, Chunyan Xia, Ying Huang, Chaohong Xiang, and Ping Huang

Abstract The course *English for Professional Communication* (EPC) is designed for postgraduates in Chongqing University, aiming to cultivate students' multi-communication ability for their future professional practice from the perspective of discursive competences in genre analysis. This chapter demonstrates how the EPC course is designed from course design rationale, material development, teaching methodology, teacher, and learner role and course assessment. It is hoped that this chapter can be of some help to the design of similar ESP courses for postgraduates in mainland China.

Keywords Course design, discursive competences · *English for Professional Communication* · Multi-communication ability · Chongqing University

1 Introduction

With the development of the national economy and the enhancement of its overall national strength, China needs a huge number of international and top-notch creative talents who are equipped not only with knowledge of international rules and the ability to participate in international affairs and international competition but also with critical thinking ability and high humanistic quality with humanistic knowledge and culture. The demands for international professional talents are

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increasing steadily in all walks of life. In view of this reality, on July 10, 2013, the Ministry of Education, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Finance held a conference on postgraduate education, introducing the idea of "*increasing the ratio of funding for postgraduate to study and visit … and to participate in international academic conferences, and improving the proportion of postgraduates who possess international academic exchange experience*," which proposes explicit requirements for the internationalization of postgraduates education.

Chongqing University is double first-class research university (a Chinese government plan conceived in 2015 to comprehensively develop a group of elite Chinese universities and individual university departments into world class universities and disciplines by the end of 2050). One of its goals is to cultivate top level international talents. In order to meet the educational target and postgraduates' needs and help them to function effectively for future work, *English for Professional Communication* has been piloted for postgraduates based on the notion of discursive competence in professional settings. This chapter, based on Bhatia's (2004) theory of discursive competences, and Hutchinson and Waters (1987) "learning centered approach", aims to discuss the course curriculum for the postgraduate English course named "English for professional communication" (EPC) in Chongqing University. How we designed this EPC course is discussed and interpreted in terms of its rationale, material development, teaching methodology, teacher and learner role, and course assessment.

2 Course Design Rationale for EPC

The rationale for the design of EPC is based on three considerations: (1) demand for international professional talents, (2) discursive competence, and (3) needs analysis.

2.1 Demands for International Professional Talents

What are international professional talents? The 2003 Asian University Presidents Forum (AUPF) defined international professional talents as those who "are capable of mastering more than one foreign language, utilizing some tools or channels for the transnational exchanges and services, possessing some expertise or abilities and basically having knowledge of international trade rules in a particular specialty, level, and field" (http://www.aupf.net/). The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also noted that the development of higher education shall be in close contact with social issues and labor community and be able to serve the long-term goals and needs of the community, not only to provide a wide range of education with common characteristics, but also to implement vocational education, and cultivate people's viability under various conditions of the educational reform. Recently, some domestic experts have advanced different ideas on training high-level talents (Luo, 2012; Xie & Fu, 2005; Xu, 2001). According to Luo's (2005) investigation of 14 universities of mainland China, postgraduates rarely participate in international academic conferences, even though they are mainly engaged in research as high-level academic talents and are supposed to play an important role in promoting international academic exchanges in order to improve Chinese academic standards. This is unfavorable for the development of high-level international talents with higher order thinking skills.

2.2 Discursive Competence

Bhatia (2004) summarizes language skills in three levels by using the concept "discursive competence" rather than language competence. He claims that "*discursive competence is the ability to identify, construct, interpret, and use a specific repertoire of professional genres to participate in the activities of a specific professional culture*" (Bhatia, 2004, p. 143).

As shown in Fig. 1, Bhatia (2004) argues that in academic or professional areas, no matter how complex and dynamic the discourse in the real world is, there are three important elements in professional expertise, which should be exploited in day-to-day professional work. These are knowledge of the system of genres they own, knowledge of the specific discipline they use, and the nature of professional practice. Therefore, what kinds of competences students should acquire before they graduate and step into the workplaces are taken into account and how teachers should help to cultivate and develop those required and desired competences are explored in various ways.

2.3 Needs Analysis for EPC

There are a number of studies on language needs analysis, as well as communication patterns analysis. Chia et al. conducted a needs analysis to describe the perception that medical college students and faculty have the English language

Fig. 1 Specification of professional expertise (Bhatia, 2004, p. 146)

needs to improve grammar–translation-based college English courses. Also concerning needs in ESP courses, Kim's (2006) needs analysis of East Asian students in US higher education shows that they considered formal oral presentations and listening comprehension the most important skills for academic success in postgraduate English courses, and pronunciation and note-taking skills the least important. Some language needs analysis has been done in workplace, which is the target situation. Kassim and Ali (2010) got some feedback from industry through a needs analysis of English communicative events and skills in the workplace. So-mui and Mead (2000) examined the English communication needs of textile and clothing merchandisers in the workplace. They also conducted questionnaire surveys, telephone interviews, analysis of authentic correspondence, and visits to workplaces and got some details of communication demands. Some types of communication have been identified and discussed. Therefore, it is possible for us to identify every item of discursive competence in the three types of competences through needs analysis. Brown (2016) recently claims the importance of ESP class. Therefore, needs analysis is the typical characteristics of ESP courses.

There are a lot of studies concerning needs analysis before designing courses (Bosher & Smalkoski, 2002; Chew, 2005; Kassim & Ali, 2010). Some researchers (such as Cai Jigng, 2010) have conducted surveys to illustrate that ESP, EAP, and EOP are strongly required by college students rather than EGP. All these studies develop a framework for ESP courses or demonstrate that ESP approach is an inevitable trend in the college English reform process. Based on these studies, we conducted a needs analysis before designing EPC.

A survey was conducted to investigate what discursive competences the postgraduates needed for their study and professions for their later workplaces before the reform of postgraduates English in Chongqing University in 2012. The results showed that students had basic language skills in reading and listening with enough vocabulary and grammar knowledge, but they needed more productive skills in writing and speaking with their professional knowledge for their workplaces, also they needed appropriate language practice in social activities. These competences suggest that they need discursive competences.

2.4 Course Aims and Content

Considering the precondition that the needs of the state and society are never compromised, the course *English for Professional Communication* gives full consideration to students' scores of English in the Postgraduate Entrance Examination, and students' ability in interpersonal relationships in light of the discursive competences in genre analysis, aiming to cultivate students' professional competences in the workplace and the required text competence, genre competence and social competence in the general socio-cultural context. In the generic competence, students are guided to know how to write different genre with move structure (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 2004). The social competence will guide students to speak and write in appropriate way in the general socio-cultural context. Module 1: Landing a professional position, Module 2: starting with the new position, Module 3: Creating a professional proposal, and Module 4: Creating a professional report (see Appendix for more details).

3 Developing Materials for EPC

Based on Bhatia's discursive competence (Bhatia, 2004) and the "learning centered approach" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), this course mainly guides and instructs students to use English in applying for professional positions, dealing with international office routines, attending professional meetings, and handling projects and international cooperation in workplaces and professional fields. Accordingly, the main contents of this course include: (1) job applications; (2) general communication in the workplace; (3) professional meetings and project presentations; and (4) project proposals/reports and cooperation, among which part 3 and 4 feature the students' majors and potential professions. Through the teachers' designing and organizing project-based activities and providing text samples as well as language input, the students are guided and instructed to fulfill authentic tasks by using the knowledge, skills, or strategies concerning English language, professional domain, and intercultural communication. Therefore, developing appropriate teaching materials play a very important role in enhancing ESP effective teaching and learning. It is suggested that ways of developing materials in a flexible and dynamic way may differentiate ESP program from EFL program.

3.1 Principles of Developing Materials for EPC

When considering what kind of materials should be developed for EPC, we keep the following principles in mind:

- Developing materials to meet teaching objectives and learners' needs and interests
- Developing materials to match the target situation–learners' professional context
- Developing materials to organize classroom activities and develop learners' discursive competence

Figure 2 shows differences between traditional materials development and EPC materials development. In traditional materials development, input materials are often given at first, which means language and content are provided as input to help the students to fulfill the designed tasks which require the use of related knowledge and language, while in EPC materials development, authentic projects or tasks in

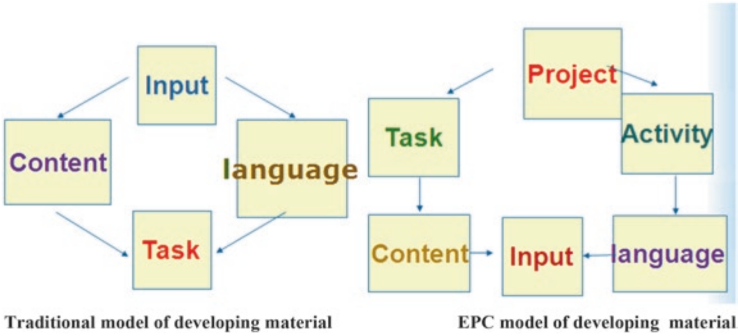

Fig. 2 Models of developing material for traditional EFL and EPC

real-life situation are first set for the students to accomplish. In order to fulfill the designed projects or tasks, the activities about the language communication are provided by the teacher to support the students while the contents concerning the disciplinary knowledge are implanted by the students, who know their subject and are required to give presentation afterwards in English, both of which are integrated as the input to the students in terms of language and content.

3.2 Selecting and Adapting Materials for EPC

In view of the principles of developing EPC materials, sources for EPC materials come from three major channels, namely available commercial materials, online resources, and student sampled materials (such as their writings and videos). Therefore, EPC materials embody the following features:

- Tailor-made, with overall structure and specific content
- Contributed by both teachers and students
- Open, dynamic, and flexible to use

After collecting the above resources, teachers may adapt these materials for their own class use according to the students' major or discipline, the students' needs and interests and the exact teaching hour for each time.

However, while developing EPC materials, we also found some limitations and challenges. First, our teachers' background is one of them. Since teachers major in applied linguistics and have no other subject knowledge, they feel incompetent and unconfident to adapt the authentic materials in different disciplinary areas. Another challenge is that they lack communication and cooperation with subject teachers in our school. Without the help and support from them, teachers could probably not implement the most effective ESP program. However we should be greatly encouraged to cooperate with subject teachers by consulting with them, getting their authentic texts or articles, or inviting them to the classroom to co-teach the students, if it is possible.

4 Implementing Project-Based Learning in EPC

To facilitate learners' discursive competence, project-based learning (PBL) is implemented in EPC, mainly guiding learners to use English in landing a professional position, dealing with international office routines, attending professional meetings, and handling projects or international cooperation.

4.1 Definition of PBL

Project-based learning is not new in the field of education, as attested by Dewey's (1916) advocacy of "learning by doing." The EPC focuses on the learner-centered approach of PBL, which is based on contextualized cooperative learning (Beckett & Chamness Miller, 2006). The implementation of PBL aims to foster the development of language learners' cognitive, social, and communicative skills through active exploration of real-world problems and challenges. It usually involves deciding on a project, making plans, collaborating with team members, and presenting and appraising the project. In the whole process, the teacher plays the role of a facilitator, helping students to design meaningful tasks, coaching both language development and social skills, and assessing students' performance.

The activity sequence is carefully designed by the teacher, and it is essential for the learners to deploy integrated competencies and thereby reach the intended output of the project. "Teachers … find that project work helps them to focus intentionally not only on language skills but also on non-language skills within the affective and cognitive domains" (AEEP/REEP, 1997, p. 3).

4.2 Implementation of PBL in EPC

EPC devises various projects of using English in workplaces, which are subdivided into different tasks. These tasks involve the basic language communicative skills expected in professional settings and include the introduction to the concerned project or subject, basic business reception and communication, meeting minutes, project report, various letters (inquiry, invitations, applications, etc.), the basic flow of convening a meeting, such as the genre of speech (opening, data or content description, ending, questions, etc.), PPT presentation, rehearsal, etc. These contents are all based on the discursive competences with which students experience and simulate through tasks provided (see Appendix).

4.3 An Example: Having a Business Negotiation

In this part, one project of the course syllabus, having a business negotiation, is given as an example to demonstrate how PBL is implemented in the classroom and what discursive competence can be taught by doing this project.

> ***Situation***
> Imagine you are working in a car company in China. Your company will buy engines from a company in Germany. However, you have not agreed on the price, delivery, and after-sale service. Now the representatives from the German company have come to China for a business negotiation. Your job is to simulate the real situation by finishing the following five main tasks.

Task 1: Pick up the guests at the airport (omitted)
Task 2: Settle down in the hotel (omitted)
Task 3: Have a business dinner (omitted)
Task 4: Have a business negotiation
Task 5: Write business negotiation minutes

Task 4 Have a business negotiation

1. **Watch a video about business negotiation and summarize the moves and language of having a business negotiation.**
2. **Four students make up a Chinese negotiation team and four students make up a German negotiation team. Each member of each team must play a role in the business negotiation and prepare for their role as follows:**

> *Role 1: You are the monitor of this negotiation. Think of your role and prepare for it.*
> *Role 2: You are the main negotiator of this negotiation. Think of your role and prepare for it.*
> *Role 3: You are the second negotiator of this negotiation. Think of your role and prepare for it.*
> *Role 4: You are the secretary during this negotiation. Your job is to take minutes.*

In order for there to be an information gap, the above roles are separated, and each role can only be seen by the student who will play this role.

3. **The Chinese and German negotiation teams have a business negotiation following the moves summarized below.**

Moves
• Greetings and introductions
• Having small talks
• Getting started
• Stating the expected outcome
• Making an opening statement/proposal/offer
• Rejecting an offer
• Making a conditional offer
• Accepting an offer
• Concluding a deal

Task 5: Write business meeting minutes

1. Make a recording of your business negotiation.
2. Listen to the recording and write minutes of the negotiation.
3. Compare your minutes with your team members, and then submit your minutes.
4. Summarize the moves of the minutes.

The above teaching activities are designed from the perspective of Bhatia's discursive competence. According to Bhatia, "discursive competence is the ability to identify, construct, interpret, and use a specific repertoire of professional genres to participate in the activities of a specific professional culture" (Bhatia, 2004, p. 143). In identification and construction stage, students are expected to analyze and summarize the moves and language of having a business negotiation and taking minutes. In the interpretation and use stage, students will simulate a business negotiation and take minutes of the negotiation. In the whole process, the learning centered approach (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) is carried out, and both the teacher's and students' roles vary as Part 5 shows.

5 Teacher and Learner Roles in EPC

Teacher and learner roles are part of language teaching method design reflecting the language and learning theories and having a direct bearing on classroom procedures (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 33). This section is focused on teacher and learner roles in EPC.

5.1 Contextual Considerations for Teacher and Learner Roles in EPC

Chongqing University is a comprehensive university. There are six faculties and over 20 schools covering over 10 disciplines and more than 90 majors. Learners in a different class and even in the same class are different in their majors. Similarly,

Table 1 EPC teacher and learner background

Teachers' backgrounds	Learners' backgrounds
• Based in the School of Foreign Languages and Cultures	• Mature adults
• Majored in English language and literature	• Doing master's in engineering, sciences, social sciences, built environment, information technology, and arts and humanities
• Did master's in applied linguistics	• Having little experience in English communication especially professional communication through English
• Have little knowledge of the learners' disciplines including engineering, sciences, built environment, information technology, etc.	• Previous teacher-fronted classroom learning experience

the EPC teachers' background and learners' background differ from each other (see Table 1). Most notably, EPC teachers and learners differ in their subject area. To accommodate such a diversity of disciplines, majors and subject areas among learners and between learners and teachers, a learner-centered approach is preferred to the teacher-fronted teaching. In other words, learners must play an active role in EPC. It is believed that as mature adults, learners in EPC are able to play an active role and take on responsibilities.

5.2 Theoretical and Empirical Foundation for Teacher and Learner Role in EPC

The theoretical and empirical foundation for teacher and learner roles in EPC is summarized as follows:

1. EPC is an ESP course taking a learning-centered approach with a focus on learner's needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).
2. English for specific purposes is an approach rather than a product and generally conceptualized as a multi-stage process. In this regard, teacher and learner roles may vary at different stages of the teaching design and practice. Teachers may have many roles such as teacher, course designer and material provider, collaborator, researcher/theorizer, evaluator, counselor, facilitator, and motivator (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998, p. 13 Ghafournia & Sabet, 2014; Javid, 2015). Likewise, ESP learners may also have many roles. Javid (2015, p. 22) posits that "ESP learners should be actively involved in the process of the choice of the content materials, curriculum development and teaching methodology…."
3. The specific defining features of learner and teacher roles are included in Table 2.
4. The aim of EPC is to develop learners' discursive competence, i.e., the ability to identify, construct, interpret, and use a specific repertoire of professional genres to participate in the activities of a specific professional culture (Bhatia, 2004).

Table 2 Defining features of learner and teacher roles (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 33)

Teacher role	Learner role
• Types of functions teachers fulfill	• Types of learning tasks set for learners
• Degree of teacher influence over learning	• Degree of control learners have over the content of learning
• Degree to which the teacher determines the content of learning	• Patterns of learner grouping that are recommended or implied
• Types of interaction between teachers and learners	• Degree to which learners influence the learning of others
	• The view of the learner as a processor, performer, initiator, problem solver, etc.

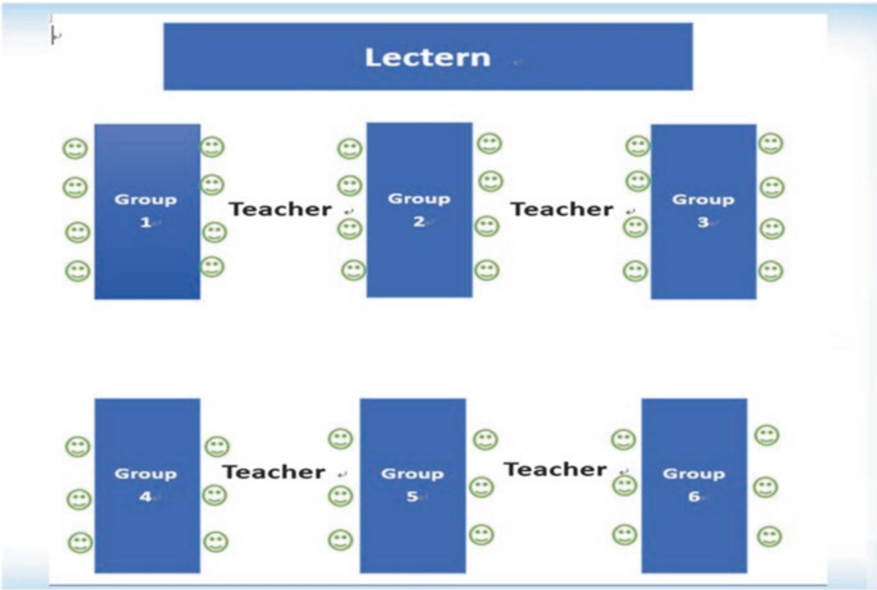

Fig. 3 Class grouping in EPC

Besides, EPC is based on projects supported by tasks and activities. The tasks and activities are designed to help learners develop their discursive competence while projects are intended to help learners integrate discursive competence, disciplinary knowledge, and professional practice (Bhatia, 2004).

5.3 An Example of Teacher and Learner Roles in EPC

To facilitate project-based learning, cooperative learning, and communication, each EPC class is organized in groups (see Fig. 3). Each group is a professional institute or organization in which every member is a professional in a particular field.

Fig. 4 Outline of Module 1 "Landing Professional Position"

Figure 4 shows an outline of Module 1 "Landing Professional Position" in EPC. This module, Project 1 "Finding a job opening" consists of four mini projects. The mini project "Enquiring about a job opening by email" is taken as an example to illustrate how discursive competence is developed and what roles the teacher and learners fulfill to develop learners' discursive competence in EPC.

Before doing the project "Enquiring about a job opening by email," learners first do some activities in order to identify and analyze the textual and generic features of a sample email enquiry provided by the teacher. Then, based on a role play task designed by the teacher, learners practice writing an email enquiry by using the textual and generic features they have learnt. While doing the project "Enquiring about a job opening by email," based on their real needs, learners write an email enquiry and send it to the employer by using the textual and generic features they have learnt and practiced. In order for the project to be implemented, the teacher has multiple roles as task designer, guide, facilitator, material provider, and so on. Likewise, learners are also actively involved in the learning process as learner, candidate, researcher, analyzer, informant, decision maker, language user, and so on.

To sum up, EPC takes a learning-centered approach with a focus on learners. To build discursive competence into EPC, both EPC teachers and learners have multiple roles which are dynamic and vary with learning activities and communicative tasks. The teachers' prominent role is to facilitate the learning process while learners are actively involved in the learning process especially as a language user as well as a language learner.

6 Doing Assessment in EPC

EPC course conducts assessments to check whether students master discursive competences (Bhatia, 2004), which constitute professional expertise to be acquired from their professional and workplaces. Based on Bhatia's theory, EPC course is focused on assessing learner's ability to identify, construct, interpret, and use various professional genres to participate in different professional cultures. Combined with basic skills required for a language learner, the course targets the test of generic, textual, and social competence from the following aspects:

1. Generic and textual competence in reading or writing, such as writing minutes, reading and writing project report, identifying job information from reading advertisements, writing CV and cover letters for interview, etc.
2. Social competence in listening and speaking like job interviewing, organizing and holding a meeting, business negotiating, making an oral present in a meeting, etc.

With the combination of formative assessment and summative assessment, this course breaks down traditional patterns with assessing students' ability of using language appropriately and correctly in practice and "being able to communicate like an expert" in the real situation (Bhatia, 2004). It is more authentic to put these situations into an ongoing process.

Formative assessment can provide a dynamic process of gathering information of learning, on strengths and weaknesses, which helps the teacher feed back into their course planning and the actual feedback they give to learners.

Formative assessment consists of two parts: class performance and project work after class. The main content of the class performance is designed in light of each task and aims at students' active participation. Students' performance will be marked as long as they speak in the class, pinpointing the students' communicative skills in class. The project work after class is mainly written assignments and the team work designed based on inter-discursive competences, such as various letters, minutes, project reports (written genre of each part), etc. needed in workplaces.

From the EPC material, learners can find a checklist at the end of each of the projects, which aims to enhance their ability in self-assessment. Also, in discussing samples of work, learners can learn to use meta-language to monitor their work for strengths and weaknesses and then formulate a self-directed learning plan.

Summative assessment adopts the form of the final oral and written examination. In the final oral examination, students are required to simulate organizing a business meeting (or other tasks happening in their future workplace). Each group member should play a corresponding role according to the meeting content, such as the moderator, the project reporter, the person who is responsible for raising and answering questions, etc. During the group work, other group members need to elect one representative to provide a grade for each member (the teacher explains the evaluation standards before the exam), and the questioner will get scores for class participation.

The main content of the written examination can be a formal proposal, report (or a project report referring to the content or a meeting report after watching a video), a meeting minutes or other topics for business letters (e.g., application letters, inquiries, complaints, cover letters, invitation letters, notices, memorandums).

Assessment pattern in EPC is shown as follows:

Formative Assessment: 40%

1. Observe and feed back on learners' classroom activities (20%)
2. Feed back on learners' homework (20%)

Summative Assessment: 60%

3. Oral test on professional presentation (30%)
4. Written test on reading and writing (30%)

Following is a sample to show how we assess the EPC course in detail:

Sample: **Learners obtaining generic competence in writing a cover letter**

Borrowed from Formative Assessment System in "The Formative Assessment Action Plan: Practical Steps to More successful Teaching and Learning" (Frey & Fisher, 2011)

Figure 5 shows that the assessments in this course should be considered as one part of teaching. Feedback from assessment will not only affect teachers' course

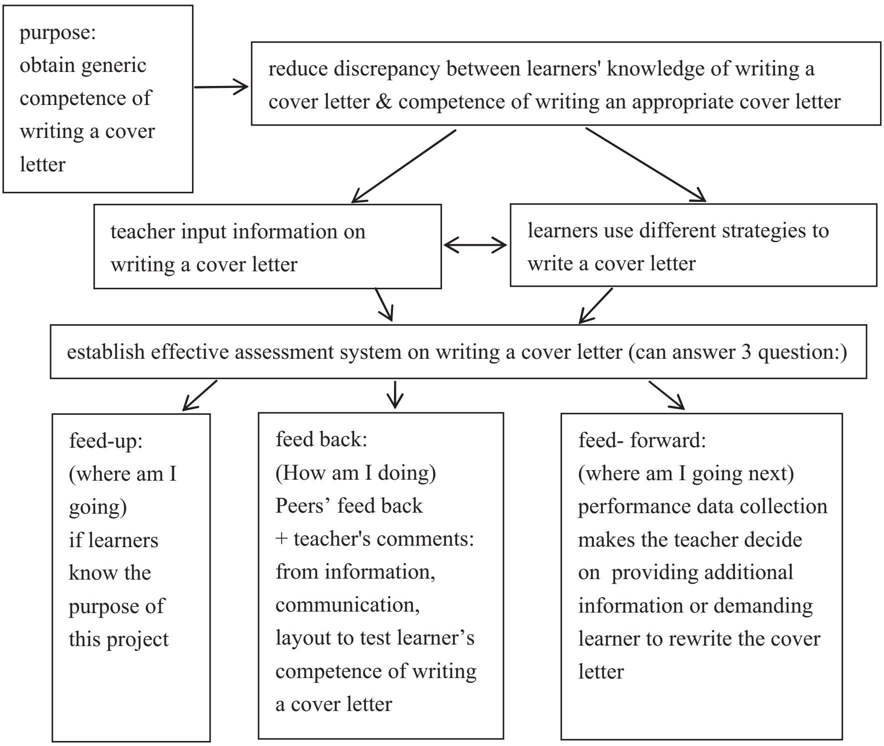

Fig. 5 Practical Steps to More successful Teaching and Learning (Frey & Fisher, 2011)

planning but also help learners establish their self-evaluation system on a certain topic, which embodies the learner-centered teaching method.

7 Conclusion

Based on the discursive competence of genre analysis along with the needs of national economic development for international high-level talents, EPC course is designed and implemented. This course tries to target the needs of students and society, design the curriculum with the combination of scenarios and projects, and adopt learning-centered approach rather than teacher-centered teaching mode. We strongly hold that students should acquire discursive competences for their professional communication. It is suggested that students should be provided with ESP-oriented courses in which discursive competences are taught for their future workplaces.

Appendix

Module 1: Landing a professional position
Project 1: Looking for a job opening
Project 2: Applying for a job position (I): writing a resume
Project 3: Applying for a job position (II): writing a cover letter
Project 4: Going for a job interview
Module 2: Starting with the new position
Project 1: Meeting new people
Project 2: Dealing with organization cultures
Project 3: Doing office routine (1)
Project 4: Doing office routine (2)
Module 3: Creating a professional proposal
Project 1: Writing a professional proposal
Project 2: Organizing and chairing a professional meeting
Project 3: Presenting a professional proposal
Project 4: Negotiating a professional proposal
Module 4: Creating a professional report
Project 1: Writing a professional project report
Project 2: Reporting on a professional project
Project 3: Writing an evaluation report
Project 4: Presenting an evaluation report

A project is a planned set of interrelated tasks to be executed over a fixed period

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Rethinking the Significance of Ma Jianzhong's *Proposal on Establishing a Translation Academy*: From the Perspective of ESP Translation Teaching in the Twenty-First Century

Ping Peng and Yuxiao Liu

Abstract This chapter aims to make a detailed analysis of Ma Jianzhong's ideas of translation in his article *Proposal on Establishing a Translation Academy* 拟设翻译书院议 written in 1894 to find out how it is instructive to today's ESP translation. Through a detailed study of Ma's opinion on what is a good translation (善译), what kind of translators were urgently needed by the country at that time and how such translators should be trained, and in particular the proper courses as well as the standard qualifications of teachers, the chapter finds that all his thoughts about translation teaching and translator cultivation were oriented towards the practical needs of the country and society and that his ideas about translation, including needs analysis, translation of materials of practical genres, and cultivation of comprehensive qualifications of translators, are of enlightening significance in the twenty-first century to the ESP translation teaching of China, in which the needs of both students and society should be taken into consideration, so that it can be decided what courses should be provided and what qualifications ESP translation teachers are supposed to have.

Keywords Ma Jianzhong · *Proposal on Establishing a Translation Academy* · ESP translation teaching

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1 Introduction

Ma Jianzhong 马建忠 (1845–1900) was a scholar and diplomat in the late Qing Dynasty. He was also a patriot, demonstrated in his concern about the country's destiny when China was suffering from the invasion by the Western powers and from the lagging behind of its technology. He wrote an article entitled *Nishe Fanyi Shuyuan Yi* 拟设翻译书院议 (*Proposal on Establishing a Translation Academy*) to call for the training of translators, who would then be able to translate Western documents of various topics and genres into Chinese so that China could develop its technology and industry and thus help itself out of the crisis of being invaded by learning from the West. His suggestions about translator training and education in *Proposal on Establishing a Translation Academy* are still thought-provoking today when ESP translation teaching is highly valued because of the need of the country's development in science, technology and economy, since we can boldly say that today's translation is not only translation of literature but also translation of different fields, such as economy, business, science and technology, politics, and diplomacy, which indicates that today's translation teaching is more of ESP translation.

There are only a few studies of Ma Jianzhong's theories on translation. They focus on his opinion on "good translation" (Gu, 2007), historical background for his translation theories (Wang, 2007), and cultural interpretation of his thoughts on translation (Xin & Ma, 2011). There has been no study of Ma's translation theories from the perspective of ESP. Therefore, this chapter will make a detailed study of Ma Jianzhong's ideas of translation in his article *Proposal on Establishing a Translation Academy*, trying to find out what ideas on translation teaching he illustrated in that article is instructive to today's ESP translation and how they are related to ESP translation. It is hoped that the study will be of some reference to ESP translation in the twenty-first century, when ESP translation has become a major part of translation teaching.

2 A Brief Introduction to Ma Jianzhong and His Experience as a Scholar, Translator, and Patriot

In 1845, Ma Jianzhong was born in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province. As he grew up, thanks to the education he received and his diligence, he became good at both classical Chinese and more than one foreign language, for instance, French and Latin, which enabled him to later become a scholar in both classical Chinese learning and new learning from the West. He was sent by the Qing Court in 1876 to study international laws in France, where he also worked as the translator/interpreter for Guo Songtao 郭嵩焘 (1818–1891), the Chinese minister to France at that time. During his 3-year stay there, he travelled many parts of Europe, visiting factories, schools, and military camps as well as families, scholars, and statesmen. All the visits broadened his horizon and helped him to realize the gap between China and the West. He even realized that the West could get on with China in equality, which showed that he had thrown away China's centralism and the overconfidence prevailing among the Chinese at that time. In this respect, his idea was similar to that of Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794–1857), who also held that the Chinese must learn merits from the foreign countries in the preface to his *Haiguo Tuzhi* 海国图志 (*An Illustrated Gazette of Overseas States*). Ma then proposed the ways of developing the country in his articles or letters to the Qing Government. He also criticized the focus of the Yangwu Pai 洋务派 (the group of officials advocating self-strengthening) on weapon manufacturing, which, in his eyes, should not be taken as the only way of building up China's self-reliance. This manifested his long-term view in helping the country out of the crisis and then rejuvenating it.

In 1880, Ma returned to Tianjin after his study in France, where, at the request of Li Hongzhang 李鸿章 (1823–1901), he threw himself into the *Yangwu Yundong* (Self-strengthening Movement in 1860s–1890s)[1] and showed his talent in developing industries. Later he acted as a diplomat for a few years and showed his talent in diplomacy, but he could not get rid of his ideas of developing manufacturing and the navy of China with loans from other countries, so he offered his suggestions on the setting up of factories and mines, ship manufacturing, railways building, and business and trade development. He even worked as Executive Officer of Shanghai Textile Bureau.

His talent was also shown in his understanding of the Chinese linguistics. In 1898, his *Mashi Wentong* 马氏文通 (*Ma's Study of Chinese Grammar*) was published as the first grammar book of Chinese, laying the foundation for later studies of the Chinese grammar with reference to the Latin grammar system. His work *Shikezhai Jiyan Jixing* 适可斋记言记行 (*Shike Study's Record of Words and Acts*) embodies his ideas of developing trade and new forms of industry and agriculture and obtaining the taxation autonomy, showing his anxiety about how to develop the country and make it prosperous.

Ma's contribution to China's technical and industrial development and diplomacy as well as to the Chinese grammar showed that he was a very important figure in China's diplomacy and reform and in Chinese linguistics. Liang Qichao 梁启超 (1873–1929) pointed out in the preface to *Shike Study's Record of Words and Acts*, "Those who talked about technical Westernization years earlier had failed to realize what Ma said; What Ma has proposed is what the rulers of China will not change in the coming scores of years. If what he has said could have been adopted before, how could China be like this today? If it could be adopted today, why should we worry about China in the future?" This showed that how Liang valued Ma's ideas, which are still valued by some of today's scholars, as Xin and Ma (2011, p. 115) point out, "Ma Jianzhong was a pioneer in seeking truth from the West in order to make China prosperous. He lived in the circle of *Yangwu Pai*, but his thought was as high as that

[1] *Yangwu Yundong* (洋务运动) has been translated into Westernization Movement by some translators, but I think it is not so correct. *Yangwu Yundong* in the mid-nineteenth century did not mean total Westernization, but the introduction of advanced technologies from the West.

of the *Weixin Pai* 维新派 (the Reformists in 1890s) and he was one of the most progressive social reformists at that time."

It was out of Ma's concern about the crisis that China was faced with at that time that he wrote in 1894 the article entitled *Proposal on Establishing a Translation Academy*, in which he illustrated the importance of translation and proposed the standard for a "good translation." By "good translation," he meant, "Before translation, the translator should read the source text again and again to grasp the ideas and style, and then try to convey the ideas and style faithfully and fluently, so that the reader can benefit from the translation as if they were reading the source text" (Ma, 2009, p. 192). The concept "good translation" involves the whole process of translation, from the preparation to the strategy and then to the acceptance of the readers. Thus, Ma Jianzhong is still famous today in the translation circles of China for his idea of "good translation," for this was not only the standard for assessing the quality of a translation but also the objective of translator training at that time. In the article, he pointed out the deficiency in the translation act by Jiangnan Manufacturing Bureau (江南制造总局) set up by Yangwu Pai. More importantly, he suggested what translators were urgently needed by the country and how such translators should be trained. Today's study of Ma's translation theory focuses on this "good translation" as the standard, and more details about the translator training are ignored, but in today's view, Ma's thought illustrated in *Proposal on Establishing a Translation Academy* is of thought-provoking in ESP translation teaching, including needs analysis, advocacy of translating materials of practical genres and emphasis on cultivation of comprehensive qualifications of translators, which will be illustrated in detail in the following part.

3 Significance of Ma Jianzhong's *Proposal on Establishing a Translation Academy* to ESP Translation Teaching in the Twenty-First Century

The popularity of ESP teaching, especially ESP translation teaching, reminds us of the article *Proposal on Establishing a Translation Academy* that Ma Jianzhong wrote more than 100 years ago, because what he mentioned in that article can be taken as pioneer views in ESP translation teaching when we take a close look at it or make a study of it, especially his emphasis on needs analysis, translation of materials of practical genres and cultivation of comprehensive qualifications of translators.

3.1 A Brief Introduction to ESP Development and Characteristics

ESP, the short form for English for Specific Purposes, refers to English teaching related to a profession, a discipline or any other specific purpose. The learner's interest and learning purpose are highly valued in ESP.

ESP emerged as a branch of English teaching in the 1960s as science and technology was witnessing rapid development, with its focus on science and technology, so it was regarded as identical with EST (English for Science and Technology) (Hutchinson & Waters, 2002, p. 7). Later, with English used in more and more areas in the world, ESP was no longer limited to science and technology, but expanded to other areas like business, law, medical science, and publishing, since English learners would use the language in different fields afterwards. So far, according to Hutchinson and Waters (2002, pp. 9–14), ESP has undergone and is undergoing five stages of development, namely register analysis, rhetorical or discourse analysis, target situation analysis, skills and strategies, and a learning-based approach. This categorization is based on teaching content of ESP. If categorized by time of research, it has undergone three stages, namely 1962–1981 (from text-based counts to "rhetorical devices"), 1980–1990 (broadening the scope/introducing central concepts) and 1990–2011 (new international journals, genre, and corpus studies take center stage) (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013, pp. 7–18).

Generally speaking, ESP has its own characteristics. First, it is aimed to meet specific needs of learners and the function for which English is required, i.e. the need of both the learner and society. Thus the syllabus is designed accordingly, and it may be language-centered, skill-centered, or learning-centered. Second, ESP has its own methodology and activities of discipline it serves. It combines subject matter and English teaching, so the materials used for teaching do not only contain English language points but also knowledge of different fields, such as science, medicine, trade, and law. Third, it is centered on the language appropriation in the specific field, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre. All these are closely related to the context and function of the text, especially in the workplace, just as M. Marra points out, "Understanding the role and practice of English in the workplace is a key concern in English for specific purposes (ESP)" (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013, p. 176).

With the development of China's economy and the increase of its national strength, ESP has become an important part of English teaching throughout the country. Especially, to meet the specific need of different sectors for talents with high English proficiency, universities have put or are putting more emphasis on ESP. Thus, business English, legal English, tourism English, medical science English, science and technology English, and so on have been put into the curriculum of English teaching in universities. Translation, one of the core subjects for English majors, is no longer mostly centered on literature translation as was the case in the past, especially before the end of the twentieth century, but involves more materials concerning different fields. Besides, the subject is aimed to improve the learner's skill of translating materials of different fields and of different genres, so we can take today's translation teaching as one of the subdisciplines of ESP teaching as it has the characteristics of ESP mentioned above.

3.2 *Views Concerning ESP Translation Teaching in Ma's* Proposal on Establishing a Translation Academy *and Their Significance to the ESP Translation Teaching in the Twenty-First Century*

3.2.1 Needs Analysis in Translator Training

One of the focuses of ESP is the needs analysis, which is a distinct and necessary phase in planning ESP educational programs. As for needs analysis, Hutchinson and Waters (2002, pp. 55–56) point out that we have to know the need determined by the demands of the target situation and what the learner knows already, so that you can then decide which of the necessities of the learner lacks as well as what the learner' needs are. Needs analysis is quite obvious in Ma's article *Proposal on Establishing a Translation Academy* when he talked about translator training.

First, Ma realized the necessity and urgency in training translators by analyzing the situation. In other words, he realized the national and social need to produce translators. According to Ma, it was urgent to produce translators to deal with the situation facing China at that time. He said,

> It is a pressing demand to translate from other languages, so more translators should be produced right now. I am getting old, and in my life, I have witnessed foreign invasion and civil conflicts, and the country's southeast's falling to enemy occupation, but I've got no opportunity to take the imperial examinations. (Ma, 2009, p. 193)

From what he said, we know how he was wishing China to produce more translators, who could translate other languages into Chinese, though he himself had not got the opportunity. He also mentioned, "When I look around, I find how hard the times is, so I would like to try all my best to list the difficulties of translating as well as the purpose and curriculum of the translation academy to be established in the following part. Hopefully there are officials who will agree to my proposals and put some of them into action, and if so, it will be good to China" (Ma, 2009, p. 193). Ma's realization of the necessity and urgency in training translators was similar to that of some other scholars and officials at that time, including Lin Zexu 林则徐 (1785–1850), Wei Yuan, Feng Guifen 冯桂芬 (1809–1874), and Guo Songtao. Among them, Wei put forward the idea of "learn merits from the foreign countries to conquer them" in the preface to his "*An Illustrated Gazette of Overseas States*," as has been mentioned above, and Feng regarded translation as "the most important administrative matter" (Chen, 2000, p. 76). Obviously, in Ma's opinion, the very first motivation for translation should be to resist the bully and occupation of foreign powers and to defeat them (Wang, 2007, pp. 72–73).

Today, China is trying to realize its goals of different stages and the Chinese Dream, and translation plays an important role in realizing the goals and the Dream. Against this backdrop, we should analyze what kind of needs of the present times for translators. For example, the country is in need of more Chinese–English translators to introduce the Chinese culture and Chinese experience in the past 40 years of reform to the world and to help more Chinese enterprises and other organizations to "go out"; meanwhile, China still needs translators to translate materials about science and technology and economy to facilitate its development in these fields. Therefore, our ESP translation teaching should be aimed to cultivate such translators to meet the national and social needs.

Second, Ma realized what to be translated by analyzing the situation. Since China was in a disadvantageous situation in his time, he categorized the materials that should be translated into Chinese into the following: (1) diplomatic documents, including letters, treaties, diplomatic conference minutes; (2) administrative, military, legal, and financial reference books as well as those necessary for diplomacy; (3) required readings for foreign students, covering history, mathematics, geometry, physics, biology, and so on (Ma, 2009, pp. 194–195). Ma listed these materials to be translated because he thought that China, first, should maintain good relationship with other countries, so it should learn something from them; second, the country should establish and develop its political, economic, financial, and legal systems by referring to these systems in other countries, since it did not yet have the complete systems; and it should cultivate more talents with basic knowledge of different fields, so that they could help make the country better after their graduation. Ma was anxious that some books which should have been translated were not completely translated yet or even were mistranslated.

As is said in the previous part, more aspects of China's long-lasting culture should be introduced to the world today, and its experience in the development of economy, politics, science and technology, diplomacy, and so on as well as its experience of the reform of its economy and politics should be introduced to other countries, who are also eager to know about all those aspects to develop their own. Therefore, in today's ESP translation teaching, materials about the Chinese culture, economy, politics, science and technology, diplomacy, and so on should be adopted for the students' translation practice, so that they will be qualified translators in these fields in their future career, thus contributing to the development of and communication between China and the world.

Third, Ma realized the needs of the translation learners. In view of the shortage of translators and the qualifications of the students in the academy to be established, Ma gave his opinions based on the students' needs. Since translation involves at least two languages, he suggested that the students should improve both their Chinese and foreign language(s). According to him, the students should first improve their proficiency in Chinese and then learn foreign languages, so a supervisor who was good at both Chinese and English and who would also act as a foreign language teacher, and four or five people who were good at classical Chinese should be employed to do proofreading for translated works and act as teachers of Chinese (Ma, 2009, p. 194).

Ma also categorized the students to be enrolled into two kinds and suggested different curriculum for them. For those who were already proficient in English and French and who had the potential above the average, foreign language reading courses should be offered in accordance with their foreign language level, besides readings of Chinese classics from the Tang and Song dynasties. Those who were intelligent by natural endowments were supposed to read English and French materials while being asked to learn Latin and Greek (Ma, 2009, pp. 193–194). This suggestion of different courses was obvious based on the students' potential needs.

From Ma's suggestions, we conclude that today, the students who are learning translation should, of course, be proficient in both English and Chinese. But for a long time, English majors or translation majors as well as their teachers have been putting more emphasis on their English proficiency, ignoring their proficiency in Chinese. This has resulted in their failure to understand some Chinese expressions and thus their mis-conveying of the meaning in Chinese–English translating and their poor expression in English–Chinese translating. Moreover, with the rise and the coming rejuvenation of China, translation learners in the country should be proficient in classical Chinese, since much of Chinese culture is contained in and conveyed by classical Chinese. Besides, some materials to be translated may contain more than one foreign language in some fields. For example, in Switzerland, a country with four working languages, namely French, German, Italian, and Romansh, some materials about Swiss tourism contain English and German, sometimes some paragraphs followed by one or two paragraphs in German or French. Therefore, ESP translation teaching should involve not only English but also another foreign language. In this regard, Ma was a visionary man in language and translation teaching.

3.2.2 Advocacy of Translation of Materials of Practical Genres

Ma's view about the objective of the translation academy was very clear. In his opinion, to establish the translation academy meant to produce qualified translators for China helping itself out of the crisis of being bullied and invaded before catching up with the powers in the world. Ma (1968, p. 214) once said, "I think today's China's is seriously bullied by some other countries." Therefore, he proposed three categories of materials to be translated, as mentioned above. These three types of materials could also be taken as the teaching materials for the students in the translation academy. Since they involved diplomacy, politics, administration, nature, society, humanities, history, military affairs, law, economy, and the subjects taught in the West, we realize that he was suggesting translation of materials of practical genres and teaching translation of such materials. Especially, the textbooks that should be translated were about arithmetic, thermology, optics, acoustics, electrology, zoology, botany, sphragistics, physics, and study of principles and rules (Ma, 2009, p. 195). Actually, all the content and materials were urgently needed by China, due to the urgency at that time for the country to adopt technology to develop its industry and administrative, political, and legal mechanisms and systems to reform its own mechanisms and systems so that it can develop in an all-round way to get rid of the invasion by other countries. This was a visionary idea at that time, which, to some degree, embodied not only the thought held by *Yangwu Pai* but also the thought held by the *Weixin Pai*, since the two schools had different opinions on the materials to be translated. The former advocated introducing Western technology, such as military technology and ship manufacturing technology because their purpose was to use this technology to enhance the national strength. Their opinion on selection of source texts to be translated was characterized by pragmatism guided by the principle of "Chinese Learning as the Fundamental Structure, Western Learning for Practical Use." The latter, represented by Kang Youwei 康有为 (1858–1927), Liang Qichao, and Yan Fu 严复 (1854–1921), realized that introduction of Western technology and natural science had failed to help China safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

> They began to criticize and correct the technical westernization advocators' translation, so they no longer focused on translation of technical and scientific documents, but of Western systems, i.e. superstructure and ideology. During 1896–1910, foreign history, laws, politics, economics, sociology, logic, etc. were translated into Chinese. (Peng, 2010, p. 323)

According to Ma, the two groups of students to be enrolled by the Academy would be able to do translation after 1 or 2 years of study, and their translations would be published on newspapers. That was also a practical idea, which suggested that learning and translation should be connected with the industry and society; thus what to be learned and what to be needed could facilitate each other. This idea is enlightening in two ways. First, this is something we should adopt today in translation teaching, because when we connect the students' translation with publication or application, or in other words, if their translation can be published or applied in society, the students will be highly motivated and they will try their best to improve their translation quality. Second, ESP translation teachers should bring the latest materials about different fields into class, so that the students will find them interesting and practical and thus show interest in translating.

3.2.3 Emphasis on the Cultivation of Comprehensive Qualifications of Translators

Ma emphasized the cultivation of comprehensive qualifications of translators, which is apparent in the curriculum he suggested. It is generally believed that anybody who is proficient in the source language and the target language can be a translator. But translators themselves do not think so since different translations involve different fields. As Lü Shuxiang pointed out, to translate well, the translator should be equipped with *zaxue* (general knowledge of different fields) (Lü, 2009, pp. 593–597). This means that a translator should equip him/herself with some general knowledge, so that he/she can do translation of different fields well. At least, he/she can make the right choice of expressions in the field that the translation involves. Ma, based on his own experience of learning both at home and abroad, and of his translating, suggested that the students in the Academy should learn foreign languages (English, French, Latin, and Greek) and Chinese (especially classical Chinese, classical Chinese, in particular, adopted in the essays from pre-Qin period to the Tang and Song dynasties), and should know something about science, politics, and law. Since Greek and Latin played an important role in the origin of Western civilization, to know better about the West and to do better translation from Western languages into Chinese, the students had to master Greek and Latin. What is noteworthy is that Ma did not directly mention science, politics, and law when talking about what was important to the students of two groups, but he talked about his own experience in the previous part, which could be taken as a hint for the necessity of knowing about other fields.

Not only comprehensive knowledge of the students was suggested by Ma, but also their competence of combining what they learned with practice. The comprehensive qualifications of the translation learners in Ma's opinion can be illustrated in the following chart (Fig. 1):

This chart can be referred to in today's ESP translation. The twenty-first century is witnessing the rapid development of technology and economy as well as the unprecedented cooperation among countries. For the purpose of the development and cooperation of the world, translators, of course, should be proficient in both the foreign language(s) and the native language and acquire knowledge of different fields. But it is observed in translation classes that some Chinese students are not so proficient in modern Chinese, not to mention classical. For example, some students' writing in Chinese is not so fluent when they translate from English into Chinese and some have a wrong understanding of Chinese sentences and thus twist the meaning in Chinese–English translation. Reading more classical Chinese can help the students to better master the skills of wording and phrasing, so to add some classical Chinese courses to their curriculum or to let them read some classical Chinese

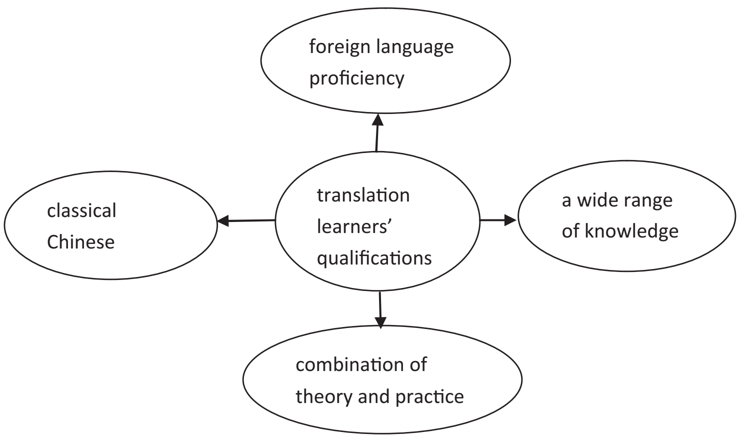

Fig. 1 Comprehensive qualifications of the translation learners in Ma's opinion

in translation class can help them to improve their proficiency in Chinese, to improve their comprehension competence and thus to improve their translation ability.

3.2.4 Qualifications of Translation Teachers

In his *Proposal on Establishing a Translation Academy*, Ma also suggested the employment of two groups of teachers: one proficient in both Chinese and English and the other proficient in classical diction. The first group could act as foreign language teachers and the second as teachers of Chinese and proofreaders of the students' translation (Ma, 2009, p. 194).

But, today, we have only translation teachers from China, and some of them may not be quite proficient in English though they are English majors, because after all, they are not English speakers; and some may not be quite proficient even in modern Chinese, not to mention classical Chinese, though they are native speakers, because they have not attached so much importance to Chinese in their previous education. Some even do not have any educational background in translation but have majored in linguistics or literature (Bao, 2009). That's why sometimes even translation teachers cannot tell what is Chinglish in Chinese–English translation. Presumably, they are less likely to become good translation teachers. Therefore, it is suggested that Chinese translation teachers improve their English and Chinese (modern and classical) by reading more or by accepting some further training in both languages. It is also suggested that foreign teachers be employed as immediate staff to work together with Chinese teachers as writing teachers, or even translation teachers if they are proficient in Chinese, so that they can help each other to improve their foreign languages, and writing and translating skills by holding teaching discussions, in which Chinese teachers, in particular, can improve their foreign language proficiency through their communication with foreign teachers. When their foreign language proficiency is improved with the help of their foreign colleagues, they can be better translation teachers. Or, foreign teachers can be asked to do some proofreading of the students' translation assignments since in most universities there are some foreign teachers.

Although Ma failed to mention other qualifications of translation teachers, from his idea of the students' qualifications, we realize that translation teachers should also be equipped with a wide range of knowledge, since what they teach in translation involves different fields, especially ESP translating. They should acquire the knowledge in both English and Chinese to meet the demand of their profession.

4 Conclusion

Ma put forward his proposal on establishing a translation academy to meet the demand of the country at a certain time, but from the detailed analysis that has been made above, it can be concluded that there is no denying what he mentioned is still provoking today. In particular, it is still of significance in ESP translation teaching of the twenty-first century, including his ideas about needs analysis (covering national and social needs and the learners' needs) in translator training, choice of materials of practical genres to be used in translation teaching, cultivation of comprehensive qualifications of translation learners, and qualifications of translation teachers. Admittedly, he failed to talk directly about the importance of the students' and teachers' acquirement of a wide range of knowledge, which was indicated in his constructive ideas. From what he discussed, it can be concluded that today, in the fast-growing economy and society, more attention should be paid to the translation learners' needs and the society's needs, the learners should be provided with materials of practical genres for their practice of translation, and both the translation learners and teachers should be equipped with a wide range of knowledge, so that ESP translation teaching will better meet the demand of today, when ESP translation is the major part of translation teaching.

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Chinese Translation Activities from the Perspective of Ethics (2008), and *Translation between English and Chinese in Tourism* (2010) as well as over 40 papers on translation studies, cultural studies, and ESP. She has also translated more than ten books like *China Internet Development Report 2017* (Springer, 2019), *World Internet Development Report 2017* (Springer, 2019), and *The General History of China Vol. V & VI* (2014) into English and *Visual Arts in the Twentieth Century* into Chinese.

Exploring the Identity Formation of Chinese ESP Students

Lily Ye

Abstract Grounded in poststructuralist theories, this chapter explores the identity formation of the Chinese students studying English for specific purpose. Giddens' (Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the Late Modern Age, Polity, Cambridge, UK, 1991) concept of reflexive self-identity provides an effective way to understand the phenomena under investigation. Qualitative data were collected from a group of ESP students at an Arts university in China through face-to-face conversation, which were followed up by other means such as informal conversation, classroom discussion, email exchanges and Wechat messages for clarification and depth. The findings of thematic analysis indicated that participants' depicted themselves discursively as autonomous learners and users of English rather than a homogeneous group of passive learners. Within the sociocultural context of this study, the participants' self-articulated identities did not fall under the native/non-native categories, which broke the dichotomies associated with the traditional understandings of learner's identity (such as native speaker/non-native speaker, good/bad, passive/proactive, Asian/Western). The findings of this study suggest that ESP students' identities are dynamic and situated rather than fixed and inherent. The study also argues for applying critical pedagogy in ESP teaching.

Keywords English for special purpose · TESOL · Identity formation · Learner autonomy · Ownership of English

1 Introduction

The field of English for specific purposes (ESP) has grown rapidly in the past four decades to become a major part of English language teaching and research (Hyland, 2007). A close look at previous discussion on English for specific purposes (ESP) reveals that most of it have focused on students' needs analysis (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Water, 1987; Munby, 1978; Songhori, 2008; see also Hyland, 2007); genre analysis of written and spoken discourse in academic and

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professional settings (Hyland, 2004; Liu & Deng, 2016; Paltridge, 2001; Swales, 1988, 1990); Corpus-based Lexical Analysis (Fuentes, 2003); discipline construction and curriculum design (e.g. Zhang & Ye, 2016); ESP teaching, learning and teachers' professional development (Feng, 2017; Hutchinson & Water, 1987); and assessment (Rahimy, 2007) and issues of intercultural communication (Fan, 2008; Wang, 2012; see also Gao, Moses, & Adelina, 2016).

More recently, a growing number of ESP researchers have begun to study student identity in order to address students' learning needs (Belcher, Johns, & Paltridge, 2011). The growing interest in identity is due to a shift of research interest from the psycholinguistic aspect of language acquisition to a focus on the sociological and anthropological perspectives of language learning (Norton, 2011). Indeed, understanding L2 learners' identity is necessary to understand the complex dynamics of learning and teaching foreign languages (e.g. Block, 2007; Norton, 2006). Following this line of inquiry, this study aims to investigate Chinese ESP students' identity through the mobilisation of Giddens' (1991) theory of reflexive identity formation, taking an anti-essentialist stance towards identity, and moving beyond the simplistic dichotomy of native-speaker and non-native speaker. In the next section, I will offer a justification for the choice of theoretical framework.

2 Theoretical Framework

With its focus on students' identity formation and negotiation, this study is underpinned by Giddens' (1991) concept of "the reflexive project of the self", which is understood in terms of a "storied self", whereby individuals construct their own personal biographies and self-identity that is seen as self-articulated and non-given. Doing so opens up a space for resistance and agency and helps us develop the counter-essentialist discourse of ESP learners' identity, which categorises L2 learners as a homogeneous group of passive non-native speakers (e.g. Holliday, 2003, 2005; Kubota, 2001). With the voices of ESP students articulating their own perception of themselves and English language, we are able to develop a fuller understanding of students' identity formation and negotiation in relation to the English language and language learning. This approach not only challenges the notion of identity as categorised, essentialised, imposed and united, but empowers the participants by allowing them to create and maintain a "small" narrative that challenges the grand ones that position them as uncritical, passive and problematic (Holliday, 2003, 2005).

In Giddens' view, self-identity cannot be anchored in collective categories such as race, gender, age or social class in a post-traditional world where viewpoints are no longer influenced by custom. In other words, it is not something that is simply given, but rather is understood in terms "coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives" (Giddens, 1991, p. 5). The emphasis, then, is on the role of narrative in understanding the Self. Taylor (1989) claims that narrative, as a particular form of linguistic articulation, offers us a way of adequately understanding the self, through which we make sense of who we are. Similarly, Sarup (1996, p. 16) asserts that "to some extent we construct our story, and hence our identity". The narrative created by an individual includes past memories and future plans in which private "stories" are shaped by the external sociocultural environment.

In short, self-identity is understood as a "storied self", which is a biographical narrative reflexively created and maintained continuously by individual, rather than fixed or inherent. Consistent with the authors' aim to avoid viewing ESP learners as a homogeneous group of passive NNS, this approach challenges the notion of identity as essentialised and given, and breaks the dichotomies associated with traditional understandings of learner's identity (such as native speaker/non-native speaker, good/bad, passive/proactive, Asian/Western), highlighting students agency and reflexivity. Under this theoretical framework, this study attends to address the following research questions: (1) what are students' perception towards the English language? (2) what are the ways in which students exercise their capacity to take control of English learning? A description of the methodology which guides this study will be put in place in the next section.

3 Methodology

In line with Gidden's (1991) concept of "reflexive project of the self", this study uses a narrative methodology. Narratives (Bruner, 1987) are verbal accounts relating to experiences and perception of Chinese ESP learners. For Connelly and Clandinin (2006), narrative inquiry is "the study of experience as story"; it is "first and foremost a way of thinking about experience" (p. 375). As Brockmeier and Carbaugh (2001) argued, its importance lies in its "expressive embodiment of our experience, as a mode of communication, and as a form for understanding the world and ultimately ourselves" (p. 1).

The focus of narrative research, then, is on the individual, and the fact that life can be understood through a recounting and reconstruction of the life story or biographical narrative. As an interpretive researcher, I share the belief that knowledge is linked to interpretation, meaning and illumination rather than generalisation and prediction, requiring researchers to understand and make sense of participants' self-interpretation of their life experience, contextualised by time and sociocultural space. As a narrative inquirer, I not only gather facts or "truths" about a participant, but actively construct interpretations of their experiences in the field, and then question how those interpretations come about (Hertz, 1997).

Following researchers such as Le Ha (2009) who used small samples (eight participants attending her seminar) to explore students' identity formation in relation to the English language, data gathered from 20 ESP learners from an Arts university in China were used for this narrative study. Apart from face-to-face conversations with the participants, they were asked to respond to seven guided questions in writing, and these questions were followed up by informal conversation, email exchanges and Wechat messages for clarification and depth. All of the participants explained how they take the ownership of language learning and the various strategies they used to appropriate English and construct their identity in relation to language and culture. Meanwhile, the participants articulate their perceived personal development and growth. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to facilitate the second phase analysis, aiming to investigate common themes and identify "critical experiences" across the whole data set. For a qualitative study using thematic analysis, 6–10 participants would be enough (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Twenty individuals' narratives were, therefore, deemed sufficient for this study. The subsequent inductive analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 389) was guided by the research questions, the theoretical underpinnings, the existing literature, and the themes emerging from the data.

What I seek from this inquiry is the personal and contextual details of students' perceptions, and the linking of individuals' oral accounts with the broader social context where these narratives happened. In addition, I look for the "resonance" (Conle, 1996) or dissonance readers may have with the stories presented in this study so that they can enrich their understanding of experience known or unknown to them and join the dialogue around meanings students make in relation to their understanding of themselves in relation to language. The themes emerging from an analysis of ESP students' narratives will be presented in the next section, which offer fresh insights on Chinese ESP learners' identity.

4 Findings and Discussion

Two interrelated themes recurred throughout their narratives: autonomous learner and the multi-competence user of English. We will look at each in turn.

4.1 Autonomous Learner

The first main theme that emerged from the data concerns the autonomous learning—"the capacity to take control of one's own learning" (Benson, 2001, p. 47). It is essential to foreign language study, which takes numerous different forms in participants. According to Crabbe (1993, p. 443), "learning is more meaningful, more permanent, more focussed on the processes and schemata of the individual when the individual is in charge." Autonomy, personal and intellectual independence, and confidence are among the "essential characteristic of all truly successful learners, regardless of their age or the domain in which they are learning." (Little, Ridley, & Ushioda, 2002, p. 1) This section will explore how the participants used their own personal agency to manage their study. Through their narratives we can see how they used their autonomy to take responsibility for their own learning and how they coped with difficulties they encountered in their ESP learning. For instance, fashioning herself as an autonomous and reflexive agent, Nathalia, a final year student in business English, comments:

> *… I read BBC News, China Daily, the Economist*, etc. *I also enjoy watching English TV programmes and movies. I follow famous English bloggers. I actively take part in various English-related activities such as English corner and competitions. I also make foreign friends…really I always take any chances available to learn English and its culture…*

It is apparent that Nathalia constructs a narrative in which she proactively takes responsibility for her own language learning. In a similar vein, Xiao, a material science student, describes how he has coped with linguistic challenges faced during his study. The following excerpt underlines his autonomy, agency, reflexivity and independence:

> *The biggest difficulty is always chemistry-related terminology. I am studying chemistry and polymer science here, which may be different to other subjects because of the specialist terminology and abbreviations. Although I have learned English since I was in primary school, terminology and abbreviation are still a pain for me. For example, PET means Polyethylene terephthalate; PS stands for Polystyrene*, etc. *It is quite hard. Even now it is still one of the biggest barriers for my study.*
>
> *Ye: How will you tackle this problem?*
>
> *Xiao: You have to prepare it in advance. Also I just read, read, read. I have read a lot of academic papers concerning polymer and chemistry in English. The more you read, the more you know. If I do not understand the meaning of the word, I just look up the dictionary and sort out all the words by myself. I spent a lot of time thinking. In the past I spent a lot of time reading, but later on I found out that it didn't work if you just read, and you have to think.*

Xiao's oral accounts demonstrate his self-reflexivity. He has engaged in reflection on language learning process, which is an important component of autonomous learning (Benson, 2001). The linguistic challenges faced by Xiao were mainly caused by his weakness in subject-specific terminology. He uses "resourcing" strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990) to cope with the shortage of knowledge, including consulting written materials (intensive reading academic articles). His comments demonstrate his own resourcefulness and agency. It is apparent that Xiao constructs himself discursively as an autonomous learner, who actively takes on responsibility for his own learning, sets his goals, chooses the appropriate learning methods (Little, 1991) and reflexively monitors its progress (e.g. Schunk, 2005).

The following oral accounts of Kerry, a business English student, also illustrates autonomy and agency, where she proactively engages in planning in advance in light of her needs:

> *For example, I am very interested in two subjects: principles of accounting and principles of economics. Of course, the exams of these two subjects are quite important and hard. I don't want to fail the exams, so I work very hard on these two subjects, using my initiatives. Because these two subjects are taught in English, so it is natural that I cannot understand everything in the class. My listening comprehension was not very good, and my reactions were not very quick either. Therefore, I spent lot of time reading the textbook before the lecture so that I could get the gist of the context. This method helps me focusing on the difficult parts and the main points made by the lecturers during the class. If I haven't got time to prepare my lessons, I will definitely do revision afterwards. I have to go through the textbook because no matter how you stay focused during the lecture, you have to read textbook and mark down the key points, which can help you to improve your learning.*

This extract illustrates how Kerry works to craft and sustain an account of herself as an autonomous learner, narrating how she devises ways to overcome obstacles. For her, autonomy and independence are fundamental components of self-identity formation in relation to ESP learning. Like Xiao and Natalia, Kerry not only shows the capacity to take charge of her own language learning, but "accepts responsibility for specifying the objectives and contents, through selection of methods and techniques, to monitoring the acquisition procedure and evaluation of both what she has learnt and of the learning process itself" (Holec, 1981, p. 3).

To sum up, the present study suggests that ESP students relied heavily on their own resources to learn English; students discursively constructed themselves as autonomous learners, who were highly motivated and able to control their own study, using a range of strategies. From a theoretical perspective, this pattern of response supports Giddens' concept of "the reflexive project of the self", in which the self acts with agency and discernment. Students' "small" narratives challenge the traditional view that learner autonomy is a Western phenomenon (e.g. Benson, 2001) or the view that NNS students are a homogeneous group of learners who are passive, dependent and lack of learner autonomy (e.g. Holliday, 2005; Kubota, 2001; Zacharias, 2010).

4.2 Multi-competence User of English

The second theme emerged from the data is "user of English". The discussion which follows, then, will focus on how individuals constructed their identity as L2 users or "users of English", who take the ownership of English in the context of EIL, rejecting the deficient and incompetent *non-native speaker* label. For example, Jasmine reflects:

> *In my opinion, being able to speak English like a native-speaker is not my goal of learning English. If I can use English to communicate with people from other cultures, it is okay. Like any other language, English is just a tool and a skill. As a Chinese saying goes, "it is always good to have more skills". That's why I want to learn English. I can explore different culture through English. Anyway, I like to be a Chinese who can speak both Chinese and English.*

This excerpt shows how Jasmine works reflexively to claim her legitimate right to speak English and successfully define herself as a multi-competent L2 user and "legitimate speaker" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 650). She refuses to accept native speakers as her "frames of reference" (Huang & Zhu, 2009), defining herself as a competent user of English as opposed to an imperfect or deficient speaker of standard English or an incompetent English language learner. As far as Jasmine is concerned, language is a site where her sense of self is constructed (Weedon, 1987, p. 21). By claiming that "*I like to be a Chinese who can speak both Chinese and English*", she not only constructs herself discursively as a bilingual (Pavlenko, 2006), but asserts proudly her cultural identity through English, claiming the ownership of it. As Widdowson (1994, cited in Fernandez, 2005, p. 89) points out, "to own a language is to be able to affirm oneself through it and to adapt it to one's own meaning and wishes". Her identity as "Chinese" is strengthened and deeply felt in the ways she asserts her identity as Chinese in relation to English and her mother tongue. Analytically, Jasmine's narrative resonate with the findings of Clemente and Higgins' (2008) study of Mexican pre-service English teachers' identity formation in relation to English. Like Jasmine, one of the participants (a non-native English teacher) in Clemente and Higgins' study was able to take the ownership of English without compromising her Mexican identity. In her words,

> *I have a Mexican accent. English is mine from the very moment I put it into practice and I am able to establish communication. But when I say that the English language is mine, I do not mean to say that I want to take the culture that comes with it.*

In a similar vein, Yi Tong, a fashion student, challenged the essentialist view of "native-speaker", and claimed the ownership of English by asserting that:

> *I think anyone who is already proficient in English can be called "native speaker". My goal in learning English is to reduce some of the obstacles in the way of learning western culture and fashion design in the future, which will give me more opportunity of becoming an international designer. I will not take "native speaker" as my ultimate goal of learning. English belongs to the whole world. I think English is a tool of communication, as long as you can express your meaning. You don't have to have a perfect command of English in order to own it. I have the ability to communicate in English, so I own it!*

Yi Tong's account suggests that she successfully claimed her legitimate right to own English because English "*belongs to the whole world*". Like Jasmine, Yi Tong's narratives therefore depict her as a legitimate user of English rather than a passive non-native speaker.

In addition, students such as Helen believed that she was privileged to have both Chinese and English as linguistic resources. She was also aware of the importance of learning English as an international lingua franca:

> *I think the basic function of English is communication. I am a person who wants to know more about different ideas and cultures. Although more and more people are learning Chinese, English is still the second language of almost every country and the universal language in the world, so I want to learn English. I think China will get better and better in the future, and Chinese language will get more and more popular in the world. So if you can speak both Chinese and English, you will have more advantages in the future.*

This excerpt exemplifies the common themes throughout all of the participants' narratives. Highlighting the importance of both Chinese and English, Helen's accounts show that she has "knowledge of more than one language in the same mind" (Cook, 2002, p. 10), which reflects the notion of English users as multi-competence bilingual, indicating what bilingual L2 users can do rather than what they cannot do as the term "non-native speaker" describes.

Furthermore, reflecting upon her relationship with English, Natalia feels that she has developed a sense of empowerment through drawing upon his additional linguistic resource:

> *I think that being able to speak English brings me confidence. People are more likely to succeed with self-confidence. This kind of confidence becomes part of you as time goes by.*

She goes on to explain,

> *Native speaker is a person who has lived in the culture of the language from a very young age. Their advantage is that they understand the particular culture better than we do. But as far as the "learned knowledge" or "subject knowledge" is concerned, I don't think there is any difference between native speakers and non-native speakers. As long as English can bring advantages and benefits to me, that's enough, which means that I have successfully mastered English. In terms of speaking like a native speaker, I think that it depends on personal interests. For me, it doesn't have to be like that.*

Natalia's data is clearly consistent with the notion of multi-competent user of English. Rather than portraying herself as an incompetent non-native English speaker, Natalia builds confidence and successfully negotiates legitimacy as a second language speaker. She understands the limitations of her English language competence. However, she refuses to accept the disadvantages associated with non-native speakers, repositioning herself as a legitimate speaker of English by highlighting that "*as far as the 'learned knowledge' or 'subject knowledge' is concerned, I don't think there is any difference between native speakers and non-native speakers*". In her narrative, she creatively portraits herself as a resilient multi-competent L2 user (Cook, 2002), underlining the relevance of personal agency in the process.

Like other students, Shelly's narrative below also demonstrates that she felt that she was in control of the English language and saw her command of both Chinese and English as their advantages. She seemed to enjoy positive international experiences by taking ownership of English. She did not use "native-speaker" as a frame of reference and articulated an oral account within which the multi-competence user of English or L2 user was constructed:

> *I want to learn a language because it can give me an edge in terms of future employment, social interaction, travelling and so on. Although Chinese is my mother tongue, there are still a lot of things about Chinese that I need to learn. Of course, there are a lot of things about English that I need to learn as well. After all, language is just a tool for communication and description. For me, what I pursue is free and fluent English. English is widely used all over the world, so English has become a very practical language when you travel. I used to ask the local for direction in English when I went to Korea. It was wonderful to be able to talk with Koreans in English. English has helped me make foreign friends in Beijing.*

A key point to make here then is that students' data resonate with the findings of Canagarajah (1999), Le Ha (2008, 2009) and Brutt-Griffler (2002) who all document the appropriation of English by international users to an extent that is meaningful to them.

To sum up, this section discusses the ways in which students legitimised themselves as multi-competence users of English and confident bilinguals, taking the ownership of English. Students' oral accounts broke down the conventional NS versus NNS dichotomy in understanding ESP learners' identity. The findings show that "English is the property of only the English-speaking West and that students have to submit themselves to English is no longer valid and thus must not be taken for granted" (Le Ha, 2009, p. 204).

5 Concluding Remarks

This study explores a topic which has been under-studied to date, namely the Chinese ESP learners' identity formation. This study sheds some light on how students' perception on the ownership of English, and how they see themselves in relation to the English language. As the reflexive project of the self (Giddens, 1991), students construct themselves discursively as bilinguals (Pavlenko, 2006) and multi-competent L2 users (Cook, 2002), who have a unique status as standing between two languages and cultures. The finding also illustrates that the participants were able to appropriate English without sacrificing their Chinese identity. In offering participants a chance to "speak" to us, their narratives challenge the essentialised view of Chinese ESP learner as a culturally and academically homogeneous group of deficient "non-native speaker" who are inadequate, deficient, passive, dependable and uncritical (Jenkins, 1996; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; Phillipson, 1992; Zacharias, 2010). They help the readers gain a basic understanding of the complexity and nuances of the identity formation of participants whose experiences cannot be captured in neat typologies. It is argued that ESP learning is more than acquiring a set of grammatical, lexical, and phonological forms of the language. More importantly, it is a "reconstruction of selves" (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000).

Furthermore, participants' "small narratives" break the dichotomies associated with traditional understandings of learner's identity (such as native speaker/non-native speaker, good/bad, passive/proactive, Asian/Western), highlighting individual's agency, motivation, self-determination and reflexivity. This chapter demonstrates that students' self-identity is dynamic, multiple and situated rather than fixed and inherent. Finally, it calls for applying critical pedagogy in ESP teaching, thinking beyond the simplistic dichotomy of NS and NNS.

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A Corpus-Driven and Functional Analysis of the Use of NP-*of* Phrases in English Thesis Abstracts by Novice and More Advanced Writers

Jing Li

Abstract Structural complexity, a recognized feature of academic writing, has been recently proven by Biber and Gray (Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 9: 2–20, 2010) to be embedded in nominal expressions with phrasal modifiers. However, little has been done to identify the problems that novice Chinese academic writers might face when using nominal expressions to compress information, especially from a functional perspective. This chapter explores the most common phrasal modifier—*of*–phrases—aiming to find how novice Chinese academic writers in computer science differ from more advanced science writers regarding the discourse-semantic function in which nominal expressions with *of*-phrases as postmodifiers (NP-*of* phrases) perform. NP-*of* phrases retrieved from two self-built corpora of master's thesis abstracts from China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) and ProQuest were investigated both quantitatively and qualitatively. Our findings show that novice Chinese academic writers use NP-*of* phrases more frequently but do not compress information as effectively as more advanced writers. For the semantic function, they tend to underuse NP-*of* phrases with an internal nominalized relationship and overuse some head nouns before *of*-phrases in certain abstract moves. For the discoursal function, they use fewer NP-*of* phrases in the verbalized cause–effect relationship, especially in the problemizing step, the result move and conclusion move. These deficiencies may hinder novice Chinese academic writers' ability to produce compact and compelling academic discourse with the meaning-making function of the NP-*of* phrase enabled by its structural complexity.

Keywords Structural complexity · Academic writing · *Of*-phrases · Discourse-semantic function · Cause–effect relationship

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1 Introduction

Numerous studies have indicated that academic writing is more structurally complex than speech, measured by the mean length of "*t*-units," and the number of subordinate clauses per unit (e.g., Brown & Yule, 1983; Chafe, 1982; Kroll, 1977; O'Donnell, 1974). Supported by a large-scale corpus investigation, Biber and Gray have challenged this stereotyped notion of complexity in academic writing by redefining it as "being structurally compressed, with phrasal (non-clausal) modifiers embedded in noun phrases" (3). As a matter of fact, a range of other studies have identified the nominally oriented language as a key feature in academic writing (e.g., Halliday, 1988; Ravelli, 1996; Hunston, 2002; Hyland, 2009; Coffin, 2009), though none of them have explicitly associated it with the interpretation of complexity in academic writing.

When they compared the complexity feature of academic writing to that of conversation, Biber and Gray have discovered that "the most striking difference from conversation is the use of prepositional phrases as noun postmodifiers. Many of these are *of*-phrases (e.g., the *participant perspective of members of a lifeworld*)" (7). There is also evidence that the nominal structures in academic writing represent a high degree of complexity and will be acquired in later developmental stages of learners (e.g., Biber, Gray, & Poonpon, 2011; Lu, 2011; Parkinson & Musgrave, 2014). Therefore, for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instructors, it should be an important part of their teaching syllabi to train novice academic writers to use nominal phrases, especially the complex ones, such as NP-*of* phrases to create a compressed academic style.

Postgraduates in Computer Science at Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (BUPT) have never taken basic EAP courses for decades, let alone those courses which aim to help learners develop a compact style in English academic writing. To prepare such a course for upcoming students enrolled in the year of 2018 to fill the gap, we conducted a contrastive study to compare the English master's thesis abstracts of our students between 2010 and 2015 from China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI)—the universally available research product in school for most students before they take a real academic path—with abstracts between 2000 and 2015 from ProQuest written by postgraduates with similar academic background from universities in English-speaking countries, mostly in the USA. Since we tried to match the two corpora for topics, we set a broader time range for our search in ProQuest so that we can increase our chances of success in finding the best match in ProQuest for the selected CNKI abstracts. Though there might be some individual variations within each group, we assume that the CNKI abstracts represent the novice writer level and the ProQuest abstracts represent a more advanced level of proficiency, because the former samples were written by students who had never taken any EAP training while the latter were written by students likely to have been assisted by their universities in the USA which generally offer EAP courses and editing services from writing centers. Our aim is to inform future EAP writing instruction in China of our new findings by identifying the difficulties novice Chinese academic writers might face in using NP-*of* phrases to develop complexity in academic writing. In particular, we focus on the genre of English-language abstracts which require a highly informational and condensed writing style. This study is also part of widespread efforts to cultivate EAP learners' rhetoric awareness of the prominent grammatical structures in academic writing.

2 NP-*of* Phrase and the Semantic Approach to Its Complexity in Academic Writing

Though Biber and Gray attribute the complexity in academic writing to the high frequency of nominal expressions, they mainly focus on the grammatical aspect of complexity—the structure of "multiple levels of phrasal embeddings" (19) without exploring how the linguistic form of nominal expressions should function to meet the meaning-based, contextual, and communicative demands of complex academic discourse. According to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) grammar, "grammar is seen as a resource for making meaning—it is a 'semanticky' kind of grammar" (Halliday 31). A functional analysis is therefore needed to guarantee that novice academic writers will not only learn the linguistic forms of complexity but also know how and when to use them to generate proper meaning in line with the requirement of specific writing tasks. This element is still missing in a number of recent studies of linguistic complexity (e.g., Yoon, 2017; Parkinson & Musgrave, 2014). However, there has been recent growing interest in the discourse-semantic role the construct of complexity may play (e.g., Ryshina-Pankova, 2015; Housen Kuiken & Vedder, 2012). Housen, Kuiken, and Vedder define linguistic complexity in L2 writing as "formal and semantic-functional properties" (4). Ryshina-Pankova argues that "the majority of research on linguistic complexity have favored the formal properties of complexity and operationalized this construct as grammatical and lexical complexity (Bulte and Housen 23). What appears to be missing from the research is a focus on the discourse-semantic aspects of linguistic complexity defined as a focus on the link between the complexity of linguistic forms and its function in construction of meaning (semantics) in texts (discourse) at different levels of L2 abilities, an area of investigation that should be of particular interest to L2 writing research and instruction" (52).

With regard to the discourse-semantic function of nominal phrases, Biber and Gray briefly mentioned: "they are more economical, and they allow faster reading by experienced knowledgeable readers" (11). Halliday and Martin also discuss how a nominal rather than clausal expression of meaning makes text denser (76). Carroll, a once frustrated history teacher in college found that nominalization could help his students build stronger arguments in their writing (24). Ryshina-Pankova also argues that nominalization can enable a better understanding with "the abstracting and theorizing" needed to "fulfill the communicative purposes of particular situations" (55).

The studies outlined in the preceding paragraph all reflect a view that the desirable use of complex nominal expressions can realize a discourse-semantic function of facilitating information flow and advancing writers' arguments efficiently in academic discourse. However, how to understand and evaluate this meaning-based function of nominal phrases, specifically complex ones, such as NP-*of* phrases remains an unsolved problem. This lack of knowledge will make it impossible for EAP instructors to track learners' progression in acquiring the complexity feature of academic writing. Focusing only on the literature of NP-*of* phrases, we still cannot find a satisfying answer.

One focus of studies concerning the NP-*of* phrase is its diverse meaning relationships between the head noun and its *of*-postmodifier (Biber & Gray, 2010; Cai, 2003; Ping & Yan, 2012; Sinclair, 2005; Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik, 1985), because "Prepositional phrases beginning with 'of' are the most numerous postmodifiers and convey very rich meaning relationships with the head noun" (Sinclair 129). Most of these studies elaborate on different semantic relationships within NP-*of* phrases either with or without a comparison with the s-genitives. Only a few researchers have explicitly mentioned the effect this structure may produce, such as Cai (2003), who mentions that the appositive relationship between the *of*-postmodier and the head noun most effectively compress information of a clause (39) as well as Li Ping and Cao Yan who studied the condensing function of *of*-postmodifiers in research paper titles based on the titles' semantic structures (322–324). Biber and Gray have also explored the various semantic relationships within the nominal phrases including the ones with *of*-postmodifiers to demonstrate the implicit style in academic writing (7–12). Despite the differences in the research motives, we still have reasons to believe that all the above studies represent efforts to explain the semantic function inherent in NP-*of* phrases by revealing how *of*-postmodifiers semantically relate to the head nouns. This interpretation, however, cannot evaluate the complexity on the phrasal level or explain how this phrasal complexity can work to promote the information flow over larger stretches of text, such as sentences and discourse. Biber, Gray, and Poonpon once tried to measure the semantic complexity of nominal phrases. They distinguished between prepositional postmodifiers with concrete/locative meanings and those with abstract meanings, associating these two types of postmodifiers with different degrees of complexity by placing the latter in a more advanced stage than the former (30–31). However, Ansarifar, Shahriari, and Pishghadam (2018) did not find any significant differences in the frequency of "of phrase (concrete/locative meanings)" and "of phrase (abstract meanings)" across three groups of abstracts written respectively by L1 Persian MA-level students, a group of L1-Persian doctoral students and a group of published writers within the field of Applied Linguistics (67–68). In another word, Biber, Gray, and Poonpon's method to assess semantic complexity of NP phrases may not be adequate enough to reflect learners' developmental progression and problems when they try to master the complexity features of NP-*of* phrases.

The other research direction involving NP-*of* phrases is the study of nominal lexical bundles. A wide range of lexical bundle studies focus primarily on comparing expert and non-expert writing to see how they differ in the function and structure of lexical bundles (e.g., Hyland, 2009; Biber, Conrad, & Cortes, 2004; Biber & Barbieri, 2007; Chen & Baker, 2010; Pan, 2016). Lexical bundles of NP-*of* phrases are more frequently found in expert writing than non-expert writing, which has also led researchers to realize the noun-dominant feature of academic writing. However, the functions of nominal phrases, including NP-*of* phrases, are underexplored in the following two aspects:

1. The cut-off frequency requirement of lexical bundles excludes many useful but not that frequent nominal phrases, especially those with subject-specific content.
2. Lexical bundles of nominal phrases are mostly assigned the research-based or text-based function (see Hyland, 2009) without attention to their role in building argument over the discourse.

EAP instruction on how to use nominal phrases informed by the result of this frequency-based approach might lead to such a danger: EAP learners might be obsessed with top nominal lexical bundles and use the same grammatical structures profusely, but possibly for a different function from that which experts might use, to create the discourse (Cortes 142); for nominal phrases unqualified as lexical bundles in frequency, EAP learners will probably have little chance to realize their (lexical bundles') value to construct a compact and powerful academic discourse.

As can be seen, the above lexical bundle studies about the NP-*of* phrase mostly aim to explore how linguistic complexity is achieved with the high frequency of this structure, but generally overlook how this linguistic form of complexity operates semantically at different levels to meet the generic complexity of academic discourse. As Ryshina-Pankova has summarized based on Pallotti (2009)'s study, the problem is "complexity is studied as an ability to produce certain types of language forms, divorced of considerations of meaningful content production and realization of communicative goals" (52).

Thus, despite the vast scholarship on the NP-*of* phrase, there remains a need to systematically examine the discourse-semantic functions[1] this structure performs when it compresses information for complexity. Our study is also an effort to respond to the suggestion of Biber and Gray concerning the nominal complexity of academic discourse: "In order to succeed in an academic profession, students must learn to efficiently read and to eventually write this style of discourse. Future research is required to determine how that process can best be facilitated through EAP instruction" (19). To this end, the present study suggests a meaning-based method to measure the discourse-semantic functions of NP-*of* phrases in academic writing, and thereby conducts a comparative study between novice Chinese academic writers and more advanced academic writers to identify the former's possible problems in the context of thesis abstracts. Our functional and comparative analysis in the following part shows that EAP novice learners' use of NP-*of* phrases

[1] The term of "discourse-semantic function" is used interchangeably with "discourse-semantic complexity" in this study, for both are about the discourse-semantic aspect of linguistic complexity.

Table 1 Constituents of the two corpora

Corpus	Word count	No. of texts	Types	Type/token ratio
CNKI	34,974	100	3833	11.05
ProQuest	31,362	100	4537	14.55

in abstracts does not fit the communicative needs of their writing task as closely as more advanced learners. The aim of this study is to shed light on how EAP instructors can integrate the form and the meaning dimensions of NP-*of* phrases in order to teach the nominal academic style most productively.

3 Data

The investigative procedure takes the form of a contrastive corpus-based enquiry. The analyzed data consists of 200 English master's thesis abstracts, of which 100 were downloaded from CNKI, written by graduates from BUPT (they will be labeled henceforth as "CNKI corpus[2]"), 100 downloaded from ProQuest written by graduates mostly from universities in the USA, (they will be labeled henceforth as "ProQuest corpus"). The CNKI writers in this study are Chinese-speaking senior postgraduates majoring in computer science. They have all passed College English Test Band 4 (CET-4) and finished one general English writing course taught by Chinese instructors for 18 h in their first school year as postgraduates. The ProQuest writers in this study are all enrolled Computer Science postgraduates in universities of English-speaking countries, mostly the USA. As we mentioned before, ProQuest writers may have received more academic training and professional assistance from their school during their preparation of the theses. And the fact that the Dissertation and Thesis collection of ProQuest has been declared the official US off-site repository of the Library of Congress further led us to believe that the selected ProQuest writers of English can represent a higher level of academic writing proficiency than their CNKI counterparts. And to ensure we had access to the latest learners' writing materials, we started with CNKI looking for abstracts with distinct topics during the interval between 2010 and 2015. Then to maximize the comparability, we paired each abstract in CNKI with one having similar key words in ProQuest, since it is rare to find two abstracts with similar or identical topics in two different sets of data. The time interval between two abstracts in one pair was set to no more than 10 years to minimize any impact time might have on the comparison. The size of each finalized corpus for investigation is approximately 30,000 words, though the CNKI corpus is slightly longer than the ProQuest corpus in average length of abstracts and the latter is more varied in word choice (see Table 1).

[2] Sometimes we might use "CNKI abstracts"/"CNKI writers" and "ProQuest abstracts"/"ProQuest writers".

After retrieving all the concordance lines containing NP-*of* phrases in the two corpora using the corpus tool WordSmith 7.0 (Scott, 2007), we manually excluded the following NP-*of* phrases: (1) those for numbers and amounts, such as *a number of*, for the *of* part in these phrases has become a head noun rather than a postmodifier; (2) specialized terms, such as *Internet of Things* and *multicore scheduling of application threads*, for their occurrence has little to do with the writer's deliberate choice. Additionally, each occurrence of NP-*of* phrases was manually coded to differentiate between prepositional phrases functioning as noun postmodifiers versus all other functions (e.g., adverbials). The numbers of NP-*of* phrases before and after data refinement are found and shown in Table 2 below.

As Table 2 shows, CNKI writers, contrary to expectations, surpass their American counterparts in the frequency of NP-*of* phrases per 1000 words after refinement, which justifies the need for a qualitative analysis of NP-*of* phrases in the following sections.

4 Methodology

Our qualitative analysis is mainly built on Ryshina-Pankova's proposal of "using the concept of grammatical metaphor (GM), typically realized as nominalizations, as a construct that links linguistic complexity to discourse-semantic complexity and helps capture complex meaning making in advanced L2 writer text" (52). Ryshina-Pankova attributes the discourse-semantic complexity of GMs as nominalizations to its "conceptual refiguration of experience" and "configuration or development of concepts" (57). "Conceptual refiguration of experience" can help us understand the complexity of nominalization itself as a function that enables a generalization from individual cases to "abstract categories" to be evaluated and understood beyond the specific text. Since the quantity of nominalization alone is not adequate to measure the quality of the essays (Ryshina-Pankova 59), Ryshina-Pankova goes beyond the phrasal level, using "configuration or development of concepts" to explain how nominalization meets the complexity demand of the sentence and discourse. This high level function can "allow additional semantic density to cluster around them (nominalizations)" (55) and "configure these concepts into a particular line of reasoning in explanatory and argumentative texts" (58). This theorization of complexity views nominalization as one means to realize semantic complexity with the function of abstraction at the phrasal level and to realize discoursal/contextual complexity with the function of strategically placing nominalization in the sentence or

Table 2 Number of NP-of phrases in the two corpora before and after refinement

Before refinement		After refinement	
Corpus	No. of NP-*of* (tokens)	No. of NP-*of* (tokens)	Frequency per 1000 words
CNKI	1189	864	24.7
ProQuest	925	543	17.3

the text for the communicative appropriateness of the writing task. This approach to complexity offers us a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of NP-*of* phrases in producing abstract/condensed and argumentative meaning needed by the genre of academic abstracts. Thus, based on Ryshina-Pankova's theory, we propose the following meaning-based approach to measure the discourse-semantic functions of NP-*of* phrases in the two corpora.

Regarding the ways that the semantic complexity of NP-*of* phrases can function at the phrasal level, we try to measure it in terms of whether a nominalized relationship between the head noun and *of*-structure exists. We start by classifying the semantic relationship between the head noun and its *of*-phrase modifiers with a goal to see how the two corpora differ in abstracting and generalizing about concrete entities. For fear that frequency alone cannot display the full picture of novice academic writers' difficulties, we also look into the top ten head nouns in each corpus, hoping to capture any meaning-related difference in the context of abstracts.

For the function of discoursal complexity, we follow M. Ryshina-Pankova's practice to assess the function of nominalization with "the creation of links between the concepts" (54) in context-related terms but employ Halliday and Martin (1993)'s framework for evaluation. Both approaches can help judge the role of nominal phrases in making semantic connections and building argument in academic discourse. However, Ryshina-Pankova (2015) demonstrates his model using a case study without providing a concrete tool to assess a set of data with different topics while Halliday and Martin (1993) offer a more tangible and applicable sentence pattern as the criterion which better suits a corpus-based study dealing with different writing themes, especially in scientific discourse. Halliday and Martin argue that "the nature of scientific discourse which had to proceed step by step, with a constant movement from 'what we have established so for' to 'what follows from it next'; and each of these two parts, both the 'taken for granted' part and the new information, had to be presented in a way that would make its status in the argument clear" (81). They believe that for this purpose, the best way is to build the whole process into a single sentence with two nouns at each end and a verb setting up different "logic-semantic relations" between the two (Halliday and Martin 90). "This pattern obviously provides a powerful resource for constructing and developing an argument…construes iconically the total reality in which we now live, a reality consisting of semiotic entities in a periodic flow of information—a flow that one might well say has now become a flood" (Halliday and Martin 92). Therefore, we have reason to argue that NP-*of* phrases as either the subject or the object of this pattern may contribute more significantly to creating a powerful argument and a smooth information flow than those NP-*of* phrases in other patterns, and thus would consider this use of the NP-*of* phrase in a sentence or discourse as important to realizing its discoursal complexity. It is worthwhile to explore how this meaning-making function of NP-*of* phrases differs between academic writers at different levels.

So far, informed by Ryshina-Pankova's and Halliday and Martin's work, we have categorized different discoursal-semantic functions of NP-*of* phrases, and proposed a method of measurement. The following comparative analysis proceeds to find whether NP-*of* phrases in two corpora differ in discoursal-semantic functions and how the differences might impact the realization of communicative needs of abstracts.

5 Comparison of Semantic Function Within NP-*of* Phrases Between the Two Corpora

In order to capture how nominalization functions semantically within the phrasal level, we firstly need to classify the internal meaning relationships within NP-*of* phrases. Drawing upon the previous classification of Quirk, Sidney, and Geoffrey (1275–1285), we listed five types of semantic relations between the head noun and its *of*-phrase which can cover nearly all NP-*of* phrases in the two corpora: (1) part-whole; (2) verb-object.; (3) subject-verb; (4) apposition; (5) noun-qualitative attributes. Examples are as follows:

1. Part-whole: e.g., the roof of this house (Quirk et al. 1277)
2. Verb-object: e.g., the imprisonment of the murderer (Quirk et al. 1278)
3. Subject-verb: e.g., the arrival of the train (Quirk et al. 1278)
4. Apposition: e.g., the news of the team's victory (Quirk et al. 1284)
5. Noun-qualitative attributes: e.g., a picture of a house (Sinclair 129)[3]

A chi-square test indicates that the two corpora differ significantly in terms of the distribution of these five types of NP-*of* phrases at the 0.05 level (p-value <0.00001) which is shown in Table 3. All cells, except for the cell of subject–verb relationship, have an absolute R value lower than 1.96, which suggests that the other four types of NP-*of* phrases contribute to the significant differences between the two corpora. The R values of the other four types can lead us to suggest that CNKI writers use significantly more NP-*of* structures with part-whole relationships and noun-modifier relationships, and fewer NP-*of* structures with verb–object relationships as well as appositive relationships than ProQuest writers.

The two types of NP-*of* structures CNKI writers use more frequently, part-whole and noun-qualitative attributes, happen to be relatively noun-oriented without obviously involving a unified process, which can be demonstrated in the following examples of CNKI corpus[4]:

1. In the design and implement phrase, this paper firstly introduced *the main function* of each module. (CNKI-28)

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[3] Quirk only gave examples of noun-quantitative attributes, though he mentioned partitive constructions of both qualitative and quantitative attributes in his study (Quirk 1278). So we turned to Sinclair's study for examples of qualitative attributes.

[4] All the examples from the corpus will be identified by the corpus name followed by a number representing the location of the source abstract in the corpus, e.g., CNKI-01 means the example comes from no.1 abstract in CNKI Corpus. Both the number and the title of the source abstracts can be found in the Appendix.

Table 3 The contingency table for the distribution of semantic types of NP-of phrases within the phrasal level in ProQuest and CNKI

Corpus	Values ($p < 0.00001$)	Part-whole	Verb–object	Subject–verb	Apposition	Noun-qualitative attributes	Row totals
ProQuest	Observed count	198	197	46	57	45	543
	Expected count	232.33	152.44	45.54	35.51	77.19	
	R value	−2.3	3.6	−0.1	3.6	−3.7	
CNKI	Observed count	404	198	72	35	155	864
	Expected count	369.67	242.56	72.46	56.49	122.81	
	R value	1.8	−2.9	0.1	−2.9	2.9	
Column totals		602	395	118	92	200	1407 (grand total)

The results in Table 3 were generated by SPSS Statistics 22

2. The creativity of this paper about the *method of information security risk evaluation* lies in the following two factors. (CNKI-90)

Even though some nominalized verbs, such as "evaluation" in (2) may occur in an *of*-structure of these two kinds of NP-*of* phrases, they merely provide ancillary semantic content to the head noun and do not semantically engage with it as directly and dynamically as those nominalized verbs with either their subject, object, or appositive.

Conversely, the other two types of NP-*of* structures CNKI writers use less frequently, verb–object and apposition, mostly involve a nominalized process created by the head noun and the *of*-structure, as in the following examples from the ProQuest corpus:

3. The implementation of these devices on an enterprise can save on costs and add capabilities previously unavailable. (ProQuest-70)
4. …the needs of finding a friendly, comfortable and smart interface between users an*d home environments* are growing. (Proquest-100)

The marked difference in frequency of semantic types of NP-*of* phrases may show the CNKI corpus is generally less nominalized than the ProQuest corpus in the relationship between the head noun and its *of*-structures within NP-*of* phrases. The difference suggests that semantic complexity within NP-*of* phrases contained in the CNKI corpus is weaker than that in the ProQuest corpus, and thus may result in a less condensed style in CNKI abstracts.

To further examine different semantic functions that NP-*of* phrases perform in the two corpora at the phrasal level in context-related terms, we also compared the top ten head nouns in NP-*of* phrases within each corpus. To avoid idiosyncrasies

Table 4 Frequency of top NP-of phrase head nouns in the two corpora

Number	CNKI top head nouns in NP-*of* phrases/frequency	ProQuest top head nouns in NP-*of* phrases/frequency
1	**Development/65**	Use/13
2	**Analysis/25**	**Problem/10**
3	**Characteristics/23**	Properties/10
4	Application/23	**Development/10**
5	**Performance/22**	**Analysis/9**
6	**Problem/16**	**Performance/8**
7	Process/15	**Characteristic/8**
8	**Method/14**	**Method/8**
9	Implementation/14	Quality/7
10	Basis/13	Results/7
Sum (percent of all the occurrences)	240 (240/864 = 27.8%)	93 (93/543 = 17.1%)

The bold-faced head nouns are those the two corpora have in common

from individual writers, we apply the criterion that the same head noun with its *of*-structure has to occur in at least 3–5 texts (a criterion to avoid writers' idiosyncrasies adopted in lexical bundle studies: e.g., Biber & Barbieri, 2007; Cortes, 2002; Chen & Baker, 2010) and found the CNKI corpus greatly exceeds the ProQuest corpus in the total frequency of the top head nouns as indicated in Table 4:

The statistics in Table 4 convinced us that compared with ProQuest writers, CNKI writers tend to overuse certain head nouns in NP-*of* structures most of which are nominalizations. In order to find the semantic function these overused NP-*of* phrases may serve, we try to locate them in abstract moves.

With a similar frequency criterion we have used to extract the top NP-*of* head nouns (occurrences in the same move of three abstracts), we found that the top NP-*of* head nouns in the CNKI corpus seem to be more closely associated with certain abstract moves than those in ProQuest, as the following table shows (five moves are represented by B for background, P for research problem, M for method, R for results, and C for conclusion):

The result in Table 5 shows that in the CNKI abstracts, the top NP-*of* head nouns semantically linked to the background and method move greatly outnumber those in the ProQuest abstracts (73/5; 40/0, respectively), which might be proof that certain NP-*of* phrases in the CNKI corpus are not used where abstraction is expected to be necessary but as "formulaic expressions" (Hyland 43) or "learner bundles" (Chen Yu-hua and Baker 31). This is confirmed by Hyland (2009) who has found that postgraduates tend to use more formulaic expressions than native speakers in order to prove their writing skills (Hyland 55).

Next, we try to specify the semantic content these formulaic NP-*of* phrase head nouns in the CNKI corpus tend to convey in order to pin down CNKI writers' problems.

Table 5 Top NP-of head nouns associated with each move in the two corpora

CNKI					ProQuest				
B	P	M	R	C	B	P	M	R	C
Development (63) Application (10)	Problem (9) Method (9) Implementation (11) Process (7)	Analysis (17) Characteristics (10) Basis (13)	Performance (12)		Quality (5)	Problem (8) Properties (6) Analysis (7)		Results (5)	
73	36	40	12	0	5	23	0	5	0

The number in the bracket represents the occurrences of the above top NP-*of* head noun in the corpus

In the background move, "development of" and "application of" are found to usually introduce generalized information, as illustrated in the following examples from the CNKI corpus:

5. With t*he rapid development of global economy and people's life rhythm speeding up, along with the rapid growth of the world aviation transport,* air transport is becoming increasingly busy, the demand of air monitoring control technology is rising, navigation system is facing new challenge. (Background move of CNKI-01)
6. With *the application of advanced science and technology*, the technical content of the various products is increasing, which puts forward higher requirements for maintenance training. (Background move of CNKI-29)

For the background move in the ProQuest abstracts, there is little generalized information about society, people's lives, or the whole industry but information about a related area of the industry, specifically on its contribution or needs. This difference may result in the more diverse choices of nominal phrases we find in ProQuest abstracts, as shown in the following examples from the ProQuest corpus:

7. As the tremendous growth of networks and e-business changes the nature of traditional information security threats, the capability to provide prompt and accurate information to authorized users boosts the competitive power of an organization. (Background move of ProQuest-42)
8. In this Big data era, the need for performing large-scale computation is evident. *A better understanding of the most suitable platforms* which can efficiently run these computations is needed. (Background move of ProQuest-87)

In the research problem move, there is no drastic difference in the frequency of top NP-*of* head nouns between the two corpora as Table 5 indicates, and the different choices of concrete words like "method" or "process" might be topic-related. However, we cannot help noticing the only nominalization in this move—"implementation"—which leads an NP-*of* phrase 11 times in the research problem move of the CNKI abstracts but zero time in the same move of the ProQuest abstracts. Instead of using "implementation," ProQuest writers are found to prefer the more congruent form-—"implement"—whenever the idea is needed in the research problem move of the of abstracts as the following examples show:

9. Also, this paper focuses on the implementation of clients function modules and finishes many tests by connecting with the server. (Research problem move of CNKI-41)
10. This thesis's objective is to develop and *implement* a low cost autonomous robot tank with Microsoft Kinect for XBOX as the primary sensor, a custom onboard small form factor (SFF), high performance computer (HPC) with NVidia GPU assistance for the primary computation, and OpenCV library for image processing functions. (Research problem move of ProQuest-32)

Regarding the method move, “basis of,” “analysis of,” and “characteristics of” common in CNKI are found mostly after prepositions like “on” and “according to,” as illustrated in the following examples:

11. On the basis of getting the point of intersection between the two-dimensional free-form curves, research and analysis the envelope generate algorithm for producing new envelops. (Method move of CNKI-38)
12. Second, based on research and analysis of the popular research database connections for different development platforms, this paper proposed one abstract model and the overall design of the interface system, which included related seven main modules. (Method move of CNKI-42)
13. This dissertation designs a flexible privacy protection scheme based on application scenario and a query-based protection scheme *according to the characteristics of* Internet of Things. (Method move of CNKI-100)

These patterns are not found in the ProQuest abstracts which tend to offer a more direct and active way to present the method, such as:

14. *Based* on a plane-wave expansion approach, I proposed a method by which one can obtain the effective cladding indices by solving the full-vector wave equation for a periodic cladding structure. (Method move of ProQuest-93)
15. In this thesis, we propose a pub-sub network architecture design called MEDYM, for Match-Early with Dynamic Multicast. MEDYM follows the end-to-end distributed system design principle, by decoupling the content-based pub-sub service into a computationally intensive, application-specific event matching at network edge, and a simple, generic multicast routing in the network. (Method move of ProQuest-91)
16. To evaluate the feasibility of the mechanism with different types of AD sensors, we *analyze* its performance with content and volumetric sensors that characterize the payload and other relevant features of the traffic exchanged by a user. (Method move of ProQuest-85)

In the result move, “performance of” seems to be favored by CNKI writers when they try to prove the validity of their research, as the following examples demonstrate:

17. The experiments show that the solutions can effectively enhance the performance of the network. (Result move of CNKI-09)
18. Finally, to verify *the performance of* the proposed Lexicon-SVM method by micro-blog corpus, the results show Lexicon-SVM method shows higher accuracy. (Result move of CNKI-06)

As Table 5 shows, ProQuest writers prefer “results of” in the result move to reveal what they have found. Examples are:

19. *The results of this study* identify the different importance levels of security controls and sub-security controls. (Result move of ProQuest-90)

20. The results of this research include the release of the first open-source Android enterprise monitoring solution of its kind, a comprehensive guide of data sets available for collection without elevated privileges, and the introduction of a novel design strategy implementing various Android application components useful for monitoring on the Android platform. (Result move of ProQuest-70)

When ProQuest writers need to verify their findings, they often offer specific information about how the performance is improved without mentioning the improved performance at all, as in the following example:

21. The results show that CCN-FOH provides for a better user experience while keeping its overheads comparable to, if not better than, the less costly CCN-Publication. (Result move of ProQuest-99)

The above semantic analysis of the formulaic NP-*of* head nouns in the CNKI abstracts lead us to believe that they often introduce NP-*of* phrases which do not produce "useful complexity" (Ryshina-Pankova 60). In another word, the use of these NP-*of* phrases is not motivated by an expression of semantic complexity entailed by the writing task but an attempt of novice academic writers to exhibit some formal rules they believe apply to the writing of academic abstracts. Part of these rules in the case of novice writers in BUPT might derive from some so-called "universal" model or sample abstracts which tend to associate specific moves with certain expressions, such as some NP-*of* phrases. As the examples demonstrate, these move-specific NP-*of* phrases usually produce generalized information devoid of any specialized content. Instead of facilitating the information flow in abstracts, these nominal phrases only slow readers down by distracting them with unrelated information.

In a nutshell, the lower frequency with which nominalization occurs within NP-*of* phrases as well as the bigger number of formulaic expressions—move-specific NP-*of* phrase head nouns—might prevent CNKI writers from using a wider range of NP-*of* phrases to compress relevant information efficiently and flexibly within the phrase level. The consequence is that despite the dense use of NP-*of* phrases, the abstracts by novice academic writers may be still less compact than their academic communities expect. The next question is how NP-*of* phrases semantically relate to other parts of the sentence in order to function effectively in discourse construction.

6 Comparison of Discoursal Complexity of NP-*of* Phrases Between the Two Corpora at the Clausal Level

It is clear that in the dominant pattern in scientific argument proposed by Halliday and Martin (1993), verbs rather than conjunctions or prepositions are used to realize logical-semantic relationships between two processes represented by nominal phrases. Though they believe that the relationship within the dominant pattern is

Table 6 Common types of logical-semantic relation, with typical realizations as conjunction and preposition

Expansion type	Category	Typical conjunction	Typical preposition
Elaborating	Expository Exemplificatory	In other words I.e. For example; e.g.	Namely Such as
Extending	Additive Alternative Adversative	And Or But	Besides Instead of Despite(in contrast)
Enhancing	Temporal Causal Conditional Concessive Comparative	Then (at that time) So (for that reason) Then (in that case) Yet So (in that way)	After Because of In the event of Despite (contrary to expectation) Like

typically a cause-proof realized by verbs, such as “depends on,” “accelerates,” and “produce,” Halliday and Martin still think it is an oversimplification, so they propose a model to realize the common types of logical-semantic relation by using conjunctions, prepositions and verbs as in Tables 6 and 7 (90–91):

Table 6 shows semantic relationships realized with prepositions or conjunctions. Table 7 shows the same relationships realized by a verb linking two nominalizations. We plan to compare between the two corpora the proportion of NP-*of* phrases either in the subject or object positions in the patterns of Table 7 in an effort to find any difference in the discoursal functions NP-*of* phrases serve at the clausal level. All these NP-*of* phrases in the subject or object positions in the lexicalized relationships are categorized and marked in Table 7. There are also NP-*of* phrases in the two corpora which do not interact directly with another noun-depicted process in a relationship lexicalized by a verb. They are:

1. NP-*of* phrases as part of adverbials, such as “with the development of the industry”;
2. NP-*of* phrases which occur as objects in the infinitive or participle phrases, such as “to improve the efficiency of,” “…thus ensuring the independence of the site data”;
3. NP-*of* phrases which serve as subjects of intransitive verbs, such as “the application of GIS have made great progress” or the subject in a passive-voice clause with no agent given, such as “the complexity of space and time is reduced”;
4. NP-*of* phrases which function as objects of verbs initiated by nouns that cannot depict processes, such as “we,” “the paper,” and “the study”.

These categories of NP-*of* phrases are marked as 1, 2, 3, 4, respectively in Table 8.

The above categorization of NP-*of* phrases can help us find how they interact with other parts of the sentence to which they belong and know what role they play in connecting concepts in academic discourse. Since there are fewer than five counts in type 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 510 in two corpora, we only calculate the occurrences of the other types in the following table:

Table 7 Examples of Lexicalization of logical-semantic relations (as verbs)

Category	Examples of lexicalization (verbs)
Expository (51)	Be represent constitute comprise signal reflect
Exemplificatory (52)	Be exemplify illustrate
Additive (53)	Accompany complement combine with
Alternative (54)	Replace alternate with supplant
Adversative (55)	Contrast with distinguish
Temporal (56)	Follow precede anticipate co-occur with
Causal (57)	Cause produce arise from lead to result in prove
Conditional (58)	Correlate with be associated with apply to
Concessive (59)	Contradict conflict with preclude
Comparative (510)	Resemble compare with approximate to simulate

Table 8 Comparison of frequency of NP-of phrases in different semantic relationships at the clausal level between the two corpora

Types of NP-*of* phrases	CNKI	ProQuest	Fisher's exact test
1	273	110	Yes ($p = 0.0004$)
2	74	38	No ($p = 0.36$)
3	26	10	No ($p = 0.23$)
4	232	104	Yes ($p = 0.0099$)
51	118	100	Yes ($p = 0.044$)
52	25	10	No ($p = 0.29$)
53	6	15	Yes ($p = 0.003$)
57	125	152	Yes ($p = 0.00$)
Sum	859	537	

Results show that compared with the ProQuest abstracts, the CNKI abstracts use significantly more NP-*of* phrases as part of adverbials in type 1 and more NP-*of* phrases as objects of sentences with subjects like "the paper," "we," and "the study" in type 51; and much fewer NP-*of* phrases in a cause–effect relationship in type 57. In order to more closely fit Halliday & Martin's model that highlights nominalization, our investigation is narrowed down to NP-*of* phrases which involve nominalizations. Among all the NP-*of* phrases in the verbalized cause–effect relationship, 92 out of 152 (61%) cases in ProQuest involve nominalizations compared to 49 out 125 (32%) in CNKI. That means the difference between two corpora grows even bigger when we focus on the frequency of nominalized NP-*of* phrases occurring in a cause–effect relationship.

Halliday and Martin discovered that "scientific writers, from Issac Newton onwards, increasingly favour such a mode of expression—one in which, instead of writing 'this happened, so that happened', they write 'this event caused that event'" (81). Thus, compared with ProQuest writers, CNKI writers are less able to build knowledge in a scientists' way in terms of using NP-*of* phrases at the clausal level. For ProQuest writers, the prevalence of NP-*of* phrases, especially nominalized ones in a cause–effect relationship in their abstracts, shows that more advanced writers are better at creating more discoursal complexity with *NP-of* phrases by connecting two processes within one clause to efficiently push forward the discussion.

Carroll further argues that a congruent expression of cause–effect means "there is very little argumentation here" since "because gives no sense of the type of role the cause played" (16). In this sense, NP-*of* phrases in the ProQuest abstracts seem to create more argument than those in the CNKI abstracts at the clausal level.

The next step is to find the moves that contain these nominalized NP-*of* phrases in a causal-effect relationship (shortened as nominalized causal NP-*of* phrases hereafter), which will shed light on any discoursal effects they might have on the communicative demands abstracts exert.

7 Comparison of Discoursal Complexity of NP-*of* Phrases Between the Two Corpora at the Discoursal Level

Numbers in Table 9 reveal that both the CNKI and ProQuest abstracts mainly use nominalized causal NP-*of* phrases in the background move but a major difference emerges in the problemizing step of this move. Of nominalized causal NP-*of* phrases in the background move, only 7 out of 28 (25%) in CNKI occur in the problemizing step while in ProQuest 20 of 43 (46.5%) occurrences happen in the same step. Another difference between the two corpora is that CNKI writers use nominalized causal NP-*of* phrases in the result move and conclusion move considerably less often than ProQuest writers (8.2% vs. 25%; 8.2% vs. 13%, respectively).

Swales and Feak noted that "Academics are famous for problemizing….We often do this in order to justify or prepare the way for our own research" (23). Compared with the generalized background information, the problemizing step in the background can more effectively highlight the value of the research by revealing a gap and leading naturally to the relevance of the research question. In this sense, a cause–effect argument using NP-*of* nominalizations in this step can efficiently and straightforwardly accentuate the connection between the social needs and the research problem in an argumentative manner as the following examples illustrate:

22. However, *estimation of cyclic features under constrained sensing time* suffers from *cyclic frequency offsets resulting from non-synchronous sampling and local oscillator offsets*. (Problemizing step of ProQuest-65)
23. …the *detection of application-specific vulnerabilities* necessitates *the examination of both logic flows among web pages and user inputs of each page*. (Problemizing step of ProQuest-100)

Table 9 Distribution of nominalized clausal NP-of phrases in different moves of the two corpora

Corpus	B	P	M	R	C	Sum
CNKI	28	0	13	4	4	49
ProQuest	43	4	8	23	12	92

Apart from the problemizing step in the background move, the result and conclusion of abstracts are also key moves in that they address the questions of "what was discovered" and "what do the findings mean?" (Swales & Feak, 2009, p. 5). In these two parts of abstracts which are essential to sell the research, the cause–effect relationship realized with the help of NP-*of* nominalizations can create a stronger and clearer argument and thus, can help convince readers of the validity and value of the research, as is shown in the following examples:

24. The reduction in complexity and energy cost comes from *discretization of feature* space based on tolerable frequency offsets for the required classification accuracy. (Result move of ProQuest-65)
25. The *combination of all the innovations* allows building a robust and fully automatic human face processing system. (Conclusion move of ProQuest-91)

The increased argument in the problemizing step, the result and the conclusion of abstracts is also consistent with Hyland's data which shows that "major increases in the percentage of abstract moves between 1980 and 1997 occurred in the opening and closing moves" (Swales & Feak 2009, p. 20). Hyland believes that these changes are due to a stronger need to attract readers in response to the increased competition to have papers accepted by journals (Swales & Feak 2009, p. 20). Therefore, we have reason to believe that the more frequent use of NP-*of* phrases in the cause–effect pattern in the ProQuest abstracts may turn out to be one means that more advanced academic writers employ to lend support to self-promotion in the genre of thesis abstracts. Novice academic writers represented by CNKI writers in this study, however, seem less able to employ NP-*of* phrases vigorously for this function.

8 Conclusion

From a meaning-based point of view, this study adopts a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches in an attempt to assess the discourse-semantic complexity of NP-*of* structures and detect how it differs between academic writers at different levels of proficiency. Taking English-language abstracts within the same discipline of computer science by two different groups of learners as samples, we find that with regard to semantic complexity, novice writers represented by the CNKI corpus show less flexibility in realizing this function by underusing NP-*of* phrases with a nominalized relationship and, at the same time, overusing some head nouns in NP-*of* phrases which they might mistakenly associate with certain moves. Conversely, ProQuest writers tend to use more nominalized NP-*of* phrases and individualize their word choices of NP-*of* head nouns to more flexibly categorize concrete experiences into abstractions. Regarding the discoursal complexity, CNKI writers tend to use more NP-*of* phrases as part of temporal adverbials or objects governed by static subjects like "the paper," "we," or "the study" to report the content of their master theses. By contrast, ProQuest writers use far more NP-*of* phrases in a cause–effect relationship to reason with readers by linking different processes, especially in the problemizing step, result move and conclusion move, where arguments are most needed for self-promotion. Our finding suggests that though CNKI writers use the NP-*of* phrase even more frequently than ProQuest writers, they may have the tendency to treat it as a mere formal feature of academic writing, and thus fail to relating its use to the communicative requirement of their writing task as closely as ProQuest writers. Specifically speaking, CNKI writers are firstly found to be less able to employ the NP-*of* phrase diversely to nominalize discipline-specific processes as expert readers in their academic community may anticipate in abstracts, and secondly they are weaker in forging cause–effect reasoning to improve the persuasiveness of their research by using nominalized causal NP-*of* phrases in important abstract moves.

These problems, however, should not be viewed as errors but need to be treasured as the developmental features in their process of mastering the noun-dominated feature in academic writing. EAP teachers are suggested to take the discourse-semantic view of linguistic complexity into consideration. They not only need to lead novice academic writers to realize the heavy presence of NP-*of* phrases in academic writing but also have to guide them into using this structure to respond to the complexity of their academic writing tasks. In the actual class, teachers may provide extensive practice in decoding discourse-semantic functions of NP-*of* phrases in representative abstracts relating to students' fields, encourage students to collect discipline-specific processes usually nominalized into NP-*of* phrases, and try to identify the cause if students overuse certain NP-*of* phrases in some abstract moves.

Further research is needed to reveal the progress that novice academic writers exhibit when they struggle to grasp the functions of NP-*of* phrases in actual pedagogical practice. Last but not the least, the major limitation of this study is that both corpora represent learner language, which cannot guarantee a clear distinction between two writing levels. It would be a productive area for future study to compare the discourse-semantic complexity of NP-*of* phrases between student writing and the expert writing.

Appendix: Composition of the Corpora in This Study

Number of the source abstract	Title
CNKI-01	Communications and navigation monitoring coverage simulation system by using GIS
CNKI-02	Emergency dispatch system based on GIS design and implementation
CNKI-03	A software implementation of electromagnetic simulation and automated testing platform
CNKI-04	Efficient transmission for multi-type information in space tracking network
CNKI-05	Design and implementation of UE-based recommendation system

Number of the source abstract	Title
CNKI-06	The design and implementation of log analysis system for the user-oriented personalization recommendation
CNKI-07	The design and implementation of information extraction and storage system on video vertical search engine
CNKI-08	Research and implementation of dynamic face recognition technology based on mobile video
CNKI-09	Research and design of video information electromagnetic leakage suppressor
CNKI-10	Program design and application of the value-added business operations platform
CNKI-11	The design and research of a RFID reader antenna
CNKI-12	Research on LTE-A system of the base station coordination scheduling
CNKI-13	Research based on key technologies in vehicular AD-HOC network
CNKI-14	A research on VANET data transmission mechanism based on network topology dynamics analysis
CNKI-15	Development of key technologies in fingerprint-based mobile positioning
CNKI-16	EEG applied research in personal identification and fatigue detection
CNKI-17	Design and implementation of automated testing tools for Android application
CNKI-18	Development of location information services in Android platform based on Baidu Maps
CNKI-19	Study on privacy preserving data mining under horizontal distribution
CNKI-20	Research and implementation on recommendation algorithm based on location and trust of food businesses
CNKI-21	Research on joint resource allocation in LTE-advanced based Internet of vehicles network and building of application platform
CNKI-22	A research and implementation of public transportation path optimization algorithm based on traffic condition
CNKI-23	The research and development on vehicle and crew scheduling problem based on intelligent optimization algorithms
CNKI-24	Mobile intelligent recommendation platform for public transportation users
CNKI-25	Information and communication technology research based on cooperative vehicle infrastructure system
CNKI-26	The research and application based on OSGI Technology
CNKI-27	Network optimization based on data mining
CNKI-28	Design and development of social platform for Webserver
CNKI-29	The cognitive load research of human–computer interaction in the virtual maintenance training
CNKI-30	The design and implementation of data center system using for bottles anti-counterfeiting and traceability
CNKI-31	Research on CNC lathe tool parameters measurement based on image processing
CNKI-32	A software development kit for display and control of indoor maps
CNKI-33	The mobile map Mashup application system design and research based on Arcgis Server

Number of the source abstract	Title
CNKI-34	The research of IoT information system based on Webgis
CNKI-35	Design and application of spatial database based on Hypertable
CNKI-36	The design and implementation of OpenAPI for indoor map information service
CNKI-37	The design and implementation of indoor map construction system based on Arcgis engine
CNKI-38	Research and implementation of regional synthesis and envelope generation algorithm based on GIS platform
CNKI-39	The measuring of the engine vane molding surface based on grating projected method
CNKI-40	Detecting the overlapping community structure in social networks
CNKI-41	Design and development of intelligent spectrum sensing application based on Android platform
CNKI-42	Research and implementation of database unified interface system for wisdom oilfield applications
CNKI-43	New technology of image processing based on statistical analysis and its application in Photodynam
CNKI-44	Application layer virtual method based on software-defined network
CNKI-45	Design and implementation of consumer software for contactless IC card
CNKI-46	Some key technologies research in wireless communication system based on MIMO
CNKI-47	The implementation of Linux Kernel based on S+Core CPU
CNKI-48	Design of embedded control system for the riderless bicycle
CNKI-49	Research on global planning algorithm of mobile robot in complex and dynamic environment
CNKI-50	Research on security technology of Internet of Things
CNKI-51	Analysis and design of topic crawler
CNKI-52	Spam filtering based on online ranking logistic regression
CNKI-53	Research and implementation of load balancing technology for SDN network controller
CNKI-54	Research on time-domain interference coordination and resource allocation in heterogeneous networks
CNKI-55	Convolutional neural networks for hyperspectral image classification
CNKI-56	System identification and simulation of bicycle robot
CNKI-57	Face recognition platform design and the complementation of face recognition algorithm
CNKI-58	Design and implementation of dynamic virtual machine security domain control service
CNKI-59	Applications of SVM in data mining
CNKI-60	Research on information hiding algorithm based on the digital image
CNKI-61	Research and practice of video image quality test technology
CNKI-62	Data mining engine based on Big data
CNKI-63	The research of the influence on Chinese user acceptance behavior TOO20 E-Commence model

Number of the source abstract	Title
CNKI-64	Research and implement on data mining algorithm parallel based on Hadoop
CNKI-65	Generation and application of high quality optical frequency comb
CNKI-66	Design and implementation of multisource download system based on network crawling technology
CNKI-67	Capacity optimization for full-duplex massive multiuser MIMO systems based on random matrix methods
CNKI-68	Design and implementation of shopping online system
CNKI-69	Research on real-time global illumination mode in complex scenes
CNKI-70	Design and implementation of multi-location sharing application system based on Android mobile terminal
CNKI-71	The study of the security and privacy protection of Big data based on cloud computing
CNKI-72	Prediction of ads' click through rate based on recurrent neural network
CNKI-73	Case assistant system based on the intelligent video analysis technology
CNKI-74	Research on dual-band antenna over EBG Structure and band-notched UWB antenna
CNKI-75	Comparison of data mining techniques used to predict student retention.
CNKI-76	Study on key technologies of wireless optical communication
CNKI-77	Research on the construction of the Quasi-Cyclic low-density
CNKI-78	Analysis and design of high-level programming language assisted learning system
CNKI-79	Research on a new path finding algorithm of mobile robot in the complex environment
CNKI-80	The research of feature selection method and sentiment analysis based on microblog
CNKI-81	Radio resource management in broadband satellite communication systems
CNKI-82	Design and implement of taxi call system based on IOS
CNKI-83	Application of machine learning algorithms in data mining
CNKI-84	The study of models and theory researches of optimization of demand and supply in smart grid
CNKI-85	The research of constraint QoS routing technology based on the next generation network
CNKI-86	Research on recognition technology based on stationary cycle signal modulation
CNKI-87	The research and implement of data mining algorithms based on Hadoop
CNKI-88	Design and development of social platform for webserver
CNKI-89	Research of risk detection for Android application
CNKI-90	The research of information security risk assessment model and method
CNKI-91	Empirical study on effect model of podcasting core information releasing behavior
CNKI-92	The improvement and application of k-means algorithm
CNKI-93	Research on infrared absorption characteristics of photonic crystal and its application

Number of the source abstract	Title
CNKI-94	Coalition game-based cooperative spectrum sensing research in cognitive radio networks
CNKI-95	Design and optimization of camera application based on Android system
CNKI-96	Quantum state preparation and application in cavity QED
CNKI-97	Simulated annealing-based congestion control strategy
CNKI-98	The controller placement problem and cloud storage assignment problem in SDN
CNKI-99	The research of routing mechanism for named data network
CNKI-100	Towards and autonomous mobile control unit of smart homes
ProQuest-01	Improvement of security in UAS communication and navigation using ADS-B
ProQuest-02	A flexible simulation framework for processor scheduling algorithms in multicore systems
ProQuest-03	Scalable ray tracing with multiple GPGPUs
ProQuest-04	Compressing genome resequencing data
ProQuest-05	A new class of techniques for Web personalization
ProQuest-06	Accelerating Mahout on heterogeneous clusters using HadoopCL
ProQuest-07	Towards next generation vertical search engines
ProQuest-08	Simultaneous multi-view face tracking and recognition in video using particle filtering
ProQuest-09	Securing unfamiliar system entry points against faulty user authentication via electromagnetics
ProQuest-10	Web services for application development in next generation telecommunications networks
ProQuest-11	Long range ultra-high frequency (UHF) radio frequency identification (RFID) antenna design
ProQuest-12	Health and activity monitoring system
ProQuest-13	Routing protocol evaluation and development of a fully functional simulation environment for vehicles
ProQuest-14	Protocole de routage intelligent pour les réseaux ad hoc de véhicules
ProQuest-15	Indoor positioning system using software defined radio (SDR) and support vector machine (SVM)
ProQuest-16	Creating and breaking it: Design of an ERP biometric protocol and development of a device for ERP
ProQuest-17	Replay debugger for multi-threaded Android applications
ProQuest-18	CAP—a context-aware privacy protection system for location-based services
ProQuest-19	Data transformation for privacy-preserving data mining
ProQuest-20	Sparsity, scalability, and distribution in recommender systems
ProQuest-21	A framework for reliable and efficient communications in vehicular networks
ProQuest-22	Routing protocol evaluation and development of a fully functional simulation environment
ProQuest-23	Genetics-based concurrent planning and scheduling for flexible and modular manufacturing systems

Number of the source abstract	Title
ProQuest-24	Human activity detection using smartphones and maps
ProQuest-25	Flexibility in dependable real-time communication
ProQuest-26	Reconfigurable software defined radio platform an OSGi approach
ProQuest-27	A Tabu search, augment-merge heuristic to solve the stochastic location arc routing problem
ProQuest-28	A web application based on the MVC architecture using the Spring Framework
ProQuest-29	Design and implementation of human–computer interaction based on remote control for DRC system
ProQuest-30	A framework for data delivery in integrated Internet of Things architectures
ProQuest-31	Development of an automated system to evaluate the surface condition of grinding wheels
ProQuest-32	Mobile robot tank with GPU assistance
ProQuest-33	Exploring San Francisco's treasures: Mashing up public art, social media, and volunteered geographic information
ProQuest-34	Time-reversal massive multipath effect and bandwidth heterogeneity
ProQuest-35	Coupling environmental models and geospatial data processing
ProQuest-36	A study of mobile internet usage and the implications for mobile search interfaces
ProQuest-37	Mapping native plants A mobile GIS application for sharing indigenous knowledge in Southern California
ProQuest-38	Social media integration for open source GIS applications
ProQuest-39	Advanced multidirectional UV lithography for three-dimensional (3-D) micro-nano structures
ProQuest-40	Discovering community structure by optimizing community quality metrics
ProQuest-41	A feasibility study of distributed spectrum sensing using mobile devices
ProQuest-42	Distributed semantic web data management in HBase and MySQL cluster
ProQuest-43	Target—a new photo-mechanics measuring method based on digital image processing
ProQuest-44	Policy-driven network defense for software-defined networks
ProQuest-45	Design and research of ID card automatic recognition system
ProQuest-46	Precoding over the multiuser multi-input multi-output broadcast channel
ProQuest-47	Linux kernel module for security enhancement
ProQuest-48	Integrated motion control of wheeled mobile robots
ProQuest-49	New insights into bio-inspired intelligence: Safety-aware navigation and mapping of an autonomous vehicle
ProQuest-50	The insecurity of things: How to manage the Internet of Things
ProQuest-51	Eliminating SQL injection and cross-site scripting with aspect oriented programming
ProQuest-52	Regression with categorical predictors and random effect logistic models
ProQuest-53	Improving load balancing mechanisms of software-defined networks using open flow
ProQuest-54	Cost-effective deployment of heterogeneous networks and the effect of pilot contamination
ProQuest-55	Hyperspectral image classification using deep neural networks

Number of the source abstract	Title
ProQuest-56	Integrating centralized and decentralized approaches for multi-robot coordination
ProQuest-57	Applications of convolutional neural networks to facial detection and recognition for augmented reality and wearable computing
ProQuest-58	Modeling and analysis of security standards for webservices and cloud computing
ProQuest-59	Autonomous navigation algorithms for indoor mobile robots
ProQuest-60	An efficient approach to categorizing association rules
ProQuest-61	Multi-view face processing in video imagery
ProQuest-62	Research on application of data mining in intrusion detection security audit
ProQuest-63	How do organizations prepare and clean Big data to achieve better data governance? A Delphi study
ProQuest-64	Acceptance of health services on mobile phones: A study of consumer perceptions
ProQuest-65	Enhancements to the data mining process
ProQuest-66	Stable optical frequency comb generation and applications in arbitrary waveform generation, signal processing, and optical data mining
ProQuest-67	An enhanced malicious web crawler detection and classification system
ProQuest-68	On duality of MIMO relays and performance limits of full-duplex MIMO radios
ProQuest-69	The influences of atmospheric cues on consumer behavioral intentions: An affordance perspective
ProQuest-70	A system study of high dynamic range imaging
ProQuest-71	Android forensics: Automated data collection and reporting from a mobile device
ProQuest-72	Applying hybrid cloud systems to solve challenges posed by the Big data problem
ProQuest-73	Intelligent systems for quality defect prediction in injection molding
ProQuest-74	Adaptive sparse representations for video anomaly detection
ProQuest-75	Bandwidth enhancement of monopole UWB antenna with new slots and EBG structures
ProQuest-76	The research and application of data mining technology in analysis for students' performance
ProQuest-77	Polarization effects in optical fiber communication and distributed vibration sensing systems
ProQuest-78	Designing structured low density parity check codes with large girth
ProQuest-79	Characterizing the usage of computer-mediated communications
ProQuest-80	Sentiment analysis of Twitter data
ProQuest-81	Study on the modeling, analysis, and compensation of on-board processing (OBP) multicarrier demultiplexer/demodulators (MCDD) for the MF-TDMA signal in the presence of degrading factors
ProQuest-82	The taxi: Friend or foe? Understanding planners' perceptions of the taxi industry
ProQuest-83	Machine learning with incomplete information
ProQuest-84	Analysis and characterization of wireless smart power meter

Number of the source abstract	Title
ProQuest-85	Behavior-based admission and access control for network security
ProQuest-86	Wideband cyclostationary spectrum sensing and modulation classification
ProQuest-87	Performance comparison of two data algorithms on Big data platforms
ProQuest-88	Web archive services framework for tighter integration between the past and present web
ProQuest-89	Anomaly detection system using system calls for Android smartphone system
ProQuest-90	An approach to information system security assessment
ProQuest-91	Architecture design for distributed content-based publish-subscribe systems
ProQuest-92	An iterative cluster correction enhancement for the bisecting K-means algorithm
ProQuest-93	Photonic crystal fibers: Characterization and supercontinuum generation
ProQuest-94	Power control and multi-target identification in cognitive wireless networks
ProQuest-95	Creating and documenting Android web applications
ProQuest-96	Studies in quantum control and quantum entanglement
ProQuest-97	Routing optimization in wireless AD HOC and wireless sensor networks
ProQuest-98	An approach for mobility support in software-defined network-based mobile cloud computing
ProQuest-99	CCN forwarding strategies
ProQuest-100	Internet of Things based energy aware smart home control system

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The Construction of ESP Teacher Community from the Perspective of Synergetic Theory

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Abstract The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the construction of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teacher professional community. This chapter puts forward how ESP teachers in colleges and universities can build a teacher community. Based on the theory of synergetic, this chapter clarifies the connotation of an ESP teacher professional community: it is an open system, with a complex high-level self-organizing structure and a perfect feedback mechanism. We can build an ESP teacher culture community, an ESP teacher practice community, and an ESP teacher cooperative community through interaction and symbiosis, which will help teachers to build a professional community to improve ESP teaching.

Keywords English for Specific Purposes · Teacher professional community · Synergetic theory

1 Introduction

The mission of a university is to shape the talents of students and expand their personal needs to meet disciplinary, societal, and national strategic development needs. In order to meet the needs of further expanding foreign exchange in China, it is necessary to cultivate talented people who are proficient in both English and professional knowledge, namely, "language + professional" combined talents. The present situation of College English teaching in China is that English learning students cannot communicate deeply; professional articles and documents cannot be accurately translated; and English paper writing on their major cannot be successfully

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accomplished (Cai, 2017, pp. 1–7). Therefore, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) emerges as a current necessity and has a special status in university-level English teaching. It is no longer simply English, but more closely related to a discipline or a major.

ESP students have special learning needs in English in order to carry out selected academic or workplace tasks and should be taught with a method of English language instruction tailored to their needs which differs from generic English courses (Robinson, 1980, p. 32). ESP arose in the early 1960s in response to the need for improved communication between the developed and developing countries of the world. It led English language teachers to realize that English language was desired "not for the purpose of spreading British or American social and cultural values but as a natural link within multi-cultural, multi-lingual societies as a vehicle for international communication" (Anthony, 1963, pp. 63–57). ESP courses are designed to concentrate on the identified language needs, skill needs, and interests of a particular group of English language learners. However, it is challenging for the current situation of ESP teaching to meet the requirements of the compound talents raised by "The Syllabus of College English Teaching." It is difficult to meet the needs of China's economic development and foreign exchange. Although English teachers want to improve their classroom efficiency, teachers are powerless because of the shortage of professional knowledge. This is because English teachers lack content knowledge about different majors and the professional teachers are short of the knowledge in English. It is hard to find teachers who are good at both English and specific disciplines. During their teaching process, teachers from College English departments often consider how to integrate English into professional areas of study, so the students can learn and practice.

In view of these problems, I organized the research group to carry out the program called "The ESP Reform in Application Oriented Universities in the View of Synergetics Theory." This study found that establishing an ESP teacher professional community can combine English teachers with professional teachers and bring some benefits: (1) broaden the professional teaching circle; (2) adopt interactive teaching methods to language teachers and professional teachers; (3) improve professional teaching and teaching practice interaction; and (4) increase students' English knowledge and professional skills.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Background and Characteristics of ESP

In order to understand the context of the study of ESP teacher professional communities, the background and characteristics of ESP and establishing a teacher community must be explored. ESP is a special program developed in specialties. Its central interest is to understand ESP teaching and learning in different environments around the world. ESP study abroad dates back to the 1960s, with the leading scholars as Herbert, Barber, and Latorre (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, pp. 136–138). Since the 1970s, ESP teaching has detailed and specific classification of teaching types in terms of curriculum, teaching content, and teaching methods (Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1991, pp. 297–314).

ESP in Europe focused on ESP language description. In England, the ESP study focused on the ESP program and curriculum design. In the United States and Canada, people paid more attention to the theory and practice (Bowles, 2012, pp. 43–58). Since the 1990s, the research and evaluation of computer computer-based corpus testing has been on the rise. The corpus provides abundant materials for developing ESP teaching syllabus and textbooks, which has greatly improved and broadened the space and latitude of ESP teaching research. So, the study of ESP teaching has been developing for nearly 60 years, and the research fields are extensive, involving the analysis of demand to the ESP classification, teaching methods, teaching materials; multiple designs, teacher training, research and evaluation corpus.

The study of ESP teaching in China began when Yang Huizhong (Yang, 1978) published "How to Teach and Research on Technology English" and "Technology English Teaching and Research Dynamic in Foreign Countries," which introduced the concept of ESP, and recommended the relevant materials that were popular in foreign countries. With the reform of College English teaching method, teaching ESP research also introduced open a new research area for the development of the research in College English. With the reform of College English teaching method, from 2000 to 2007, ESP research has had a wider scope and diversity, which includes the development of ESP evaluation, the nature and categories of ESP, and the relationship between ESP and University. This research helps deepen our understanding of ESP teaching in varying degrees, and promotes the development of ESP teaching practice in China. But the surge in the number of ESP researches does not mean that the teaching level of ESP in Colleges in China has correspondingly improved greatly.

2.2 Background and Characteristics of Teacher Community

Sergiovanni (1994) introduced the concept of a "Learning Community" into the field of education at an American Educational Research Association (AERA) conference. After this, the concept of a teacher community within the field of education has a relationship officially defined. From the cultural point of view, the formation of self-governing practice is the key to promoting the development of a teacher professional community (Sato, pp. 91–104). Louise Stoll et al. pointed out that the teacher community is a team in which members are sustained, repetitive, cooperative, inclusive, focused on learning, and promote development (Stoll, Bolam, Mcmahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006, p. 223.) Dufour believes that learning in a professional community is an ongoing process in which teachers conduct collaborative inquiry and action to help students improve their academic achievement (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010, pp. 11–13.)

2.3 The Experience of ESP Teacher Education Abroad

There is a mature ESP training and certification system abroad. Some universities offer ESP master's degree courses and set up ESP majors in pedagogy programs. Learners can obtain master's degree in ESP certification. In order to strengthen the construction of ESP faculty, English education institutes or English education majors also provide ESP ontology teaching courses (TEPS) teaching for ESP teachers and future EPS teachers (Hewings M., pp. 55–59.) In addition, there are special ESP certificates established for the training of EPS teachers, which provide professional qualifications certificates for ESP teachers engaged in ESP teaching. British TESOL uses distance teaching method to provide ESP certificate; the Arizona State University training program (AECP: American and English Culture Program) provides six kinds of English certificates. British Central Lancashire University opened the International Business English teaching professional first, and set up different kinds of master's degree: diploma, certificate and full-time study, spare time learning, and distance education. The qualification of enrolled personnel should be English teachers who have received TEFL teacher qualification certificate and have more than 2 years' teaching experience. The business English teacher training department of London Metropolitan University and the Florence language center of the British college opened a short-term training program to effectively improve the skills and abilities of business English teaching (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, pp. 169–175).

In non-English speaking countries, the Philippines Manila De La Salle University Language Center with the British Council and the Lancaster University jointly launched ESP master's degree teacher education program. The purpose for teachers who are willing to engage in or have already engaged in ESP teaching is to learn ESP professional knowledge, teaching ability, and theoretical research of ESP. Several Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries such as Russia and Ukraine have established the ESP electronic journal ESP-WORLD, which mainly discusses and studies the relevant theoretical and practical issues (Chen, 2000, pp. 127–132). At the same time, the transnational cooperation project of ESP teaching and the large-scale teacher training project have been established.

2.4 The Experience of Teachers' Community Abroad

The definition of "Community" in the dictionary is: "1. The people who live in the same area, town, etc. 2. A group of people who have the same interests, religion, race, etc. 3. Society and the people in it" ("Longman Dictionary of Contemporary

English," 2004). According to this, teachers' community is a group of teachers with similar interests and aspirations. Some schools in America launched the teacher professional development school standards movement. The British built "Teacher Education Center" and "Teacher partnership school"; Germans created "Mentoring activities." Japan organized "Education training centers." In these places, teachers can improve their professional efficiency through collaborative learning, blended learning, team learning, project learning, mentoring, and so on. The "Teacher Excellence Professional Standard" in America, the "Teacher Excellence Education Program" in Germany, and the "Government Excellent Teacher Program" in Australia are proposed to cultivate excellent teachers through collaborative learning, mixed learning, team learning, project learning, and teacher-apprentice pairing (Zhan & Li, 2009, pp. 1–9). The teachers' Professional Learning Community (PLC) model supposes that the teachers' professional development is the concept of professional knowledge and learning activities in potential social situation and working experience (Ho, Lee, & Tenga, 2016, pp. 32–43). Activity is strengthened through interaction, reflection, and communication among teachers, and situational participation is the core characteristic of teacher professional community.

The learning design support environment (LDSE) project is a representative project of online teacher development (E-Learning Strategy). LDSE project has clear characteristics of blended learning. First of all, it mainly focuses on teachers' teaching design of open learning, and everyone can participate. Secondly, it develops online learning tools for teachers and students. The third is that it explores effective mixed learning concepts, principles, learning frameworks, and innovative platforms to create an online collaborative environment to scaffold teachers' engagement with technology-enhanced learning (Laurillard & Masterman, 2010, pp. 230–246). Singapore began to implement teachers network project in 2000, and its most characteristics are learning circle—problem-oriented model. The learning circle is composed of 4–10 teachers, and the teachers communicate with each other as co-learners, who are critical friends to discuss the practical problems in class. Problem-solving and discussion revolve around five steps: identifying the problem, improving the plan, implementing, observing, and reflecting the results, which can help teachers to regain learners' identity in the process of problem-solving (Tripp, 2004, pp. 191–214).

Through the study of the training programs for ESP teachers abroad, it can be concluded that ESP teachers need to provide instructional guidance, qualification certification, and opportunities for continuing education. The construction of teacher community can help teachers to improve their professional level and develop their teaching abilities. The combination of teacher continuing education and teachers' community can improve their teaching ability.

3 The Construction of ESP Teacher Professional Community

3.1 Synergetic of ESP Teacher Professional Community

Synergetics is a rather new field of interdisciplinary research which studies the self-organized behavior of systems leading to the formation of structures and their functioning. Indeed the whole universe seems to be organized, with pronounced structures starting from spiral galaxies down to living cells (Haken, 1984, pp 8–9). Furthermore, many of the most interesting phenomena occur in systems which are far from thermal equilibrium. Synergetics in its present form focuses its attention on those phenomena where dramatic changes occur on a macroscopic scale (Chang et al., 2013). Synergetics is able to reveal profound analogies between systems in many diverse disciplines. In both the natural sciences and social sciences, people are confronted with the problems of complex systems and try to solve difficult problems.

English teachers are not mechanical engineers or biochemists, so it is hard for them to teach analysis, discussion, or the modeling of research reports in mechanical engineering or the discussion section of biochemistry. How do ESP teachers prepare lessons in the absence of specific knowledge? How do teachers in different subjects break the barriers to cooperation? These become some of the crucial questions underlining the design of this study.

3.1.1 ESP Teacher Professional Community Is an Open System

In the theory of synergetic, the openness of the system means that the system always exists in a certain environment and carries on the exchange of material, energy, and information with other systems (Haken, 1984, pp 8–9). In the open system, ESP teachers can communicate with each other through various materials, information, and energy so as to maintain its life and make the system develop in an orderly way. On the other hand, if there is no exchange between material, energy, and information, the system itself will be shut down. In this isolated situation, the internal structure of the system will be destroyed eventually. If the College English subsystem is closed for different subjects, no information and energy exchange, the ESP teachers system will fail. Teaching English for specific purposes implies that the teacher's responsibility is to use the means available to render the specialized knowledge linguistically accessible to the learner. The teacher's long-term responsibility is to provide the learner with the means of becoming an autonomous learner and user of the language. The working knowledge of the target language is moderate for most learners.

3.1.2 ESP Teacher Community Is a Complex High-Level Self-Organizing Structure Collective

Self-organization is changing constantly. The process of system self-organization is a process of continuous deviation from balance, causing fluctuation and reaching higher level balance (Haken, 1988, pp 240–246). In the ESP teacher learning community system, even if the subsystems are in an orderly state, irregular independent movement might continue. In the process of integration, there will be a large number of nonlinear activities, and the differences of ideas and interests will evolve into disordered dissipative structures along an orderly—disordered—orderly path. There are several principles for constructing the self-organizing mechanism of the formation and development of the teacher learning community: opening and non-balance are the prerequisites for the formation of teachers' learning community; the formation, competition, and cooperation of teachers' learning community are the driving force.

3.1.3 The Synergistic Effect of ESP Teachers' Community

Synergy is the core concept of synergetics theory, which refers to the whole effect or collective effect produced by the interaction of a large number of subsystems in complex open systems. For each complex system there are non-linear interactions between the different elements, if they reach a certain critical value under the influence of external energy or material, the subsystems are ordered from chaos to synergistic effect (Haken, 1988, pp 26–29). The basic forms of ESP teacher community synergy are collaborative learning, collaborative teaching research, and collaborative teaching. There is cooperation in various areas of the community, such as cooperation between language teachers and specialist teachers, cooperation between dual teachers and ordinary teachers, cooperation between teachers and parents, etc. From the aspects of teaching methods, teaching strategies and teaching models, it is necessary to stress the coordination of the internal elements of the teaching system, the coordination of the teaching system, the synchronous complementarity and the overall collaborative teaching. Therefore, ESP community is not a simple sum of individual teacher education, but also has the overall synergy. Professor Wang and Zhu conclude the basic principles of collaborative learning as "deep interaction, information convergence, collective thinking, cooperative construction, and multi field coordination" (Wang & Zhu, 2012, pp. 112–117).

3.1.4 Establish a Sound Feedback Mechanism

Feedback plays an important role in the development and evolution of ESP teacher education community. It is the key link to trigger the virtuous cycle of ESP teacher education system and the effective guarantee of the self-organization operation of the system. In order to keep the ESP teacher education system updated, the timely feedback, positive thoughts and behavior in time can encourage and promote teachers in the education system, which becomes mainstream and produces synergy. That is positive feedback. Negative feedback refers to timely intervention and correction for negative factors. Finally, it realizes the common progress and development of the individual and community, and the independent development of the system as a whole.

As shown in Fig. 1, the ESP teacher education system receives timely feedback, positive thinking, and behavioral encouragement, which makes the various elements of the teacher system produce synergy and form a new positive system. This is the positive feedback. When the negative factors are generated, they can intervene and correct in time. This is negative feedback.

3.2 The Construction Strategy of ESP Community in Universities

The reconstruction of the ESP teacher community under the perspective of synergics theory can effectively solve the problem of interdisciplinary cooperation among teachers. Establish an equal, respectful, and inclusive relationship for the professional growth of ESP teachers, and form a dynamic and stable harmonious relationship.

3.2.1 Establish ESP Teachers' Culture Community

Although members of the ESP teachers' community have their own specialty, teaching styles, and characteristics, they study ESP teaching methods and pursue quality with common aspirations and interests, common goals and mission, and commonly recognized cultural concept. The ESP teacher community condenses and strengthens the community consciousness among the members. This is a common cause to get together, in the same core values of restraint and guidance, uphold the common cultural symbols, the formation of similar cultural ideas, cultural spirit with the communication and sharing of harmony but not sameness. Relatively stable cultural cohesion can be formed through communication, interaction, and mutual promotion.

Teachers should regard the community as an entity with a common value, norms, and goals in which each member regards the common goal as his own goal. The

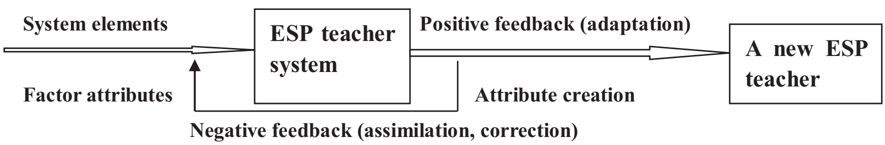

Fig. 1 Evaluation circle of ESP teacher education community

common decision-making and concerted action among community members have become the fundamental cause of the development of ESP teacher education community. The common center is like a gravitational field, attracting all members of the school community. Ideally, the technique would combine a learner-centered approach, with sensitivity to language and identity, language socialization, and discourse. In order to produce an environment that works for the ESP population, a careful observation of the culture of learner needs is to be conducted.

3.2.2 Build an Interactive and Symbiotic ESP Teachers' Cooperation Community

The qualities required by ESP teachers can be classified into three categories: language competence, professional knowledge, and teaching ability. ESP teachers have different teaching experiences, involving all walks of life, and need cooperation. The difficulties encountered in ESP teacher education are not the lack of individual professional knowledge or the lack of English knowledge, but the combination of professional knowledge and English application ability. All teachers in the professional community should support each other and build an interactive community based on cooperation and mutual assistance (Wang and Jin, 2017). If this is achieved, ESP teachers and professional teachers can help students improve their language abilities. Professional teachers can help ESP teachers have a clear understanding of the students' professional target situation. But students also need ESP teachers and professional teachers for their language and professional knowledge guidance.

In addition, the differences among members of teacher education community become the driving force of cooperation. In view of the differences among the members of the teacher education community, they show distinct differences in the process of specific education practice. These differences include professional expression, cultural characteristics, and different types of wisdom, which makes them have their own advantages, but may also expose deficiencies. Differences can bring about cognitive conflict, cause ideological communication, and form collective wisdom. According to their own advantages, teachers in various departments should have further professional cooperation, which can form a win-win situation.

With the development of ESP teachers' specialization, the aim of teaching practice education community is to promote teachers' professional development, whose activities are based on teaching practice and oriented by specialization. On the specific level of cooperation mode, teachers cooperate to analyze learners' learning needs, jointly formulate teaching syllabus, select cooperative teaching materials, explore classroom teaching design, and exchange ideas and views. A foreign language teacher can consult a professional teacher in a timely manner through the platform of teamwork and ask the professional problems encountered in teaching class. In the process of ESP cooperative teaching, professional course teachers can improve their ability of using English language, and improve their ability of obtaining foreign documents and communicating with foreign counterparts. The purpose of ESP is to enable ESP learners to function adequately in the target situation, with emphasis on the specialists' communication in English in the specialized field.

3.2.3 Construct Practical Community

Lave and Wenger (1991) were among the first to propose a "Community of practice" concept. They argued that the practice community refers to a group of people who have a common concern, work together to solve a problem, share a common theme with passion, and develop their knowledge and expertise through continuous interaction in the field of their common pursuit.

Because of the complexity of the professional college and the professional talent training scheme of difference, ESP is involved in all fields of study in non-native English academic communities; ESP teachers' education is therefore a complex field in practice which exhibits significant variations. An ESP teacher education community upholds the way of thinking on practice, pays attention to the problems of teacher education practice, analyzes the root of the problem, and explores solutions. That is to say, in the community, ESP teacher education cooperation practice does not meet together for the purposes of discussion but instead to practice. That is to say, in the community, ESP teacher education cooperation practice is not to gather together to indulge in empty talk, but to practice.

Firstly, teaching and research activities are the foundation of ESP teachers' practice community.

Interdisciplinary lesson preparation Teacher preparation should change from individual to collective, from singly focused subject to interdisciplinary lessons. For example, ESP teachers can study the syllabus, make teaching plans, analyze the internal relationship between the learning situation and the content of the teaching materials, and discuss the activities of preparing the lessons together. Through interdisciplinary lessons, teachers can discuss and solve problems for daily teaching. They can also get together to talk about teaching methods. Based on shared various differences of teaching resources, teachers can find new methods and initiatives, then format a widely accepted standardized lesson plans. Teachers can combine their own classrooms to form their own teaching arrangements and teaching plans. Collective lesson preparation can promote dialogue and cooperation among teachers, add teaching perspective, enhance the teaching ability, and carry forward the spirit of mutual help. The teaching research group has a great promotion so as to improve the learning ability of teacher themselves.

Cross training Establishing an ESP teacher education community can help various departments to share teaching resources, professional language training, such as teaching students in a discipline-specific automotive engine station, inside an accounting simulation laboratory, and so on. ESP teachers go into the training room, in the real environment to deepen the understanding of teaching knowledge points, find the blind spots of knowledge, and explore the training course language teaching methods. Secondly, we can use English language training equipment (voice teaching system, language learning system, translation training room, autonomous learning platform, etc.) to improve language skills, listening, reading, translating, and writing training. Teachers can also walk out of a small classroom, enter the relevant industry practices, communicate with related practitioners in the field of communication, exchange, and understand the most vivid industry case, in order to obtain the latest industry developments. Industry elites with practical experience can also enter the classroom, cooperative teaching, which can compensate for the lack of technical knowledge of Chinese teachers and solve many problems in the practical experience of university teachers. Teachers can learn from each other, cooperate with each other, and give full play to teachers' special skills, and also meet the different interests and needs of students so as to improve the quality of teaching and to cultivate high-quality and complex talents for the society.

Develop interdisciplinary research The purpose of building teacher community in teaching practice is to promote the professional development of teachers whose activities are based on teaching practice and oriented by specialization. The construction of ESP teacher education community will make teachers form a common goal and vision, with emphasis on the common sense of responsibility; teachers can grasp the ESP education to analyze the teaching problems and develop its own characteristics. In the team, teachers should learn from the complex education and teaching practice, looking for problems to be solved as the research object. In the teaching research community, teachers explore teaching concepts, teaching strategies, teaching problems, teacher-student relationship, etc., combine theory with practice, form a new vision of research, and finally become a teaching researcher. As a result, the physical barriers to communication between teachers from different departments are broken, and the isolation between teachers begins to dissolve, and together they share their work, thoughts, and experiences.

Secondly, establish a safeguard mechanism.

Establish an effective guarantee mechanism Any education and teaching activities should be put into practice, and reasonable system maintenance is critical. In order to make the ESP teacher community run in an orderly way, schools need to provide a good external environment, establish effective protection mechanism, and provide the basic guarantee for the support of the competent leadership, scientific and effective rules and regulations. As the saying goes, "Not a radius of no rules", which means that organizations without rules are loose, teaching affairs and majors are slack (Tennis, 2010). It is difficult to ensure that teachers participate in community activities on time. The establishment of specific and detailed rules and regulations can ensure the transformation of the community from loose disorder to normative order. Institutions of higher education should put the formation of an ESP learning community of teachers into each teacher's professional development plan, lending administrative-level support and strength. Strong leaders can guide the direction of community, where all members are involved in cohesion; scientific and effective security mechanisms are important factors in ensuring the community of teachers. At present, ESP teachers in China need to cooperate in teaching management and guarantee measures, communication platform and teaching environment and other issues, which need us to do more in-depth exploration and research.

Establish reasonable evaluation and incentive mechanism A scientific and reasonable evaluation and incentive measures can promote teachers' professional development and ensure to obtain the goals. Praise and encouragement are powerful forces for all members of the teacher group to unite and work together. In the evaluation, we should develop a diversified evaluation system in accordance with the principles of fairness, impartiality and objectivity, integrate the overall evaluation and individual evaluation, and pay more attention to the evaluation of the collective. Encouragement on teachers, individuals, or groups, the teachers' initiative can be stimulated to the greatest extent, so that activities become a kind of participation, full of vitality and vitality. Based on the development evaluation of teachers, teachers should give full space for development and trust fully on the basis of respecting individual differences of teachers.

4 Conclusion and Future Recommendations

The most difficult challenge for ESP teachers in China is subject area expertise. Through establishing a teacher community within their university alongside subject area, teachers can alleviate this problem. The new path provided by synergetics theory enables us to find an effective and efficient way to create a teacher community. In this way, we can build communities of culture, practice, and cooperation for ESP teachers, which will help them create a professional community to improve ESP teaching. Further research needs to be done, including case studies, to determine the best practices and create model guidelines for teachers and universities across China to follow.

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On the "Flipped Classroom" Teaching Model Through Task-Based Language Teaching from the Perspective of Constructivist Learning Theory: A Case of Hotel English Reform in Yinxing Hospitality Management College of CUIT

Wei Duan

Abstract Based on the course orientation of Hotel English, this chapter puts forward a detailed reform plan for it from the perspective of the constructivist learning theory in order to improve student's learning effect of it. This plan perfectly combines Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) with the "flipped classroom" teaching model and majorly falls into the following three parts: firstly, building "flipped classroom" teaching model focusing on "online task + offline task," in which the content of online task is the professional knowledge of hotel industry, while offline task refers to relevant task-formed drillings, including oral practices in class and comprehensive assignments after class; secondly, applying a teaching design combining online learning with offline drilling, under which the teaching procedure is approximately as follows: online learning before class (students)—offline guidance in class (teacher)—offline drilling in and after class (students)—online interaction after class (between teacher and students); thirdly, establishing "oral + written" test model for final examination and putting emphasis on student's daily performance. Subsequently, the realization of this plan reveals that it works well in teaching practice and can enhance the students' professional language ability in the hotel world effectively.

Keywords ESP · Hotel English · Teaching reform · Task-Based Language Teaching · Flipped classroom

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1 Introduction

Thanks to the quick development of world economy and the acceleration of globalization, a great number of investors and visitors are shutting among countries for both business and tourist purposes. Under this background, the hotel industry is rising sharply on a global scale in recent years, which results in a higher language requirement for hotel staff, especially a higher requirement for his or her English communicative ability for English is the universal language. In order to meet the market needs, the course: Hotel English is widely offered to the people who are willing to work in the hotel world to build the career competence for him or her in the future. As a representative of a type of ESP courses that focus on the service industry, the course: Hotel English has a high research value and is gradually receiving more and more attentions from the academic world. For example, the data provided by CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure) show that the annual number of published articles on the teaching of Hotel English broke through 100 for the first time in 2012 and has been increasing steadily since then. So far (up to November 23, 2017), 949 published articles on the teaching of Hotel English are included in CNKI. However, most of the present researches are still focusing on the direct application of teaching methods such as situational language teaching, communicative teaching, and Task-Based Language Teaching, etc. Almost no innovative research has been done to make the course closer to the hotel industry. Therefore, up-to-date reform and development are necessary for the course. Consequently, the following part of this chapter mainly discusses the teaching reform of the course for innovative research. The key of the teaching reform is to combine Task-Based Language Teaching with flipped classroom model perfectly, under which an exact plan is taken for the teaching reform including establishing a suitable teaching model to fit both the market and the student, finding a correspondent teaching design, and creating a reasonable course assessment, which may reflect a developing direction for ESP courses focusing on service industry.

2 Theoretical Basis for the Teaching Reform of Hotel English

In this part, the constructivist learning theory is recommended as the theoretical basis for the teaching reform of Hotel English, upon which the Task-Based Language Teaching and “flipped classroom” teaching model are adopted to carry out the teaching reform.

2.1 The Constructivist Learning Theory

As is known to all, a learner’s learning activities react greatly on the teaching of his or her teacher. Similarly, only with a thorough and up-to-date research on learning can a teaching behavior achieve success, which serves as the reason for the quick development of learning theories in recent decades. Under the influence of these learning theories, continuous reforms have taken place in the field of language teaching including second language teaching and foreign language teaching. Therefore, it is necessary for the teaching reform of Hotel English to keep pace with the development of the research on learning that has already experienced three important periods: behaviorism period (1950s), cognitivism period (1960s), and constructivism period (1990s). Developed from constructivism originally raised by J. Piaget and Lev. Vygotsky in 1960s, the constructivist learning theory (Fox & Riconscente, 2008, pp. 378–389) marks that the development of learning theories has entered a relatively complete and mature period, which cases great change in the language teaching area, namely, student-centered language teaching has replaced the teacher-centered language teaching since then, and from this perspective, it is the constructivist learning theory that can provide theoretical support for the teaching reform of Hotel English (Liu & Li, 2016, pp. 283–285).

Being a branch of cognitive psychology, the constructivist learning theory has absorbed the best parts of many learning theories such as the cultural-historical development theory raised by Vygotsky in 1978, the meaningful learning theory raised by AuSubel in 1968, and the discovery learning theory raised by Bruner in 1960, so it can reveal the cognitive laws of people’s learning process in a better way (Feng, 2006, pp. 33–36). Supporters of the theory believe that knowledge is acquired by learners themselves under certain environment through meaning construction with the help of teachers, co-learners and relevant learning materials, and it is the learner who constructs the knowledge not the teacher who teaches the knowledge. According to the constructivist learning theory, the learning environment mainly consists of four parts: situation, collaboration, conversation, and meaning-construction, these four parts work together as follows: given a real situation that is helpful for self-study, a student and his or her co-worker should finish meaning-construction through collaboration and conversation with their teacher, during which the student and his or her co-worker work as an information processing center while the teacher serves as an assistant who only offers necessary guidance to the students’ self-construction of knowledge (Yang, 2009, p. 71). Therefore, teachers should analyze student’s needs, communicate with them, and guide them to do self-study, at the same time, students should try their best to study independently without an over-reliance on their teacher and realize meaningful study (Feng, 2006, pp. 33–36). In addition, more ideas of the constructivist learning theory are listed in Table 1.

Furthermore, the major teaching methods under the constructivist learning theory are scaffolding instruction, anchored instruction, and random access instruction. Scaffolding instruction includes five steps: setting up scaffolding, entering situation,

Table 1 Main ideas of the constructivist learning theory (summarized by Feng)

Type	Ideas
Learning	Knowledge transformation, student centered
Teacher's role	Director, promoter, organizer, assistant
Learner's role	Knowledge constructor, group learning participant, collaborative learner
Knowledge	Subjective, dynamic, situational
Course	Dynamic, loose, comprehensive
Learning activities	Emphasizing process, focusing on learning skills, self-study, and social skills
Learning process	Autonomous and collaborative
Learning motivation	Intrinsic motivation oriented
Evaluation	Process evaluation: process reflection, self-assessment

exploring independently, studying in coordination, and result appraisal. Anchored instruction is also involved with five steps: creating situation, determining questions, studying independently, studying in coordination, and result appraisal. While random access instruction can be put into practice through five steps too: creating basic situation, accessing study randomly, training thinking ability, studying group cooperation, and studying result appraisal. All these teaching methods are based on the four major parts of the learning environment under the constructivist learning theory including situation, collaboration, conversation, and meaning-construction (Feng, 2006, pp. 33–36).

2.2 *Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)*

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) refers to "an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 223). In the recent two decades, a lot of researches related to TBLT have been done both at home and abroad, such as the influence on language output caused by the complexity of task perception (Robinson, 1995, pp. 62–79), the evaluation of task-formed language performance (Bachman, 2002, pp. 453–476), the planning and task performance in a second language (Ellis, 2005, pp. 325–330), meaning negotiation and task-based foreign language teaching in focus-on form (Fang, 2005, pp. 23–27), the task-formed verbal behavior of college students (Li & Chen, 2006, pp. 41–43), the application of TBLT in English audio-visual teaching online (Deng & Deng, 2007, pp. 45–49), etc. TBLT, a further development of communicative language teaching (CLT), emphasizes that the students should construct their communicative competence in real situations through finishing tasks given by teacher, which exactly coincides with the constructivist learning theory (Chen, 2017, pp.159–160). Characteristics of TBLT are mainly reflected in four aspects: (a) students complete the learning of knowledge by doing a series of tasks; (b) learning materials and activities provided to students by teachers are apparently different from that in textbooks, the simulated situation is similar to the actual life and of true communication meanings; (c) in the process of doing tasks, opinions and suggestions are exchanged among students; (d) the principle of "teacher leaded and student centered" is especially promoted (Liu, 2018, pp. 175). In short, being an influential approach of second language teaching in China, TBLT is chiefly featured by rich situations for learning, student's learning through collaborative practice and the teacher's scaffolding function, judging from which TBLT can be viewed as a perfect integration of scaffolding instruction and anchored instruction—two major teaching methods under the constructivist learning theory, so applying TBLT can realize the constructivist learning theory completely in teaching practice.

2.3 The "Flipped Classroom" Teaching Model

Nowadays, the fast development of information technology has made "flipped classroom" teaching model an inexorable trend for higher education in the future globally. So far, relevant researches are mainly listed as follows: knowledge delivery and internalization in the process of "flipped classroom" teaching and peer instruction in class, which are raised by professor Eric Mazur (2017, pp. 50–55) of Harvard university, pre-class lecture and in-class digestion in the process of "flipped classroom" teaching (Prince, 2004, pp. 223–231), the design of "flipped classroom" teaching model (Talbert, 2014, pp. 361–474), the nature of "flipped classroom" teaching model (Zhang & Zhang, 2013, pp. 73–78), the development of technology platform for "flipped classroom" teaching (Cao, pp. 116–120), the evaluation of "flipped classroom" teaching model (Li, 2015, pp. 96–100), etc. As a very popular teaching model in the "internet +" era (Chen & Yao, 2018, pp. 10–11), the "flipped classroom" teaching model is a form of blended learning in which students learn new content online by watching video lectures, usually at home, and homework is done in class with teachers and students discussing and solving questions. Teacher's interaction with students is more personalized—guidance instead of lecturing. This is also known as backwards classroom, inverted classroom, reverse teaching, and the Thayer Method (Geng, 2018, pp.107–108). The biggest advantage of "flipped classroom" teaching model is that it frees class time for hands-on work, students learn by doing and asking questions, they can also help each other, it is a process that benefits both the advanced and less advanced learners, which totally agrees with the above-mentioned ideas of the constructivist learning theory. Viewing from the angle of the constructivist learning theory, the "flipped classroom" teaching model can be explained as follows: students construct knowledge all by themselves through teaching videos and materials online before class, after which they do practices, make discussions, and ask questions in class with the guidance of teacher to achieve knowledge consolidation. In other words, the "flipped classroom" teaching model puts the constructivist learning theory into practice in a most advanced way.

As is introduced above, both TBLT and “flipped classroom” teaching model are effective ways to realize the constructivist learning theory in teaching practice. TBLT regards student as the center of language teaching by task assignment while “flipped classroom” teaching model gives the class initiative to student via online lecture before class and offline digestion in class. Therefore, compared with the single application of TBLT or “flipped classroom” teaching model, building a “flipped classroom” teaching model through TBLT can be a more effective way to stress student’s self-learning from the perspective of the constructivist learning theory.

3 The Course Orientation of Hotel English

In general, the orientation of Hotel English can be described from three aspects: course nature, course audience, and course goal.

3.1 Course Nature

Hotel English belongs to ESP course, it is necessary to find its nature through analyzing ESP. ESP refers to English for Specific Purpose. “ESP is a movement based on the proposition that language teaching should be tailored to the specific learning and language needs of particular groups of students” (Mede, Koparan, & Atay, 2018, pp. 157–175). It originated in the 1960s in the western world, developed quickly in the 1970s and 1980s, and has gradually become an important part of English as second language teaching globally up to now. Its main drive is practical, driven by the increasing numbers of people around the world who need English for clearly defined reasons (Robinett, 1988, pp. 73–74). “It is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning” (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, pp. 5–20). Therefore, Jordan (1997, pp. 1–19) provided a further classification of ESP according to learners’ different language use needs, namely, ESAP (English for specific academic purpose), EGAP (English for general academic purpose), and EOP (English for occupational purpose). ESAP means English used in certain field or subject, such as engineering English, medical English, and English for art, which mainly asks for knowledge-based teaching. EGAP mainly trains students for using English to handle both oral and written forms of academic communication, for example, using English to give a full paper presentation in an international academic conference or to write an academic paper, which majorly calls for skill-based teaching. While EOP refers to English necessary for learner’s career, such as accounting English, logistics English, and foreign trade English, which requires a specific teaching design on the basis of an industry, an occupation, or even a job position (Zhuang, 2017, pp. 45). Obviously, Hotel English is a typical EOP course, which should be oriented by the career needs of future hotel employees, namely, the market needs of the hotel industry. Therefore, Hotel English is a vocational English course focusing on equipping the students from the language angle and making them get use to the future hotel work soon (Chen, 2018, pp. 67–68). So the emphasis of the course should be put on how to increase the students' English ability in the real hotel working environment.

3.2 Course Audience

Broadly speaking, the target audience of the course: Hotel English is those who intend to work in hotel but the course setting condition differs from country to country (Ma, 2016, pp. 84–86). In China, Hotel English is currently set up for students who major in hotel or tourism management by universities, colleges, and vocational schools (Song, 2014, pp. 229–231). Taking the History Culture and Tourism College of Sichuan Normal University as example, it regards Hotel English as one of the key courses for its hotel management majors. While in other countries, the course setting condition is completely different; some universities, colleges, and vocational schools provide the course to the students whose English is not good enough to meet their entry requirement for taking hotel management programs (Li & Fu, 2015, pp. 108–109). For example, Les Roches International School of Hotel Management, located in Switzerland, adds the course: Hotel English to its Intensive Hospitality and English Language Program (IHELP), which has preparation courses designed to help students master the English language through engaging workshops, hotel workshops, and role play. Students who have a minimum overall IELTS score of 5.0 or equivalent need to take a 6-week IHELP and those with a minimum overall IELTS score of 4.5 or equivalent must take a 20-week IHELP. Comparatively speaking, the course: Hotel English is generally regarded as a compulsory course for hotel or tourism management majors in China but it is only offered as a language course and not compulsory for all the hotel management majors in other countries; as a result, a large proportion of the course audiences are hotel or tourism management majors in China.

3.3 Course Goal

Considering the course nature and course audience of Hotel English, a main course goal for it can be developing the practical operating ability of English for students to work in the hotel world (Liu, 2011, pp. 135–136). And it can be classified into three subgoals in accordance with the actual use of English in hotel, namely, to enable students to communicate with the foreign guests fluently in English when serving them, to enable students to handle the working conversations professionally with colleagues in English, and to enable students to deal with regular English forms, documents, and materials proficiently in hotel.

4 Research Method

This study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses. Qualitative analysis aims at making a detailed reform plan for the course: Hotel English through synthesis and analysis. Synthesizing the theoretical basis and the course orientation discussed in part 2 and part 3, respectively and analyzing their correlation, a reform plan is drawn up in details to build a "flipped classroom" teaching model through TBLT for Hotel English. Quantitative analysis aims at evaluation through data analysis. In order to assess the feasibility of the reform plan, quantitative analysis is made to evaluate student's learning effect of the course: Hotel English both before and after the realization of the plan.

4.1 Research Purpose and Question

The research purpose of this chapter is to draw up a reform plan for the course: Hotel English and prove that the reform plan is effective enough to help student gain a good learning effect of the course: Hotel English. The student's learning effect of Hotel English can be evaluated from three aspects: the course assessment result, student's working English ability in hotel, and course satisfaction degree.

In view of the research purpose, the research question of this chapter falls into four sub-questions: How to draw up a reform plan in details to build a "flipped classroom" teaching model through TBLT for Hotel English. Is the reform plan effective enough to make the course assessment result normally distributed with a high pass rate? Is the reform plan effective enough to improve student's working English ability in hotel? Is the reform plan effective enough to receive a relatively high course satisfaction?

4.2 Research Subject

In 2016, 100 undergraduate students studying at Yinxing Hospitality Management College were selected as the research subject. All the students selected were sophomores, majored in Hotel management, had studied College English for two semesters and had passed CET-4, which made them similar in English level to the greatest extent. They were divided into two parallel classes: class 1 and class 2, each class consisted of 50 students with an even mix of men and women. They were arranged to study Hotel English for one semester (from September to December 2016); students in class 1 received the reform plan while others in class 2 didn't.

Obviously, the learning effect of students in class 1 should be focused on, which asks for investigation and evaluation on their course assessment result, working English ability in hotel, and course satisfaction degree. In addition, the working

English ability in hotel of students in class 2 should be evaluated as a reference object to that of students in class 1.

4.3 Research Instruments

Broadly speaking, there are two instruments used for research: YHET and Questionnaire.

4.3.1 YHET

YHET, referring to Yinxing Hotel English Test, is a comprehensive test that aims at evaluating textee’s working English ability in hotel. So far, YHET result has been accepted by ten top hotels in Chengdu, Sichuan province, namely, Shangri-La hotel, Waldorf Astoria hotel, St Regis hotel, Hilton hotel, The Ritz-Carlton hotel, Crowne Plaza hotel, Celebrity hotel, Wyndham Grand Plaza Royale Palace hotel, Wanda Reign hotel, and Intercontinental hotel. The test was designed by the author and her colleagues who make up the teaching team of Hotel English in Yinxing Hospitality Management college of CUIT, a private college in Chengdu famous for its hotel management major, to evaluate the testee’s English ability to handle the daily work in hotel, and the author was in charge of the main steps of it including test design, realization and result analysis. Having served temporary posts in different hotels, all the teachers of the team have a wide experience in teaching Hotel English and have been working on the teaching reform of Hotel English for a long time. To make the test more objective and convincing, the real working scenes of hotel are recreated through video clips and other media tools, based on which all the test questions are raised in both written and oral forms, besides, some branch managers coming from the above-mentioned ten hotels are invited as judges for the oral part of the test.

The test (100 points in all) is made up of two parts: written test (50 points in all) and oral test (50 points in all), the written test consists of term translation (15 points), work table filling (15 points), and work e-mail writing under given mission (20 points), while the oral test involves obligation presentation with given job title (20 points), dialogue making with given topic (15 points), and answering questions (15 points). After the test, every testee receives a final score (hundred mark system) based on which he or she is given an evaluation on his or her hotel English ability, and there are three kinds of evaluations in all: “Poor” (below 60 points, excluding 60 points), “Average” (60–79 points), and “Good” (above 80 points, including 80 points).

All the students in class 1 and class 2 mentioned in Sect. 5.2 are required to take YHET after they have finished studying the course: Hotel English for one semester. Their YHET result will be analyzed and compared to conclude whether the reform plan is effective enough to improve student’s working English ability in hotel or not.

4.3.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire form is designed to investigate whether the reform plan is effective enough to receive a relatively high course satisfaction or not. Students in class 1 are required to fill in the questionnaire form when they have experienced the reform plan for at least one teaching unit. The questionnaire form is made up of ten multiple choice questions, among which the first, fifth, and last questions are asking about student's opinions toward the reform plan on the whole, while the rest questions are concerning about student's views on key factors of the reform plan such as online and offline tasks, class performance, offline drilling, and so on, therefore, it can produce a comprehensive result of course satisfaction.

Questionnaire forms are given out, collected, and analyzed online, so a closed questionnaire can be helpful to make the survey go on smoothly. Every question on the questionnaire form contains three answers: Yes, No, and Not sure, each of them represents a different attitude, which makes only one answer for one question.

4.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The college teaching management system developed by ZhengFang Software Co., Ltd. is applied to do data collection and analysis. Three kinds of data are collected and analyzed for research in this chapter: data related to the course assessment result of students in class 1, data related to YHET result of students both in class 1 and class 2, and data related to questionnaire survey on course satisfaction of students in class 1. These data provide powerful evidence to answer the last three sub-questions of the research question mentioned in Sect. 4.1.

5 A Reform Plan for the Course: Hotel English

To answer the first sub-question of the research question mentioned in Sect. 4.1 and build a "flipped classroom" teaching model through TBLT for Hotel English, a reform plan needs to be made up of three parts: building "flipped classroom" teaching model focusing on "online task + offline task," applying a teaching design combining online learning with offline drilling, and establishing "oral + written" testing model for final examination and putting emphasis on student's daily performance.

5.1 Building “Flipped Classroom” Teaching Model Focusing on “Online Task + Offline Task”

In a “flipped classroom” teaching model focusing on “online task + offline task,” TBLT is applied through a series of well-planned online and offline tasks that are assigned to students.

The contents of online tasks are the professional knowledge of hotel industry, including skills of handling hotel daily conversations in English, the responsibilities of different positions in hotel, commonly seen English forms, documents, and materials in hotel and hotel etiquette, etc., which can be learned by students independently or in groups through watching video lectures and studying relevant resources online that are assigned by the teacher before class. These video lectures combine teacher’s explanations with vivid means such as animations, pictures, subtitles, and so on, which are very impressive and focused. The topics of video lectures are selected according to the functions of hotel’s main departments. Every video lecture lasts 5–10 min, covering one topic with no more than three key points, which can avoid student’s distraction to a large extent during the online learning process, moreover, quizzes are provided in these video lectures to help students review what they have learned in time. When a student finishes watching a video lecture, he or she can find further information related to it through other online resources assigned by his or her teacher, which can be websites, BBS, web apps, and so on. There is an example, to talk about the front office’s reservation function, an online task is assigned to students before class including a video lecture and a sample reservation webpage. The video lecture is produced with three key points: the ways to make a reservation, how to fill an English reservation form, and useful phrases and sentence patterns for answering a reservation call. In the video lecture, explanations of each key point end up with a simple quiz like gap filling, term matching, multiple choices, etc. The sample reservation webpage may belong to a famous hotel and is used to do online room reservation.

Offline tasks refer to task-formed oral practices in class and comprehensive tasks after class. Ordinary oral practices are usually short of clear goals, which can easily make the students feel boring and tired, but task-formed oral practices are fine designed with specific purposes through which the students are encouraged to accept challenges to enhance language ability actively. The task-formed oral practices in class mainly involve with role-plays and presentations that ask for group work of students. For role-plays, there are two forms, form 1: give every group of students an English conversation that happens in hotel, ask them to perform it in the way of role play, and then scores are noted down according to their performances; form 2: give every group of students a working situation in hotel, ask them to make up a conversation under the given situation and requirements, perform it and scores are recorded too. Similarly, presentations are assigned to students with given topics and requirements such as the responsibilities of a housekeeper (at least introduce three main responsibilities), the procedure of reservation service (at least list five main steps), the function of front office (at least introduce four main functions), etc.;

students should discuss these topics with their group members before making presentations in class. Compared with the task-formed oral practices in class, the comprehensive tasks after class are more various in forms. For instance: give students several frequently seen complaints in hotel, ask them to give out reasonable solutions through discussion with their partners, and record the whole process. At last, the teacher can select several videos or sound records of the students as examples to hold a class discussion. Comments, Scores are taken too. Another example: designing a questionnaire to do a survey about the foreign guests' opinions on hotel service in China. The students may finish the assignment in groups by making interviews on foreigners, trying their best to find a certain amount of interviewees who can't be reused, besides, the video or sound record of the interview, note-taking of the whole process and a written report on hotel service reflection in China need to be handled in. In the end, class discussion based on this task can be held, in which comments and scores are collected too. It is obvious that the above-discussed offline tasks are drilling-oriented, which can fully develop the students' initiative, increase their confidence in speaking English, and bring a sense of achievement to them. They may even become longing for more tasks.

In a word, building flipped teaching model focusing on "online task + offline task" is realized by requiring students to finish online tasks (before class) and offline tasks (in and after class). However, problems appear while tasks are being done: How to evaluate student's online learning effect? How to emphasize the online learning points for students? How to help students cope with troubles appearing in online learning? All these problems can be solved by a well-organized class, which asks for a reasonable teaching design.

5.2 Applying a Teaching Design Combining Online Learning with Offline Drilling

As is discussed above, teaching design is very important for building flipped teaching model focusing on "online task + offline task." In order to evaluate the student's online learning effect, emphasize the online learning points for students and help students cope with troubles appearing in online learning; a reasonable teaching design is needed to combine online learning with offline drilling well, which can be clearly illustrated by Fig. 1.

The key of this teaching design lies in offline guidance by teacher (in class) and offline drilling by students (in class). On one hand, teacher's guidance, taking up no more than 20% of class time, mainly aims at helping students review the key points of their online learning, answering their questions, and assigning offline tasks in class, which usually happens at the beginning of a class. On the other hand, students' drillings in class, taking up no less than 80% of class time, are checked by their teacher in time to evaluate their online learning effect, based on which offline tasks after class are assigned to students to further enhance their online learning

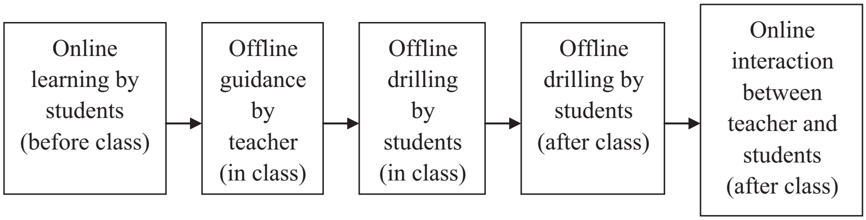

Fig. 1 The teaching design combing online learning with offline drilling

effect, that is to say, online learning is perfectly combined with offline drilling through the teaching design shown in Fig. 1. In the teaching design, professional knowledge is input through online tasks before class and output during and after the class via offline tasks done by students, which give students more initiatives and asks for teacher's monitoring and guiding. A sample teaching design is listed in Table 2 as follow.

It is obvious that offline tasks assigned to students both in class and after class can not only evaluate but also reinforce their online learning effect, so their offline drilling activities should be taken seriously, which asks for a comprehensive course assessment.

5.3 Establishing "Oral + Written" Test Model for Final Examination and Putting Emphasis on Student's Daily Performance

According to the teaching model and teaching design of Hotel English that have been discussed in Sects. 4.1 and 4.2, a comprehensive course assessment can be created through establishing "oral + written" test model for final examination and putting emphasis on student's daily performance. Firstly, to establish "oral + written" test model, the focus is on oral test to check student's English communicative ability in the hotel world while written test only serves as a supplement to the oral test aiming at examining students' familiarity with professional knowledge. Thus the items in oral test are dialogue making (role-play with given topic and requirement), terms explanation, Q&A, and oral presentation (with given topic and requirement), in the same way, the items in written test are term translation, reading comprehension, form filling, and case study. An appropriate weighting of all these items in final examination is listed in Fig. 2.

As shown in Fig. 2, dialogue making and oral presentation activities, having been done in the offline drilling in class by students, take up 50% weighting of the final examination, which can motivate students to do well in the offline drilling in class. Secondly, the proportion of a student's daily performance for his/her overall assessment should be increased to encourage students to do offline drillings both in and after class. There is a sample overall assessment weighting: a student's daily

Table 2 A sample teaching design for the check-in service in a hotel

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">Teaching objective: make students familiar with the check-in service in a hotel</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Key points: 1. Terms and useful expressions related to check-in service;</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">2. The service procedure of check-in service;</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">3. The obligation of a receptionist in the front office.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Steps</td><td>Content</td><td>Activity</td><td>Time</td><td>Remarks</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>How to handle the check-in service in English for both FITs and groups?</td><td>Online self-study by students through two video lectures before class</td><td>–</td><td>The teacher should check the online learning progresses of students through the computer terminal</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">2</td><td>(a) Key terms and expressions review</td><td rowspan="2">Teacher's explanation in class</td><td rowspan="2">8 min</td><td rowspan="2">The teacher should answer questions raised by students, which appear in their self-study process</td></tr>
<tr><td>(b) Service procedure review</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">3</td><td>(a) Performing the service process of checking in a walk-in guest in English (at least 5 steps)</td><td rowspan="2">Offline drilling by students in class</td><td rowspan="2">32 min</td><td rowspan="2">The teacher should observe students' drillings carefully and evaluate their performances by giving comments and corresponding scores</td></tr>
<tr><td>(b) Making a presentation on the main duties of a receptionist in the front office (at least 4 duties)</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>Interviewing foreigners to form a video and a report on their opinions about the check-in service of hotels in China</td><td>Offline drilling assignment explained by the teacher</td><td>5 min</td><td>The teacher should explain the requirements for the video and report clearly</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">5</td><td>Discussion</td><td rowspan="4">Online discussion between students and teacher</td><td rowspan="4">–</td><td rowspan="4">The teacher should give a summary to conclude students' opinions online</td></tr>
<tr><td>Topic 1: The non-verbal cues that appear in the check-in process</td></tr>
<tr><td>Topic 2: How to offer check-in service to a guest whose reservation has been misplaced?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Topic 3: The key factors in a group registration card</td></tr>
</table>

performance including attendance, offline task in class, and offline task after class accounts for 50% of his or her overall assessment, while final examination including oral test and written test accounts for 50% of his or her overall assessment. View more details in Fig. 3.

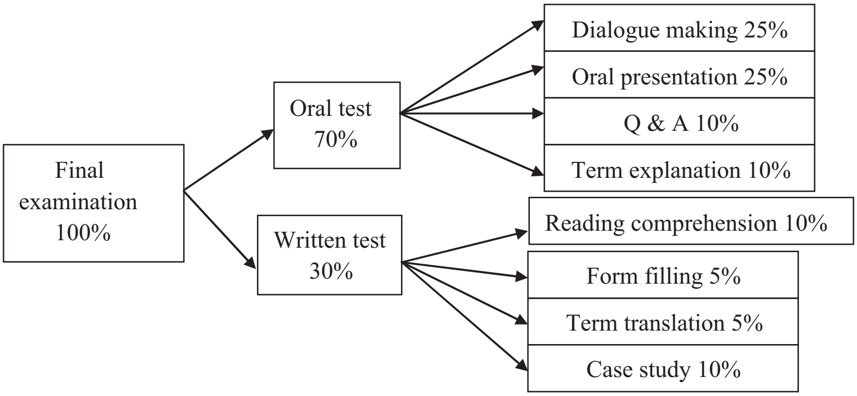

Fig. 2 Final examination weighting

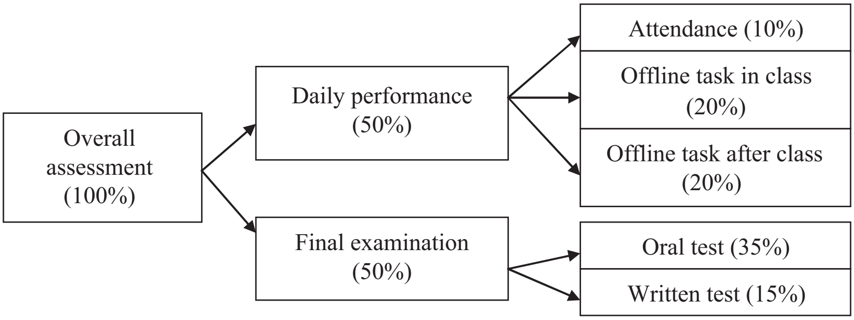

Fig. 3 Overall assessment weighting

6 Results and Discussion

In order to check the effectiveness of the reform plan discussed in part 5 in helping student gain a good learning effect of the course: Hotel English and answer the last three sub-questions of the research question mentioned in Sect. 4.1. The learning effect of students in class 1 is evaluated from three aspects: the course assessment result, student’s working English ability in hotel, and course satisfaction degree.

6.1 The Course Assessment Result of Students in Class 1

The course assessment result of students in class 1 is analyzed in Table 3.

Seen from Table 3, there are three kinds of scores related to the three kinds of assessment items of the test model discussed in Sect. 5.3, which is one of the key measures of the reform plan. For every assessment item, scores are normally

Table 3 The distribution of scores related to course assessment result of class 1 (hundred-mark system)

	Marks (proportion of students)				
Assessment Item	90–100	80–89	70–79	60–69	Below 60
Daily performance	35%	42%	21%	2%	0%
Final examination	14%	48%	24%	12%	2%
Overall assessment	20%	46%	26%	8%	0%

Table 4 YHET result of students both in class 1 and class 2

		Poor	Average	Good	Total
Class 1	Number of testees	4	26	20	50
	Proportion	8%	52%	40%	100%
Class 2	Number of testees	15	27	8	50
	Proportion	30%	54%	16%	100%

distributed with 70–89 score section as the center and the pass rate is high, namely, the reform plan is actually effective enough to make the course assessment result normally distributed with a high pass rate. In addition, more than half of the students in class 1 have gained 80 scores or more in each assessment item, which indicates that most students participate in offline drilling actively and the reform plan is very positive in encouraging students to practice their hotel English communicative ability independently.

6.2 The Working English Ability in Hotel of Students in Class 1

A great number of students in class 1 did better than students in class 2 in YHET held in March 2017. Relevant details are listed in Table 4.

Judging from Table 4, the YHET result of students in class 1 is obviously better than that of students in class 2, which indicates that the reform plan is effective enough to improve student's working English ability in hotel.

6.3 The Course Satisfaction Degree of Students in Class 1

To talk about student's satisfaction, a survey was made on the 50 students in class 1 and the result is listed in Table 5.

The answer "Yes" represents a positive attitude toward the reform plan and its key factors, while the answer "No" represents a negative attitude, and the answer

Table 5 The statistical data for 42 valid questionnaires

Question		Yes (%)	No (%)	Not sure (%)
1	Do you like "flipped classroom" teaching model?	74	10	16
2	Do you like doing online tasks of this course?	68	14	18
3	Do you like doing offline tasks of this course?	80	8	12
4	Do you need teacher's guidance in offline drillings?	50	35	15
5	Do you believe that this teaching reform plan can motivate you to study hotel English?	65	15	20
6	Do you believe that the activities in class are well organized under this teaching reform plan?	70	13	17
7	Do you have a sense of achievement when you finish an offline task?	55	30	15
8	Do you satisfy with your class performance of this course?	66	18	16
9	Do you satisfy with your after-class performance of this course?	71	14	15
10	Do you want to continue trying this teaching reform plan in the Hotel English course next semester?	82	9	9

"Not Sure" represents a neutral attitude. Needless to say, the number of students who chose "Yes" is overwhelmingly higher than those who chose "No" and "Not sure," which indicates that the reform plan is effective enough to receive a relatively high course satisfaction.

7 Conclusion

On the basis of constructivist learning theory and the course orientation of Hotel English, a reform plan is drawn up to skillfully build "flipped classroom" teaching model through TBLT, which breaks up into three parts: building "flipped classroom" teaching model focusing on "online task + offline task," applying a teaching design combining online learning with offline drilling, and establishing "oral + written" test model for final examination and putting emphasis on student's daily performance. The reform plan can make the students the center of class and motivate them to improve their communicative English ability in the hotel industry independently. In fact, it was proved to be very effective in helping student gain a good learning effect of the course: Hotel English in the real teaching practice and can be promoted widely.

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Business English Learning and Teaching and Curriculum Adaptation from Non-English Major Undergraduates' Perspectives: The Case in a Chinese University

Qing Xie

Abstract This chapter aims to explore non-English major undergraduates' understandings of outcomes and problems in business English learning and teaching as well as their suggestions for curriculum adaptation and post-course practice upgrading at a Chinese university. The methodology includes questionnaires with six open-ended questions and participant observation with 147 non-English major undergraduates in one public university in the east of China. The results of the study show participants' improvement in vocabulary learning and development in writing skills, business culture and knowledge, collaboration and negotiation skills and career potential. However, there are still problems in learning business vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar and general vocabulary due to language proficiency limitations. Communicative teaching approaches, such as group discussion and presentations, writing, reading, and translating activities are considered as useful activities. Videos, business simulations, and role plays are suggested for business English curriculum adaptation. Post-course practice should connect with workplaces with more communicative events. This study has significant implications for needs analysis research, business English teaching practice, and policy for both China and worldwide contexts.

Keywords Non-English major undergraduates' perceptions · Business English learning and teaching · Curriculum adaptation · Chinese university context

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1 Introduction

As well documented in the literature, needs analysis is an essential step of *English for specific purposes* (*ESP*) curriculum development (Basturkmen, 2010). Paltridge (2012, p. 180) summarizes that needs analysis, as a necessary element in *ESP* course design, comprises the process of investigating the needs in the "target situation and learning situations." These include identifying the communicative needs in the target contexts, learners' inadequacy in communicative competence development and the "learner's views" on language learning. Brown (2009, p. 281) summarizes that needs analysis researchers should also understand the "background information, dialects, interaction variables and means of communicating" to gain a comprehensive understanding of the learning and communicative situations.

Moreover, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p. 59) indicate that analyzing learner needs enables the appropriate decision on learning materials and course delivery approach. Needs analysis can be conducted in flexible ways, including interviews, questionnaires, and online forms combining "placement tests" with questionnaire responses. Paltridge (2012) also emphasizes using more than one approach to gather information in the needs analysis research, as it guarantees the credibility and reliability of the results.

This chapter focuses on learning needs analysis in business English courses, as a key branch of *ESP*, in the Chinese university context. It investigates learners' understandings of outcomes and problems in business English learning and views on developing teaching activities, adapting the curriculum as well as upgrading the post-course practice.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Understanding Outcomes and Problems in English Language Learning

Previous studies in different contexts have revealed varied outcomes and problems in English language learning using questionnaires. Based on the study of Sary (2015) in the Indonesian context, students' perceptions of English learning difficulties and the preferences of strategies are investigated in the university setting. The study reports that the main problem is in "vocabulary and grammar" (p. 75) which affect the development of writing skills. Moreover, writing and listening skills are considered the most difficult in the learning process. Additional learning resources are suggested to solve the learning problems. In the context of Thailand, Ngersawat and Kirkpatrick (2014, p. 1365) investigate students' English language problems and learning strategies in a bilingual program. It is reported that students' major problems lie in "writing skills" due to various limitations in vocabulary and grammar use. In the context of using "open web-based educational resources" in business

English courses, Dina and Ciornei (2015, p. 314) find the useful types of online print and audio resources. The difficulties of learning business English in this setting lie in listening activities, reading texts, vocabulary, and making presentations. The learning outcomes include more than half of the students improving their “fluency and business language comprehension.”

For business English courses, it is also necessary to define the learners’ language abilities and design the course accordingly (Ellis & Johnson, 2002, p. 43). Frendo (2005, p. 15) indicates that it is important to investigate learners’ “current situation” and “target situation,” so as to obtain the training gap. The course design process involves the development of “syllabus and methods” based on the understanding of learner “constraints and learning strategies.” In this context, this study aims to understand leaners’ outcomes and problems in business English learning using questionnaires, as parts of the needs analysis and curriculum adaptation research.

2.2 Theory and Practice of Business English Curriculum Adaptation

The theory and practice of business English curriculum adaptation follow the *ESP* principles. Basturkmen (2006, p. 28) summarizes that *ESP* curriculum should include the elements of “language system, language use, language skills and conceptual and cultural content.” *ESP* curriculum should prepare learners for their study in the academic settings or professional job in the workplace environment. Similarly, Harmer (2015) indicates that the content of business English curriculum largely depends on whether the students pursue business life in the future or are already in the workplace. The student background and needs can determine the proportions of language and business content. Business English curriculum keeps a balance between language and business elements.

Moreover, the learner-centered models (Nunan, 1988) could be applied in the business English curriculum adaptation, which are learning needs centered. Saraceni (2003) suggests that learners could be actively involved or empowered in the curriculum adaptation process. The adapted course content should be relevant to learners and authentic. The curriculum adaptation process should be flexible and learner-centered. In the higher education context, Cleveland-Innes and Emes (2005, p. 100) indicate that learners could play the roles of “content expert and learner support,” while the curriculum should offer “flexible delivery and blended learning options.” McCombs (2015, p. 61) indicates that it is necessary to build healthy relations and learning environment to meet learner needs and involve learners into the learning process.

2.3 Business English Teaching and Learning in the Chinese University Context

Business English teaching and learning in the Chinese university context are institution specific. They follow different models, depending on the institutional curriculum focus. According to Yuan (2012), institutions in China have been following the models of "English + Business" (p. 81). The business courses are taught in either Chinese or English in the business English programs.

The recent studies have been focusing on enhancing practical business skills. For example, in the Chinese university context, Yu (2015) compares the differences in students' language needs before and after the practicum through questionnaires and learning journals. The study finds that students' needs transform from language learning for general purposes to business and interdisciplinary language learning. The business practices enhance their motivation to learn business English. In a similar Chinese context, Wu (2015) investigates the connection of practicum with business English curriculum development using questionnaires. The study finds the positive connection of language knowledge and skills, and business knowledge and skills courses with practicum and employment. The study suggests establishing a system of practical skills development to improve business English curriculum and students' employment.

The learner-centered model has also been applied in business English teaching. Ellis and Johnson (2002, p. 38) have suggested the "learner involvement" in deciding the course content and teaching approach both at the beginning and during the implementation process. Learners could play important roles in course development. In the Chinese context, the study of Liang and Qin (2016, p. 94) suggested that in using learner-centered model in business English teaching, "needs analysis and learning situation analysis" are especially required. The teaching approach should be varied to cater to student needs. Li (2017, p. 38) has also suggested that learner-centered model should be used in developing the "course objective, course content and teaching approach." These are in line with the traditional business English teaching theories.

3 Research Questions

This study aims to further explore the business English curriculum development in one Chinese university context. The study explores non-English major undergraduates' learning needs and problems and understandings of teaching activities as the basis for curriculum adaptation and upgrading. The study mainly addresses the following three research questions.

1. What are non-English major undergraduates' understandings of outcomes and problems in business English learning at a Chinese university?

2. What are non-English major undergraduates' understandings of business English teaching activities at the Chinese university?
3. What curriculum adaptation can be suggested for business English courses and post-course practice at the Chinese university from non-English major undergraduates' perspectives?

4 Methodology

The methodology of the study combines both quantitative and qualitative paradigms. The study mainly uses questionnaires with open-ended questions which generate both quantitative information and "illustrative quotes." They add more "richness" than purely quantitative methods. The open-ended questions in this study include both "short-answer questions" and "sentence completion questions" (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2011, p. 37). The study also uses participant observation as a research instrument to complement the questionnaires with insider perspectives.

4.1 Data Collection

4.1.1 Paper-Based Questionnaires

Paper-based questionnaires consisting of six open-ended questions (see Appendix) were administered to all of the participants in the final session of the business English courses in May 2017. The questions were adapted from Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p. 143), Lynch (1996, p. 135) and Mackay and Palmer (1981, p. 27). The questions inquired about participants' views on the learning outcomes of business English courses, participants' perceptions of the business English teaching activities, the problems they encountered in business English learning, and their suggestions for adapting the business English curriculum and post-course practice. Participants provided their responses mostly in Chinese, which were translated into English by the researcher. Participants sometimes also used English in their responses.

4.1.2 Participant Observation

Participants' responses were based on their experiences in taking the business English courses offered in the university. Participants met the researcher once a week in class for 16 weeks in four months from February to May 2017. The researcher was also the lecturer of the business English courses. This enabled the implementation of the "complete participant observation" (Lynch, 1996, p. 121), which is used when the observer has an existing role in the observation setting, such as a teacher gathering data in her own classroom. Complete participant observation is different from non-participant classroom observation. In non-participant classroom observation, the observer may not actively participate in the teaching process and is an outsider. For this study, complete participant observation, in which the teacher was observing the teaching process as an insider, was used with all participants in three classes during the course delivery process. In this complete participant observation setting, the researcher already had a role as a teacher. Through regular written and oral interactions with the participants in and outside class, the researcher could have unique insights on participants' learning experiences and problems or challenges they encountered.

4.2 Participants

Participant profiles are illustrated in Table 1. There are 147 participants in the study for both the paper-based questionnaires and participant observation. Over one-third are male and two-thirds are female. They enrolled in the programs of bioscience (21.8%), food science and engineering (23.8%), and Japanese (54.4%) in one public university in the east of China. Over 76% of the participants were in their second year and over 23% in their third year of program study when the study was conducted. Their average age is 20.1 years old. The age range is 18~23 years old. Around 70% of the participants passed College English Test-Band 4 (CET-4) and over 10% had already passed College English Test-Band 6 (CET-6) at the time of study who were mostly third year students from the Japanese programs. The test results showed that most of the participants were at intermediate level of English while the remaining participants were at beginner to high beginner level of English.

Table 1 Participant profiles

Number of participants	147
Gender	
Male	49 (33.3%)
Female	98 (66.7%)
Programs	
Bioscience	32 (21.8%)
Food science and engineering	35 (23.8%)
Japanese	80 (54.4%)
Years	
Second year	113 (76.9%)
Third year	34 (23.1%)
Average age	20.1 years old
Age range	18–23 years old
Pass CET-4	102 (69.4%)
Pass CET-6	16 (10.9%)

4.3 Data Analysis

Participants provided their responses in Chinese and English. The Chinese responses were translated by researcher into English. A content analysis was conducted to analyze the participants' responses (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2011, p. 99). As most of the questions are short answer and sentence completion questions, the analytical process requires systematic process to avoid "rater subjectivity" (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2011, p. 99). The process includes four steps. In step one, the responses to specific questions were read and the broad themes were grouped. In step two, the frequencies of the main themes in the participants' responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaires and their percentages of the total number of participants were calculated (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). In step three, the frequencies and percentages of participants' responses were described in numerical tables, as shown in Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. For responses to different questions, the number of themes shown in different tables ranges from 4 to 14. In step four, the illustrated quotes were chosen which best described participants' views on the business English learning outcomes and problems, understanding of teaching activities as well as their suggestions for curriculum adaptation and post-course practice upgrading to answer the three research questions. The insider views of researcher's participant observation playing the role of a teacher, centering on understanding the teaching process and the learning context, provide supplementary information to the questionnaire responses, which ensure the reliability and credibility of the results.

5 Results

5.1 Non-English Major Undergraduates' Views on the Business English Learning Outcomes

Non-English major undergraduates' various views on the business English learning outcomes are summarized in Table 2. Participants indicated outcomes in vocabulary learning, writing skills development, business culture and knowledge development, collaboration and negotiation skills development which benefit their career.

Table 2 Learner views on the learning outcomes

Learner views on the learning outcomes	Number of participants (Percentage)
Writing skills development	78 (53.1%)
Vocabulary learning	98 (66.7%)
Business culture and knowledge development	55 (37.4%)
Collaboration and negotiation skills development	11 (7.5%)
Career development	2 (1.4%)

5.1.1 Writing Skills Development

Over 50% of the participants highlighted the improvement in writing skills, such as in different formats of the business documents and international trade correspondence. Participant 1, who has passed CET-4 expressed her experience as follows:

> We may have after-class assignments every time, and it's good for my writing ability and handwriting. If I don't write English for a long time, I may write with hand-shaking. (Participant 1, Food science and engineering)

It also includes the acquisition of the business terms and the ability to use them in the writing. Participant 2, who has also passed CET-4 described her results of writing skills development:

> I have learned how to write emails. I have also learned some junction words and the common expressions to make more clear and coherent sentences. (Translation, Participant 2, Food science and engineering)

Moreover, it includes the production of international trade correspondence by using appropriate trade language. Participant 3, who has passed CET-4 expressed her view as follows:

> I have learned how to use English in the international trade context according to international regulations. I have also learned the professional terms in different stages of international trade and this improves my writing ability. (Translation, Participant 3, Japanese)

5.1.2 Vocabulary Learning

Over 65% of the participants mentioned the acquisition of business English vocabulary such as the international business terminologies in the course learning. Participant 4, who passed CET-4 showed his experience as follows:

> I've learned more meaningful and useful words, which also opened my eyes to let me know a bigger world, and get closer to foreign world. (Participant 4, Bioscience)

Participants also mentioned "the common words, such as those used in business interactions and the politeness expressions" (Translation, Participant 5, Japanese, CET-4). The vocabulary also covered "untouched words, such as international trade terms and fixed expressions linked with correspondence" (Translation, Participant 6, Japanese, CET-6).

5.1.3 Business Culture and Knowledge Development

Over 37% of the participants increased their understanding and knowledge of the business world. They gained insights into various aspects of the business and companies such as corporate cases and culture. Participant 7, who passed CET-4, had the following explanation:

> The course learning has enabled me to understand more about corporate culture and improved my reading skills. I have learned a lot of new knowledge. (Translation, Participant 7, Food science and engineering)

Participants have also indicated the specific aspects of business knowledge gained through course learning, such as marketing and operation. Participants 8 and 9, who both passed CET-4, provided the following explanations:

> I have understood many product and market knowledge. I have learned business words, corporate governance, production and advertising, etc. (Translation, Participant 8, Japanese)
>
> I have learned many business related issues and gained further understanding about corporate operation. I have learned many professional words and cases. (Translation, Participant 9)

The knowledge participants gained could be as specific as preparing CV and participating in international trade. Participants 10 and 11, who passed CET-4, explained as follows:

> I have learned about business organization structure and ways of product promotion. The CV writing has enabled me to have preliminary understanding about the English use in describing job needs and professional skills. (Translation, Participant 10, Japanese)
>
> I have learned about professional words and knowledge about import and export. I have deeper understanding about insurance, especially international trade insurance. (Translation, Participant 11, Japanese)

5.1.4 Collaboration and Negotiation Skills Development

Over 7% of the participants also raised the soft skills development such as collaboration and negotiation through group cooperation with other members of the class. Participants 12 and 13 showed their understandings as follows:

> I have learned how to have class discussion and cooperate with others. (Translation, Participant 12, Bioscience)
>
> I have learned the importance of group cooperation and improved my confidence in public speaking. (Translation, Participant 13, Japanese)

5.1.5 Career Development

Two participants especially indicated the benefits to career development. Participant 14, who passed CET-4, explained as follows:

> I have a better understanding about business related English. I think business English is close to the job reality and it will help with my future work. (Translation, Participant 14, Japanese)

5.2 Non-English Major Undergraduates' Problems in Business English Learning

Non-English major undergraduates' perceptions of problems in business English learning are summarized in Table 3. The greatest proportions of problems appeared in business vocabulary. Sentence structure and grammar followed which were in various forms. There were individual differences. General vocabulary also had less than 50% of the participants indicating problems in the learning process.

5.2.1 Sentence Structure

More than 61% of the participants indicated problems in understanding complex sentences, such as sentences with inverted structures and long sentences. Participants 15, 16, who both passed CET-4, described their problems:

> It's very difficult. Sometimes I will mistake the subjects in some complex sentences. I do not know the meanings, which will lead to some misunderstandings. Sometimes I do not know some prepositional phrases, which will blur the meanings. (Translation, Participant 15, Bioscience, CET-4)
>
> Many sentences are too long, worse still, they may have dashes. It's difficult for me to translate consistently. (Participant 16, Food science and engineering)

5.2.2 Grammar

More than 53% of the participants had problems in various aspects of grammatical use, including the tense, article use, complex sentence structure, collocation, and the use of preposition. Participant 17, who passed CET-4, added the specific examples:

> I am confused with some grammar rules and do not understand well. (Translation, Participant 17, Bioscience)

A few participants indicated their lack of confidence in understanding the grammatical rules in the business English texts. Participant 18 who passed CET-4, and participant 19, who passed CET-6, described the problems:

> My grammar foundation is bad. So it's hard for me to learn. (Participant 18, Food science and engineering)

Table 3 Problems in business English learning

Problems in business English learning	Number of participants (Percentage)
Sentence structure	91 (61.9%)
Grammar	79 (53.7%)
Business vocabulary	112 (76.2%)
General vocabulary	72 (49.0%)

> It's difficult to understand. I do not often use and will not use in the future. It really relies on self-discipline. (Translation, Participant 19, Japanese)

Participants also indicated the long sentence structure which made it even more difficult for comprehension. Participants 20 and 21, who passed CET-4, elaborated as follows:

> There are too many clauses which make it difficult to translate and understand. (Translation, Participant 20, Japanese)
>
> The business letters and samples in the book often use complex grammar. If I translate the sentence by myself, I will use unable. But the book will use inability to…. I will seldom think of it. (Translation, Participant 21, Japanese)

5.2.3 Business Vocabulary

Over 76% of the participants indicated various problems in learning business vocabulary, such as difficulties in memorizing and unfamiliarity with the meaning. The following participants, who passed CET-4, indicated the details of the problems.

> I can't remember long time, we recite them just at that moment. We are too long to review them where we should read them from time to time. (Participant 22, Bioscience)
>
> Some vocabulary is too complex. We do not use them in our daily life. It's difficult to memorize, especially in writing. It takes a long time to use these words. (Translation, Participant 23, Japanese)

5.2.4 General Vocabulary

More than 48% of the participants had various problems in general vocabulary in both memorizing and understanding the ways of using the words. Participants 24 and 25, who passed CET-4, provided their understandings:

> It's not clear in which context to use the words and the meanings under different contexts. (Translation, Participant 24, Japanese)
>
> Many general English words have rich ways of use. I did not know before, such as the use of credit, clue, etc. (Translation, Participant 25, Japanese)

5.3 Non-English Major Undergraduates' Understandings of Business English Teaching Activities

Activities considered by participants as useful are described in Table 4. The largest group of participants mentioned the usefulness of in class group discussion and business document writing. They also raised reading, translation, and group presentations as useful activities. Speaking and listening were raised by a minor group of participants.

Table 4 Useful activities

Useful activities	Number of participants (percentage)
Speaking publicly in class	2 (1.4%)
In class group discussion	49 (33.3%)
Writing (business documents and correspondence)	43 (29.3%)
Listening and dictation	7 (4.8%)
Reading and translation	29 (19.7%)
Group presentation	22 (15.0%)

5.3.1 In Class Group Discussion

More than 33% of the participants preferred in class group discussion as this provided opportunities for the speaking skills development and cultivating their teamwork spirit. Participant 26 and 27, who both passed CET-4, described various positive experiences in group discussion in the case study and role play activities in class:

> I like the discussion with five partners in a group, because I can discuss the topic freely and optionally and know how others think. (Participant 26, Food science and engineering)
>
> Group discussion. It promotes cooperation, when we discuss in English, it also promotes my spoken English. (Participant 27, Food science and engineering)

5.3.2 Writing

More than 29% of the participants considered the regular writing activities enhanced their written communication skills effectively. They could understand better the formats and the rules of business document including international trade correspondence. Participant 28, who passed CET-4 and participant 29, who passed CET-6, described their experiences:

> The topic-based short article or report/resume writing is useful. Though it is difficult sometimes, this is very useful, especially to the students who do not spend after-class time to learn English. (Translation, Participant 28, Japanese)
>
> I have learned how to write international trade correspondence and got familiar with the rules of Writing. (Translation, Participant 29, Japanese)

5.3.3 Reading and Translation

Over 19% participants indicated the effectiveness of reading and translation activities in class. Participant 30, who passed CET-4, explained as follows:

> The in class translation practice can enable me to get familiar with the key vocabulary and the use of grammar. It can train my quick response ability in instant translation. (Translation, Participant 30, Japanese)

Table 5 Challenging activities

Challenging activities	Number of participants (percentage)
Group discussion	13 (8.8%)
Listening and dictation	24 (16.3%)
Reading texts	96 (65.3%)
Writing	6 (4.1%)

5.3.4 Group Presentation

Around 15% of the participants preferred the group presentation activities in class, which enable them to practice the information search skill and collaboration with other group members. Participant 31, explained as follows:

> Small group PPT presentation. Our topic is recruitment. The main content is about the recruitment news in China and abroad. While searching for news, I have developed my information search and screening ability. (Translation, Participant 31, Japanese)

Activities considered by participants as challenging are described in Table 5. The difficulties of the reading texts posed the greatest challenges to the participants. They had problems in understanding the texts themselves and the business background knowledge. Listening and dictation sometimes were also challenging. Group discussion and writing were also mentioned as challenging activities.

5.3.5 Group Discussion

Over 8% of the participants indicated the challenges in group discussion using English, due to lack of adequate target language proficiency and limited vocabulary. Participant 32 and 33, who both passed CET-4, explained as follows:

> Some difficult discussion questions are challenging. I was not familiar with some vocabulary. So it was difficult to organize the language. (Translation, Participant 32, Food science and engineering)
>
> Some business related units, such as group discussion in class on foreign trade and commercial topics. I actually did not understand it, so I did not know how to answer the question. (Translation, Participant 33, Food science and engineering)

5.3.6 Listening and Dictation

More than 16% of the participants indicated the challenges in listening and dictation exercises. The speed and clarity of the listening materials may create difficulties for them to catch up. Participant 34, who passed CET-4 and participant 35, provided their explanations:

> Word dictation. It's hard to remember many new words without review. (Participant 34, Food science and engineering)

> The listening exercises mostly were interviews. Different interviewee had different intonations. It was a bit difficult to catch the information. (Translation, Participant 35, Japanese)

5.3.7 Reading Texts

Over 65% of the participants indicated the challenges they encountered when learning the vocabulary and knowledge in the reading texts on various topics. The reasons included lack of adequate background knowledge such as payment with letter of credit and transportation in international trade and related working experiences as well as limited access in their daily life. Participant 36 and 37, who passed CET-4, explained their experiences:

> I do not have work experiences to understand management. It only relies on the book and the teacher's explanation. (Translation, Participant 36, Japanese)
>
> Letter of credit payment is far from our daily life. Even if there was Chinese translation, I still did not understand. (Translation, Participant 37, Japanese)

5.3.8 Writing

Over 4% of the participants indicated the challenges in writing activities. Participant 38 from Japanese program indicated that "writing letters are challenging. It combines knowledge and flexible use to compose a letter. It was not simply learning phrases to make them" (Translation, CET-4).

5.4 Non-English Major Undergraduates' Suggestions on Business English Curriculum Adaptation

A range of business English curriculum adaptation was raised by participants as shown in Table 6. Participants suggested enriching the teaching content and making the class more interesting by increasing teacher–student interaction, exposing the students with latest news and business knowledge. The business English curriculum can also be practical to address the recent concerns on English tests. The largest proportions of curriculum adaptation concentrate on introducing videos, business simulations, group presentations, writing instructions, and vocabulary inputs.

5.4.1 Videos and Additional Listening Materials

More than 22% of the participants indicated using more short videos in class to increase their understanding of business English content. Participant 39 and 40, who passed CET-4, provided their suggestions:

> We should increase introductory videos on western business activities, typical cases and documentaries for successful career. (Translation, Participant 39, Japanese)

Table 6 Business English curriculum adaptation

Business English curriculum adaptation	Number of participants (percentage)
Teacher–student interactions	4 (2.7%)
Videos and additional listening materials	33 (22.4%)
More group presentations	12 (8.2%)
Vocabulary and grammar explanations	13 (8.8%)
Additional reading materials	11 (7.5%)
More exercises for both in-class and after-class practice	4 (2.7%)
Speaking practices	4 (2.7%)
Business simulations and role plays	24 (16.3%)
Instruction on business English writing	9 (6.1%)
Content of English for academic study	1 (0.7%)
News-based content	2 (1.4%)
English test content, e.g., BEC, CET-4/6	4 (2.7%)
More interesting activities	3 (2.0%)
Business knowledge introductions	1 (0.7%)

> We should increase the videos introducing the practical examples of businesses related to the course. (Translation, Participant 40, Japanese)

5.4.2 Business Simulations and Role Plays

Over 16% of the participants indicated the necessity of business simulations and role plays for better application of knowledge into practice. Participant 41 and participant 42, who passed CET-4, had the following examples:

> Some dialogue-based class discussion can use role play, such as bidding and negotiation of contracts. (Translation, Participant 41, Bioscience)
>
> The practical business English conversations in daily workplaces, such as how to greet foreign guests. We can have simulations for better understanding. (Translation, Participant 42, Japanese)

Participants also indicated that it would be necessary to "visit international trade companies and simulate international business transactions" (Translation, Participant 43, Japanese, CET-6).

5.4.3 Vocabulary and Grammar Explanations

Around 8.8% of the participants mentioned more thorough learning of international business vocabulary. Participant 44, who passed CET-4 and participant 45, who passed CET-6, provided their suggestions:

> I think we should increase some words or useful sentences. (Participant 44, Bioscience)
>
> We should have a summary of the key words and professional acronyms. (Translation, Participant 45, Japanese)

5.4.4 Group Presentations

Over 8% of the participants recommended group presentations on various topics. Participant 46, who passed CET-4 and participant 47 provided their suggestions:

> The group presentation can be on foreign culture, scenery, and company introductions. (Translation, Participant 46, Food science and engineering)
>
> The group presentation can discuss a recent topic related to business. (Translation, Participant 47, Bioscience)

5.4.5 Instruction on Business English Writing

Over 6% of the participants mentioned that more detailed guidance on writing should be given on specific tasks. Participant 48 and participant 49, who passed CET-4 provided their suggestions:

> The teacher comment can enable us to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each writing task. (Translation, Participant 48, Bioscience)
>
> English business letter writing should be compared with Chinese letters. (Translation, Participant 49, Japanese)

5.5 Non-English Major Undergraduates' Suggestions on Upgrading Business English Post-course Practice

How business English post-course practice can be upgraded was suggested by participants from different aspects as shown in Table 7. The largest proportions of upgrading concentrate on enhancing connection with real world business practice and further communicative events after class. Participants also preferred watching short videos for better understanding of the business world. Other suggestions were on organizing competitions, doing exercises such as reading, guidance on writing, group presentations, more knowledge about the business background and vocabulary. One participant suggested travelling to another country as a way of post-course practice.

5.5.1 Competitions

More than 1% of the participants suggested hosting competitions to enhance their business English competence after class. Participant 50, who passed CET-4, provided her view:

> We can organize a match about speeches which can exercise our spoken language ability and increase our psychology quality. (Participant 50, Bioscience)

Table 7 Business English post-course practice

Business English post-course practice	Number of participants (percentage)
Exercises	7 (4.8%)
Competitions	2 (1.4%)
Communicative events	13 (8.8%)
Writing guidance	3 (2.0%)
Videos and additional listening materials	12 (8.2%)
Connection with workplace practice	19 (12.9%)
Group presentations	5 (3.4%)
Travelling abroad	1 (0.7%)
Topic-based English reading materials	4 (2.7%)
Vocabulary learning	1 (0.7%)
Background knowledge introductions	2 (1.4%)

5.5.2 Connection with Workplace Practice

More than 12% of the participants recommended enhancing connection with the practical business world and improving their practical business ability. These include designing simulations of business communication activities. Participant 51 and 52, who passed CET-4, provided their suggestions:

> We can join in specific business communication and receptions. Relevant lectures should be offered. (Translation, Participant 51, Bioscience)
>
> We can have inquiry-based topics to enable students to seek topics autonomously and carry out English practice. (Translation, Participant 52, Food science and engineering)

Participants also raised some methods to connect with the workplaces. These included "inviting international trade companies to campus for lecturing, so as to have use knowledge with hands-on experiences" (Translation, Participant 53, Japanese, CET-4). Participants also suggested "visiting the companies" (Translation, Participant 54, Japanese, CET-4) and "having some trade correspondence exchanges with companies to use the knowledge in practice and accumulate some experience" (Translation, Participant 55, Japanese, CET-6).

5.5.3 Communicative Events

More than 8% of the participants suggested various communicative events after class such as having a group gathering. Participant 56 and participant 57, who passed CET-6, provided their suggestions:

> We should have more communication and exchanges, such as performance and role play, etc. (Translation, Participant 56, Bioscience)

Students can check some examples and practical use samples after class for further communication. (Translation, Participant 57, Japanese)

5.5.4 Videos and Additional Listening Materials

More than 8% of the participants still recommended various kinds of short videos and additional listening materials in their after-class practice. Participant 58 and 59, who passed CET-4, provided further recommendations:

Videos about how people have business transactions in their practical life. (Translation, Participant 58, Japanese)

Business negotiation related videos can broaden students' horizon and enrich the course. (Translation, Participant 59, Japanese)

5.5.5 Background Knowledge Introductions

Two participants suggested more background knowledge introductions be given such as "the process of international trade" (Translation, Participant 60, Japanese, CET-6).

By participant observation and reflection, the researcher also recognized the limitations of classroom-based teaching and recommended models to cultivate students' practical abilities beyond the classroom. This could be partnering with local companies to better understand the requirements of the real business world and for organizing possible onsite visits. In addition, the business English curriculum should incorporate more student-centered activities, such as project-based learning and to involve students in various stages of the curriculum, including course development, material and methodology selection, and evaluation (Nunan, 2013).

6 Discussion

6.1 Non-English Major Undergraduates' Understandings of Outcomes and Problems in Business English Learning at the Chinese University

For non-English major undergraduates' understandings of business English learning outcomes, more than two-thirds of the participants mentioned gains in vocabulary learning. They also had development in writing skills, business culture and knowledge, collaboration and negotiation skills and career potential (see Table 2). However in learning business vocabulary, participants still had various problems. This study also has revealed participants' perceptions of learning problems in sentence structure, grammar and general vocabulary (see Table 3). As two-thirds of the participants passed CET-4, they had already had intermediate level of English. However, it implies that due to the language proficiency limitations, language learning problems occurred in various aspects of the course. Moreover, most of the participants who passed CET-6 were more concerned with further development in international trade knowledge and practice than the key language skills. Donna (2000, p. 126) indicates that for developing specific skills in business English courses, it is critical to consider "students' abilities" to complete the tasks. The business English courses should especially cultivate students' competence to use grammar and vocabulary appropriately in different business contexts.

6.2 Non-English Major Undergraduates' Understandings of business English Teaching Activities at the Chinese University

For non-English major undergraduates' understandings of business English teaching activities at the Chinese university, this study has revealed that the participants recommended communicative teaching approaches, such as group discussion and presentations as useful activities. They also suggested traditional language input and output activities such as writing business documents, reading, and translating the business English texts (see Table 4). Participants considered the reading texts as the most challenging activities, followed by listening and dictation, group discussion, and writing (see Table 5). In business English courses, Ellis and Johnson (2002) advocate that the teachers have to be flexible to accommodate "learner's requirements" (p. 209). This study suggests that the business English teachers have to meet learners' needs in designing teaching activities.

6.3 Curriculum Adaptation for Business English Courses and Post-course Practice at the Chinese University from Non-English Major Undergraduates' Perspectives

For business English curriculum adaption, the largest number of participants suggested introducing videos and additional listening materials (see Table 6). Harmer (2015) suggests the "reversed pyramid" of learning resources which range from "blackboard, whiteboard, cassette to videos and computers" (p. 191). It can be seen that videos are recognized as important resources for language learning. In addition, another large group of participants suggested business simulations and role plays. This is in line with the "other way up" pyramid of Harmer (2015) which suggests that the language learning resources should be connected with "real life and people" (p. 192). Meanwhile, the business English courses often adopt communicative teaching approaches such as simulation and role play, which are differentiated. Role play requires the learners' awareness of the tasks while simulation requires full immersion into the scenes (Ellis & Johnson, 2002).

For business English post-course practice, the largest number of participants suggested linking with workplaces and having more communicative events (see Table 7). Previous studies by Yu (2015) and Wu (2015) also suggest incorporating the business practice elements into the curriculum. The business practice can enhance the authenticity of the course content, which brings students closer to the business world.

7 Conclusion

This study presents an example of learning needs analysis research using questionnaires and participant observation to investigate 147 non-English major undergraduates' understanding of outcomes and problems in business English learning in the Chinese university context. It also explores and interprets their understanding of teaching activities, as well as suggestions for adapting the business English curriculum and post-course practice. The results of the study suggest that business English curriculum should focus on addressing the learning problems in vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and reading texts while recognizing the various benefits for improvement in communication skills and business and culture knowledge. The design of teaching activities should be based on student needs. The communicative teaching approaches such as business simulations, role plays, group presentations and discussion are recommended. The business English curriculum adaptation should empower learners by introducing approaches which develop practical business skills such as project-based learning. By partnering with businesses, more communicative events should be initiated as post-course practice to bridge the gap between classroom and workplace.

In theory, the study provides a learning needs analysis research case in the Chinese higher education context. This study informs the current business English teaching practice by providing real life evidence for curriculum reform in both China and worldwide contexts. In policy, the results of the study help to refine the business English program benchmark for different contexts. Though the study is conducted in only one university in China, the research process can be replicated in other cultural settings. Future research should further explore the possibility of implementing student-centered approaches in business English curriculum adaptation and investigate their potential benefits to professional business skills development.

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Appendix

Adapted from Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p. 143), Lynch (1996, p. 135) and Mackay and Palmer (1981, p. 27)

Please list the outcomes of the course for you personally.
Describe an activity that you found to be useful and explain why.
What do you think should be added to the course you are taking now?
Your problems in this course (text and specific exercises) where especially related to: (please specify the difficulties within each category)

(a) Sentence structure____
(b) Grammatical forms____
(c) The meaning of business vocabulary_______________________________
(d) The meaning of common English words____________________________
(e) Others, please specify.____

Which unit/exercise seemed challenging?
What would you suggest for follow-up to this course?

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Final Paper as Portfolio: An Academic Writing Assessment for Incipient College Student Writers from Large Classes

Lili Yan

Abstract Writing is the core competency in overall EAP assessment. Chinese private college undergraduates lack incentives and involvement in academic writing tasks. One cause of their anxiety is the dual challenge of learning the language and its academic writing conventions. There is a need for an integrated writing assessment that facilitates the abundant language practice and practice of writing conventions. The application of portfolio assessment in academic writing has been proved as an impetus to writing practice. However, there are gaps between the gaining popularity of portfolio assessment and its lesser-researched application to incipient academic writing learners, and its feasibility in large classes. This chapter describes a complete process of writing assessment in the portfolio-based classroom that supports the use of students' final academic paper as their writing portfolio. It presents how the writing assessment is modified to facilitate both language practice and writing activities that are intended to help improve class involvement and confidence in writing. Results show the feasibility of the portfolio assessment and indicate the improvement in confidence, involvement, self-assessment awareness, and overall learner identity formation. The findings have pedagogical implications that portfolio-based classroom is successful as the driving force of learning and in addressing the private college students' learning difficulties vis-a-vis EAP writing task.

Keywords Final paper · Incipient academic writing learners in private colleges · Large classes · Portfolio assessment · Learner identity formation

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1 Introduction

Developing writing skills for the success in and beyond the courses of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has been recognized as one of the primary goals of EAP. The writing competence in EAP learning can effectively mirror the integral English language ability of learners (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2010). There has been a growing need to improve the overall EAP skills among Chinese university students in accordance with their increasing access to English lectures, international students exchange programs, plans for studying abroad, participating in international competition and conference, publishing academic papers, etc. However, Chinese college students, especially the underrepresented students from private colleges, that are with lower social recognition, and are generally held to be of substandard quality (Lin, 2015, p. 16) are currently enjoying less international academic advantages. EAP courses with the emphasis on writing ability are, therefore, a pathway towards equal language education that prepares them for future academic and career development.

Writing projects in EAP courses for college students are currently bogged down in the twofold dilemma. For one thing, "compared to the overall writing ability of average Chinese university students that is competitive on the global scale" (Xiong & Yin, 2009, p. 50), the writing competency of Chinese college students is waiting to be improved because of the less competitive language proficiency (Zheng, Zhao, & Liang, 2012). For another, there is a gap between the awareness of the importance of writing and the performance of college writers.

Inefficiency in writing projects in EAP lessons is demonstrated by students' lack of incentives and involvement. Many students show aversion to writing tasks and their assignments are perfunctory when turned in (Lin, 2012, p. 68). Difficulties in developing writing skills in college learners are associated with their reluctance in participation. There are a variety of factors that can hinder the participation. The most common ones are low motivation, limited writing practice, and the feeling of not being noticed in class. These factors indicate that one salient impediment to learning is that a large number of students are assigned to one teacher. Within the college English[1] framework, the average number of students in an individual class in a Chinese EAP classroom ranges from 40 to 69 (Du, 2002, p. 74). Even if a class is comprised of a comparatively manageable number of students (30–40), the teacher is usually in charge of two or more classes, leading to the typical teacher–student ratio of 1:168 (Du, 2002, p. 74). Teachers are with heavy workload, especially in terms of giving feedback on students' writing.

Project-based writing and related new assessment approaches have been applied to enhance learners' involvement. The feasibility of project-based and academic-oriented teaching in EAP writing has been proved by researchers. The confirmed benefits include "the enhancing of learners' awareness and capabilities in practical, exploratory and creative studies as well as their competence in general academic English writing" (Yang & Han, 2012, p. 8). Cooperative activities in a project are

[1] Refers to the compulsory English courses in Chinese universities and colleges.

recognized with the value of anxiety reduction among college writers (Wu & Gu, 2011, p. 51). Dynamic assessment systems have been introduced to enhance class involvement. Non-traditional ways of assessment such as peer assessment, self-assessment, and portfolio assessment are prevailing. The popularity of portfolio assessment lies in the features of developmental assessment, and multiple evaluations, when compared with traditional assessments. While the advantages of portfolio assessment are recognized, the actual application of portfolio assessment varies in terms of students' language levels.

Given the circumstance that most of the writing lessons for non-English majors are incorporated into the integral EAP courses and the unsatisfactory status quo for college EAP learners, the effective classroom writing projects and adjustments in portfolio assessment that caters to their needs and ability are of growing importance.

2 Previous Researches on Portfolio Assessment

2.1 The Advantages of Portfolio Assessment on EAP Course

Borrowed from the field of fine arts, portfolio has been considered an assessment and learning tool to record English language learning performance. It has been widely studied over the last two decades (Lam, 2017). As a typical alternative assessment, portfolio assessments that measure linguistic abilities have been increasingly integrated to language teaching since then (Tannenbaum, 1997, p. 6). Recent literature on portfolio assessment of writing demonstrates its value in both teaching and learning processes.

The advantages of portfolio assessment on an EAP course have long been recognized. "It is the aim of general EAP programs to give students a foundation in academic writing skills. And portfolio assessment can provide useful preparation for long-term self-training of these skills without the help of language teacher" (Cresswell, 2000, p. 212). Portfolio assessment brings the opportunity for writers to reflect on the writing process (Öztürk & Çeçen, 2007). Merits of portfolio assessment in terms of the active construction of related knowledge have been pointed out by Hua Wang (2011). Portfolio assessment is conducive to the formation of the learner's identity. "Portfolio provides a space within which students can negotiate their construction of self and fit a unique window through which we can view and understand these phenomena" (Clark, Chow-Hoy, Herter, & Moss, 2001, p. 211). The social space created during the process of portfolio making also contributed to more feedback on writing. "This approach typically provides learners with abundant opportunities to engage in a feedback-rich environment for improving writing" (Lam, 2013, p. 454). Focused on the classroom-based portfolios, researchers also find the positive implications of cognitive and metacognitive development (Lam, 2016).

Studies have shown that portfolio assessment is useful in higher education. It fits the need to promote self-evaluation skills. "Students assume their learning process, they become aware of the objectives they must achieve and self-correct their learning" (Popescu-Mitroia, Todorescu, & Greculescu, 2015, p. 2649). These skills and awareness are necessary for learners' academic success in their tertiary education.

2.2 The Challenges Faced in the Application of Portfolio Assessment

However, challenges arise in the actual implementation of portfolio assessment. It has being identified that "implementing the portfolio approach in ESL/EFL classrooms entails many potential problems" (Al Hosni, 2017, p. 771). The cooperation of students is the presupposition of portfolio assessment. But the degree of students' participation in collaborative activities varies in different teaching settings. Tangdhanakanond and Wongwanich (2015) have pointed out that cooperation is one of the common problems in implementing student portfolio assessment (p. 1381).

Policy is also a challenging aspect, when adopting portfolio assessment. Research demonstrates that one obstacle to implementation pertains to budget and guidelines. "There was a lack of materials and budgets that would support teachers in implementing the portfolio assessment" (Tangdhanakanond & Wongwanich, 2015, p. 1384). Both the paper-based portfolio and e-portfolio are based on material support. Additionally, teaching training is needed to help with the transition of assessment methods. Both the time to prepare teachers to be able to conduct portfolio assessment and time spent on the teaching practices to improve the implementation calls for the coordination beyond the faculty level. The administration should in this sense make more efforts and support the assessment both financially and technically (Glover, Mirici, & Aksu, 2005).

It is hard to ignore the challenge of language for ESL/EFL learners when considering the application of portfolio assessment. "The language barrier is another challenge which makes portfolio a new burden, which can hinder them from enjoying and actively engaging with the new experience" (Al Hosni, 2017, p. 776). Accordingly, there is a lack of research on whether portfolio assessment is restricted among a particular level of student writers, and what frameworks are avaible for the portfolio-based course design for students of different levels. While researchers have provided studies that confirmed the reliability of portfolio assessment on a large scale in the US (Koretz, 1998; Willard-Traub, Decker, Reed, & Johnston, 1999), limited researches have been done among the application to large-scale students who are not native English speakers.

Empirical research that systematically addresses one or more of these issues is still needed in the whole body of related research on portfolio assessment. Compared with the inception of the assessment method from the mid-twentieth century, empirical research on portfolio assessment begins to sprout within the past decade. Generally speaking, there is limited empirical research on portfolio assessment (Huang, 2012). Given the condition that the collection of multiple pieces of writing pose a challenge for college incipient English writers, and large-scale lecture can diminish the effectiveness of portfolio assessments, this study intends to look into how portfolio assessment could be effectively implemented for college-level incipient academic English writers.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 General Description of the Research

In this study, a project-based portfolio assessment is employed in the 16-week EAP lessons for non-English majors. The introduced approach assists with students' final academic paper writing. Modification of the portfolio assessment aims towards the integration of language practice with writing activities, and the improvement of in- and after-class interaction.

3.2 The Basic Question

This study looks into the application of portfolio assessment tailored to incipient college English writers. Specifically, the research questions are as follows:

1. Can portfolio assessment be applied to large-scale EAP course after adjustment?
2. Do portfolio assessment scores correlate significantly with standardized EAP test scores and self-assessment scores?
3. What are the benefits of portfolio assessment for incipient writers in an EAP course?

3.3 Participants

The study focuses on the quasi-experimental group made up of 132 students who are second-year non-English majors from four classes in the Department of Management of a private college in China. The four classes were with the same EAP instructor. The candidates are considered homogeneous with similar education background (Chinese high school graduates selected through the national college entrance examination, and their freshman year in the same department that is offered EAP courses of the same level). All of the four classes are within the age range of 19–21 years and are not differential to each other in the level of English proficiency. In terms of academic writing, all of the four classes have limited experience in both Chinese and English academic writing.

As a teacher participant, the instructor has previous experience of teaching academic English in the same department with the similar number of assigned students, but it is the first time that the instructor uses portfolio assessment for academic English courses. The teacher's perspectives serve as a complementary indicator to student's performance and a source of comparative comments on the teacher's work load.

3.3.1 Instruments

In this study, several instruments are employed to obtain the research data apart from observation, namely portfolio assessment rubrics, end-of-term EAP test, Spearman correlation, questionnaires and interviews. There is a variety of existing rubrics for assessing writing that helps to evaluate the writing performance. Given the condition that most of the topics that students are expected to write about for this semester are within the disciplines of humanities and final paper is identified as the writing portfolio, the rubrics are adapted from the writing rubrics from a course of philosophy in terms of organization, support, sources, and mechanics.[2] The rubrics are used here to measure the completion of students' portfolios and compare students' self-assessments and scoring by the teacher.

An end-of-term EAP test (including listening, reading comprehension, translation, and multiple choices) represents the role of tradition and formative assessment. Based on the sample test questions from the textbook *An Integrated Academic English Course*,[3] the end-of-term test is reorganized in accordance with the syllabus and students' skills level. It attempts to check students' academic language skills and identification and application of genre features in academic writing.

Spearman correlation in SPSS (Statistical Packages of Social Science) is employed in the study in order to detect the correlation among the variables between students' self-assessed portfolio score and scores from the teacher, and the teacher's scoring of portfolio and end-of-term EAP test.

Questionnaire surveys and subsequent interviews are conducted. Two types of questionnaires are employed. One is pre-course questionnaire, and the other is feedback questionnaire. Both types of questionnaires intend to get a better understanding of the students' learning orientation and predict the applicability of portfolio assessment. Students' interviews are used to get data of students' self-evaluation skills and the reflection on their writing processes. The purpose of the teacher's interview is to gain an insight into the applicability of portfolio assessment from the teacher's perspective.

[2] Adapted from the writing rubrics from the course 19th–20th Philosophy, Spring 2017, Emory University.

[3] *An Integrated Academic English Course* is a series of textbooks for academic English courses of post-secondary level, published by Shanghai Jiao tong University Press, December 2013, first edition.

3.4 Specific Research Procedures

In this study, there are four major stages: (1) a survey on students' writing experience and study needs, (2) writing-oriented general EAP course design and implementation, (3) portfolio and end-of-term test assessment, (4) questionnaires and end-of-course interviews.

3.4.1 Defining the "Incipient" and Identifying the Needs

At the course orientation, a survey about students' previous writing exercise and awareness of writing ability was conducted. In all the four classes, students demonstrated a limited experience in essay writing and academic writing. From the freshmen year, 77.27% of them wrote 1–3 timed or untimed essays per semester. Besides less practice in writing, they expressed the uneven development of writing skills. As to the section on self-evaluation, they indicated the least confidence in grammar, but the highest confidence in punctuation. Thus, the incipient college student writers in question faced the dual challenge and need of improving English language proficiency and acquiring academic writing experience.

3.4.2 Writing Project Design and Implementation

The study was conducted during the last semester of the Integral EAP Course that is compulsory for non-English majors. The aim of this course is to further enhance EAP skills. All of the four classes will be to identify the elements of academic report, search, and synthesize information from related sources. They are expected to have the first attempt at full-length academic report writing and portfolio assessment.

The report-writing project is at the center of classroom activities. The project is divided into several sections with writing assignments. Each class has two meetings per week. In the first week, students read an article and listened to lectures about how to write an academic research report (steps and language styles). The following 15 weeks were divided into five 3-week sections. In each section, students read an academic report on different topics, listened to related short academic lectures, and were assigned with section writing tasks. In the first section, students should decide on a research topic, which they had done some preliminary research last semester, and practiced to write a title of the report. In the second section, students analyzed an introduction section and understood the steps to write an effective introduction. The third section dealt with ways to find recourses and synthesis writing. Citation and reference were the topics for the fourth section. Presentations and reflections were conducted in the last section.

During each section, students did reading and writing activities individually while held discussions and peer reviews in groups. A six-step method (Ntombela, 2013, p. 1163) is adopted in each section. The six-step method includes "think, research, plan, write, edit and present." In order to make it more applicable to the student body in the study, section writing tasks were made up of designated writing tasks that could help with the final paper writing instead of leaving the writing task as the separate part of each section.

For each section, students read authentic academic articles, analyzed a particular part of the writing, thought about how to write the corresponding part in their own paper, practiced writing, gave presentation, and conducted peer evaluation on the sectional writing task.

For example, after students decided on their research topic and focus, they were presented with a few academic articles, and they would discuss in groups and try to summarize a formula or main components of a title. After writing down their titles, they evaluated the writing with their peers in the next class. In the section about introduction writing, students read an article with special emphasis on the introduction section. They discussed in groups about the function and elements in the introduction section. Sentence patterns such as how to describe background and trend, or how to present arguments and the research questions were practiced. Then they finished their introduction section for presentation and peer evaluation.

Students become aware of the complete process of report writing and have an equal chance to evaluate others writing and get feedback. There is an active interaction between individual and group, teacher and students, inside and outside classroom reading and writing practice.

3.4.3 Portfolio Making and Assessments

In the first week, the teacher created an engaging environment for students in the report writing activities. Students were encouraged to find their own groups. Then they watched one episode of *WE BARE BEARS* about how Chloe finished her report and got a high grade. After watching the video, the teacher called for the issues of academic integrity that were shown in the video and pointed out the importance of team work and time management in finishing the writing project for this semester. Methods to prepare the portfolio and scoring criterion were also introduced.

At the end of the section, each writing assignment was collected. The writing portfolio mainly consisted of the final paper with pieces of sectional writing. While discussions and peer reviews were done within a group, each final paper was submitted individually on the topic of their choice.

One portfolio was awarded two scores: one from the teacher and the other from students' self-evaluation. Both teacher and students were consistent in term of portfolio assessment criterion (scoring on the basis of organization, support, sources, and mechanics).[4]

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[4]Adapted from the writing rubrics from the course 19th–20th Philosophy, Spring 2017, Emory University.

By the end of the semester, students took the EAP achievement test that included listening, multiple choices, reading comprehension, and Chinese–English translation. Listening and reading comprehension questions are intended to evaluate student's academic skills practiced while preparing for the writing tasks in each section. Multiple choices are about identifying formal language features and effective paraphrased sentences. Chinese is used as the prompt for formal language style in the translation test that wishes to test the formal writing skills.

3.4.4 Questionnaires and End-of-Course Interviews

Pre-course questionnaire consists of ten closed questions about students' academic writing experience, their needs and challenges in learning academic writing. All the results from 132 students were obtained at the course orientation. Feedback questionnaire and interviews were conducted at the end of the semester and were supplementary in demonstrating the applicability of portfolio assessment. There are 45 closed and open questions in the questionnaire, including students demographic information, description of portfolio making and writing process, confidence in academic writing skills, formal language features identification, feedback on group discussion and peer review, benefits of portfolio assessment, and suggestions for other learners of academic writing. The questionnaire link was shared with all of the 132 students, and 129 feedbacks were received online. Results analysis of both questionnaires was assisted by www.wjx.cn. In addition to the feedback questionnaires, 20 students were randomly chosen for the interview to get more detailed feedback on their writing process, assessments, study groups and peers, and suggestions.

The interview of the teacher was also included in the study. Questions are designed around two aspects: the workload and classroom observation. The teacher talked about their time allocation for lesson planning, assignment evaluation, and office hours for students from this course. The teacher described the interaction she observes between teacher and students, student and group, as well as between students.

4 Results and Findings

4.1 Applicability of Portfolio Assessment

The primary aim is to see whether portfolio assessment is feasible among incipient college writers in large number for one instructor. Students were not told about the study in order to exclude the factors such as novelty that may intrude on the degree of involvement. The data of three students were excluded because of their regular absence during the 16 weeks.

The feasibility is considered in three aspects: the completeness of the portfolio, students' motivation and involvement, and the teacher's working load.

4.1.1 Portfolio Completion

Most of the students (90.15%) keep their section writing exercises to the end of the semester. These section-writing tasks help them understand the procedure of writing and better time management. On a 1–5 scale, students show the degree of each section that is helpful to their research report writing. Each section has indicated similar helpfulness. Among them, the practice on reference and citation, and how to write the title of the report are deemed the most helpful. From their rankings of the most useful academic skills, synthesis writing is believed the most helpful with the choice of topic and how to do literary research second to it (Fig. 1).

4.1.2 Motivation and Involvement

Contrary to the apparent reluctance to write timed essays, most of the students are highly motivated by the individual-orientated group task. Some students talk about their interest in the writing task even after the first meeting. Individual writing task (each student submit their own report on the topic they choose) help the students feel motivated to write and have a better idea of the comprehensive writing process.

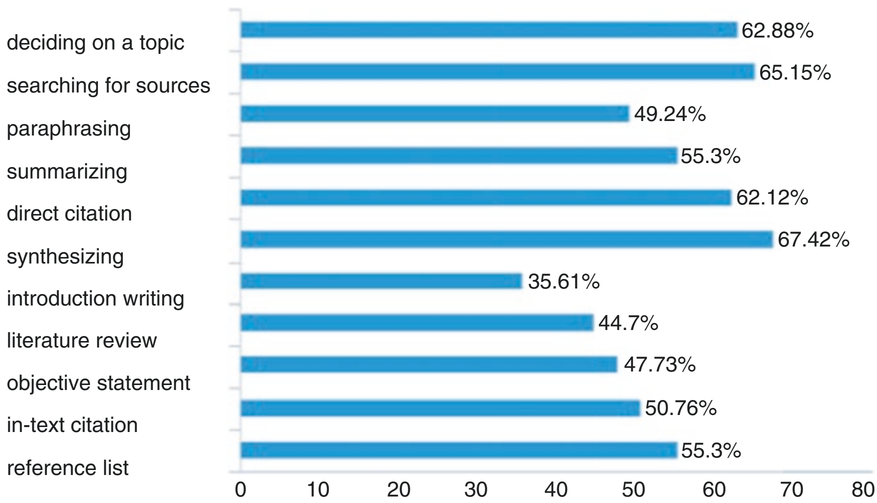

Fig. 1 Student reported helpfulness of each topic

4.1.3 Teacher's Working Load

The study shows a comparatively manageable working load for the teacher in contrast to the presupposed pressure in grading and giving feedback regarding the large number of students. Reports have confirmed the heavy working load of average college English teachers (including EAP instructors). Reviewing and marking writing assignments are deemed "the most time consuming" (Du, 2002, p. 74). According to the data from National Council of Teachers of English in 1998, a total of nearly 42 h is needed for a teacher to mark papers from 125 students, if spent only 20 min per paper. In this study, the teacher spent less than 5 min on sectional writing for each student, and around 15 min for each final paper, as reported in the teacher's interview. The overall workload is not increased because of the change of assessment approach.

4.2 Correlation to Final Test Scores

The effectiveness of portfolio assessment has been confirmed by Brown and Abeywickrama (2010). Assessing mainly the use of language in a specific context warrants the validity of portfolio assessment (pp. 122–154). However, it is skeptical whether portfolio assessment can replace traditional test methods such as timed writing or paper-based examinations. Correlation between the scores of portfolio assessment and final EAP test scores reveal the validity of portfolio assessment as an alternative method that is supplementary to final test scores to provide data on the learning process. Furthermore, the correlation helps to explain the feasibility of portfolio assessment among a large student body.

Scores of altogether 129 students are collected for correlation analysis. (Data of three students were excluded because of the long absence from the course.) Table 1 demonstrates the correlations of four variables. The four variables are PA score-teacher (portfolio assessment scores from the teacher), final EAP test scores, PA score-student (portfolio assessment scores from the student), and self-assessment result. In order to make it clear that these variables are correlated, the study grouped the four variables into three pairs: PA score-teacher and final EAP test scores; PA score-teacher and PA score-student; final EAP test scores and self-assessment result.

Suppose that portfolio assessment score from teacher (PA score-teacher), final EAP test scores, and self-assessment result (PA score-student) are three random

Table 1 Spearman correlation between four variables

	Spearman correlation	*p*-value
PA score-teacher—Final EAP test scores	0.7150	1.2586e−4
PA score-teacher—PA score-student	0.7654	2.0850e−5
Final EAP test scores—Self-assessment result	0.4757	0.0218

variables. The Lilliefors test could be employed to verify whether these three variables follow the Gaussian distribution. It turns out that PA score-teacher and PA score-student are not normally distributed, while the final EAP test scores come from a normal distribution. Therefore, we use the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient instead of Pearson correlation to measure the correlation between two non-Gaussian variables.

Results showed that these three pairs of variables are correlated. First, all the *p*-values are less than 0.05, which means the three pairs are at the significant level. In other words, the correlation values between these pairs of variables are all more than 95% confidence.

Second, the degree of correlations in each pair shows that correlation (r) is significant at the 0.05 level. In "PA score-teacher and final EAP test scores" and "PA score-teacher to PA score-student," r is more than 0.70 (0.7150 and 0.7654 respectively), which means the two pairs of variables have a high positive correlation.

As for the variables between final EAP test scores and self-assessment results, r is only 0.4747 compared to 0.7150 and 0.7654 in the first two pairs of variables. Generally speaking, it is doubtful whether a correlation of 0.4757 between two variables is high enough. We assume that the correlation of 0.4757 is really interesting and relatively high. On the one hand, the correlation coefficient is statistically significant at the 0.50 level, which means that the two variables (final EAP test scores and self-assessment result) are at the significant level. On the other hand, Chinese students lack the practice of self-evaluation, which means there exists no rationale that would lead the study to hypothesize a close relationship between the two variables (at least in private colleges in China nowadays); therefore, $r = 0.4757$ is relatively high in this study.

What follows is that all the three variables PA score-teacher, PA score-student, and self-assessment results have a higher positive correlation to the variable of final EAP test scores. The research results show that both the teacher and students themselves contribute a lot to the effectiveness of different writing stages. It is implied that the potential teacher and students collaboration can help improve students' EAP writing. The research results also show that in contrast to the traditional method, portfolio assessment can provide useful ways for making the successive evaluation of students' writing process, which makes the EAP writing more manageable and easier to access.

4.3 Benefits of Portfolio Assessment

4.3.1 Confidence in Writing

Even if it is still challenging to finish a full-length report within 16 weeks, students feel more confident when they are in a group and can have sectional writing practice.

Most of the students indicated a great release of pressure when they can discuss in groups. And talking between classmates within a group can help them decide on and have clearer expression of research questions. Other aspects such as attention to academic style and grammar check were also mentioned but not as the dominant benefits. Other students mentioned that working in groups help them to keep up on the writing project when seeing everybody is working hard (Fig. 2).

4.3.2 Self-Evaluation Ability

The effectiveness of student self-evaluation of their writing portfolio is indicated by the correlation between self-evaluation scores and scores from the teacher (Table 1). The aim of academic writing practice is to help students become their own independent article reviewers. Peer assessment also helps to enhance their self-evaluation ability.

Students became better aware of the academic style. Nominalization is the most recognizable feature (Fig. 3). They can effectively talk about drawbacks in the final paper, and evaluate what aspects of skills were practiced or being improved during the semester. The improvement of reading ability, information organizing ability, and expression skills were among the most frequently reported aspects of improvement among students when finishing the final paper (Fig. 4).

The self-evaluation ability is also indicated in their suggestions to students who will take the course next year. At the last meeting, students are asked to write a few suggestions for taking this course. Recourses and materials, writing, and structure were the most frequently used keywords in their suggestions, indicating the structure awareness and an awareness of the necessity of the iterative reading-writing practice in learning.

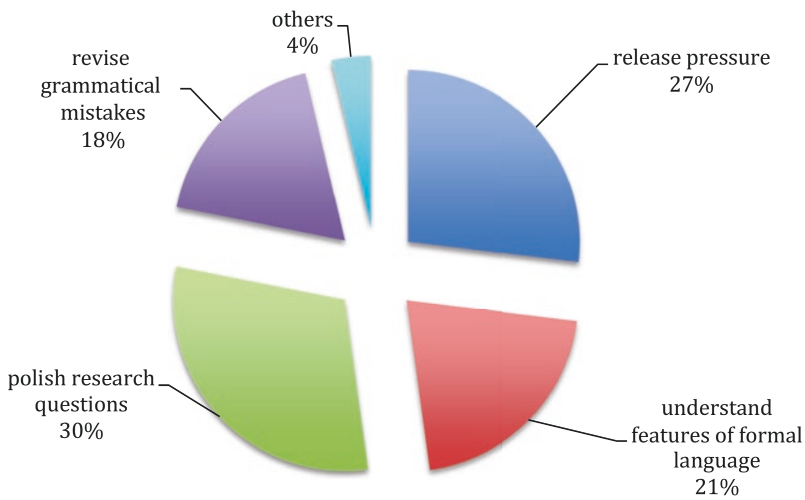

Fig. 2 Benefits of group discussion

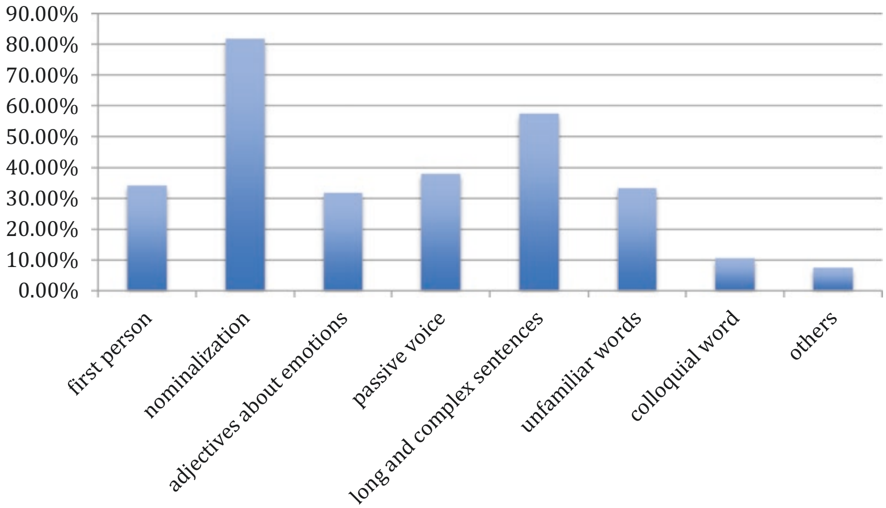

Fig. 3 Features of formal language identified by students

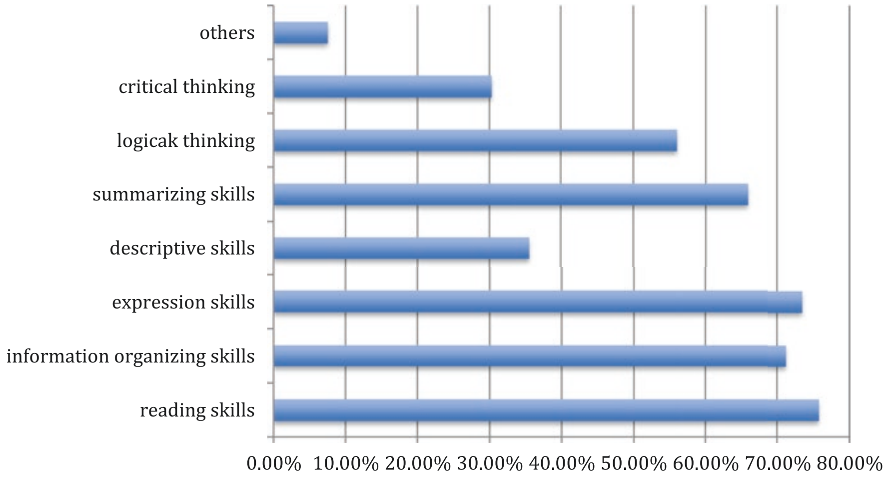

Fig. 4 Self-evaluated improvements of abilities and skills

5 Conclusion

During this final paper as portfolio project, the feasibly of teaching academic writing among college incipient writers is confirmed. The findings have pedagogical implications for administrators, EAP teachers, and course designers. It challenged the rationale that academic writing should better be a course for comparatively mature essay writers. There is no sequential necessity that academic writing should be practiced after other skills are fully developed. It shows a case about how an academic writing unit could be highly integrated with a general EAP class. Students are more motivated in the product-oriented task. This study is in line with the "output driven, input-enabled" hypothesis, the newly developed EFL teaching hypothesis proposed by researchers such as Wen (2013, 2014, 2015). Portfolio making serves as the driving force of learning, which greatly enhances students' involvement and participation. In this way, the improvement of their reading ability and listening ability is also noticed. Learners' identity is gradually formed by undertaking the dual role of the writer and the reviewer. Students can be exposed to the multiple perspectives of the academic report writing processes. Group discussions and peer reviews also contribute to the large-scale writing task implemented in a class of the lecture form.

However, there is not enough time for language practice. Although grammar-related issues can be discussed during the title writing and synthesizing part, there was not enough grammar tutoring during the writing process. Students have the impression of academic language style, but fewer chances to confirm their judgment. In the feedback survey, some students even misidentify academic language features by the end of the semester.

There is a lack of diversity of the student body with only students from the Department of Management were involved. Further investigations that help to determine the extent of the "incipient" is needed. Even though with a similar background, the difference in writing ability has not given to full account as to whether the assessment favors the more advanced writer or not.

With the confirmed feasibility of large-scale academic writing teaching within an integral EAP course, this study shows the effectiveness of getting students involved in EAP writing with a large number of students. The learner as writer identity has been gradually formed during the writing process. It contributes to the attempts at promoting equal language pedagogy among underrepresented private college students in China.

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Interaction and Collaboration in International Office's Help Desk Setting

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Abstract A large volume of literature has dedicated to examine all sorts of institutional interaction using conversation analysis. This study, following this research tradition, endeavors to explore how specific interactional practice in an international office's Help Desk setting orients itself to the particular institutional tasks by the aid of CA. A data set of authentic Help Desk conversations between officers and international students in a Chinese university is collected by means of recording. It is found that both parties are aware of the existing interaction rules of Help Desk interaction and collaborate with one another to fulfill their own tasks in this particular context. The idiosyncratic features of institutional discourse can be identified in the conversations such as accountability in breaching the turn taking system, negotiable sequence organization, and specific turn design. By examining the details of Help Desk encounter, it is also hoped that communication between staff members in bureaucratic system and international students can be made more effective.

Keywords Help desk encounter · Institutional talk · Conversation analysis

1 Introduction

Institutional talk and conversation analysis (henceforth CA) have long been intertwined. CA developed by Sacks (1992) in cooperation with Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson is a hybrid of Garfinkel's ethno-methodology and Goffman's notion that talk-in-interaction can be studied as institutional entity itself (Heritage & Clayman, 2010, p. 12). It believes that individual actions and ordinary conversations are far from disordered. Reversely, they are organized move by move, step by step. Interlocutors contribute to the ongoing interaction, making it rational and meaningful. At the very beginning of the CA research, much attention was paid to "ordinary conversation." The major job was to pinpoint the specific conversational practices and their relationship with the context. The second wave, however, put the basic findings about the institution of talk into the service of discovering the fabric of

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other social institutions such as courtroom interaction, emergency call interaction, and workplace interaction. Interaction is still the major subject, but it is studied to find out how specific interactional practice is related to the specific institutional tasks and rules. This study, therefore, follows the second trend, trying to disclose the interlocutors' hidden manipulation of discourse practice to fulfill their own goals in the particular setting of international office's Help Desk counter.

Recently there is a growing interest in institutional talks including service encounter (Kevoe-Feldman & Robinson, 2012; Lee, 2009; Mortensen & Hazel, 2014; Raevaara, 2011; Rafik-Galea, Wan, & Aliyah, 2012), academic talk (Limberg, 2007; Zuraidah & Ahmad, 2011), and classroom talk (Hellermann, 2005; Walsh, 2002, 2003; Walsh & Li, 2013). Most of them resort to CA in order to have a close observation of the operation of certain institutional interaction. Raevaara (2011, pp. 556–571) examines the convenience store setting, focusing on the design features of accounts for dispreferred sequence or as small talks. By analyzing the service interaction turn by turn, sequence by sequence, she discovers that there are some distinct sequential and turn design features in different types of occasions but the functions of all the accounts may be overlapping. Zuraidah and Ahmad (2011, pp. 3782–3792) apply CA to uncover how the candidates and examiners in a PhD dissertation defense achieve face and interactional work. The analysis shows that the participants' interactional practice is largely influenced by the institutional nature of the dissertation defense. Once flouting the covert rules, sanction will come forth. Hellermann (2005, pp. 919–944) investigates how a particular activity type namely "quiz game" borrowed from one institution (the television game show) is co-constructed in another institutional setting, i.e., classroom through prosodic practice. The findings manifest that "quiz game" activity distinguishes itself from other classroom activities by pitch contour in the triadic exchanges. The status of CA in these studies is remarkable. However, CA is largely used to explore specific conversational practice instead of attaching every interactional practice in the said institution to the veiled institutional goals or identities. The secret of how the existing rule of the institution underlies the way people act and speak is rarely investigated. In this sense, this study contributes to the institutional CA literature, trying to identify details where the officers in the international office and the international students act according to the hidden institutional rules.

On the other hand, it is not hard to detect a dearth in literature examining the help desk setting in university's international office. Studies on university discourse largely concentrate on academic settings such as dissertation defense and lectures. On some rare occasions, however, there are a few articles studying the help desk setting. Rafik-Galea, Wan, and Aliyah (2012, pp. 17–28) carry out a qualitative study to investigate the language use and communicative strategies adopted by the library front desk staff and international students of a university. Although CA was employed as a tool, its main function is to identify strategies used by the participants. The basic institution of CA as turn taking, sequence organization, turn design has not been exploited. In a similar vein, Mortensen and Hazel (2014, pp. 46–67) examine how interlocutors in a help desk counter setting for exchange students at an international university move into action. Different from the previously mentioned studies, this study embarks on multimodal analytical work on space, mobility and objects in interaction. Therefore it departs from the main research trend on discourse but focuses on the contextual cues. As noted above, it is hard-pressed to name a few studies that both focus on help desk encounter and relate interactional practice to specific institutional goals, which in turn imparts originality to this study.

International office's help desk encounter is to some extent similar to office hour interaction (cf. Chiang, 2011; Limberg, 2007) where students go to their instructors for suggestion on all kinds of problems that cannot be thoroughly fixed in the classroom. In the international office, the major agenda is to deal with a number of educational issues such as visa and financial problems, accommodation, curriculum problems, as well as enrollment. In this sense, it is rooted in academic setting where the address of the officers is "lao shi" (literally translated as "teacher" in English, but in Chinese campuses, a "lao shi" does not necessarily have to undertake teaching tasks. It is used mostly as a courtesy address by the students to imply that someone whose social status was deemed higher and whose order is to obey) by the students and thus form an asymmetry in epistemic stance. However, as an office set up for admitting new students and providing counseling service for international students, it is, in its essence, a customer service encounter where the educational product is on negotiation. The students are entitled to get help from the officers, and the officers carry on the duty to provide necessary information and service to the students. In general, the officers enjoy a relatively higher status than the international students but actually feel obliged to serve the students as they are hired for this task. On the other hand, the international students are aware of their rights to require assistance but are still victims of epistemological asymmetry and need to follow the traditional social hierarchy within the educational system. Under this circumstance, the two parties collaborate with each other in order to accomplish their own institutional goals in interaction.

2 Data and Method

The data set includes 37 pieces of face-to-face interactions which lasts for over 70 h between international students and officers in the international office in a Chinese university. International students in this university come from Europe, Africa, South America, and Asia and some of them from North America. The vast majorities are African students and students from some Arabic countries. A small number of them have a fair command of Chinese language while the rest use English as lingua franca to communicate with the office staff. The major problems they come with to the Help Desk are related to accommodation, visa, scholarship, and finance. Two officers are involved in the study, one of whom is responsible for dealing with financial problems while the other is in charge of the accommodation and scholarship issues. They are both equipped with the basic knowledge of English to communicate with the students though not sufficient enough. The reason for choosing international office Help Desk setting is that it is imbedded in the academic institution while possessing its own service nature. The dynamic social cultural resource in this setting provides rich analytical bases. For the sake of privacy, no name of any participants and the institution are to be mentioned. All the issues involved are depoliticized.

These conversations between officers and international students were recorded when the researcher served as an assistant in the office, and the subjects were unaware of the recording (however the recordings were shown to the two officers and the dean of the office. Their oral consent to make the data go public was obtained). None of the interactions were previously arranged. All the international students came to the office with real questions and problems about their university life. Both parties should act genuinely in case of conflicts or other "dysfunctional" occasions without knowing that their conversations are on record. Under such natural circumstance, it was often the case that the officers had to deal with several works at the same time. Therefore the current issue at hand may be delayed until another new one is done. There could be a long period of silence or chitchat among office staff. The recorder was switched on the minute the author went into the office and retired to her seat. Each piece of recording lasts for the whole working period—sometimes the whole morning session and sometimes the afternoon. There are different episodes that deal with different issues with different students. After sifting through the data, the ones that are clearly discernible and closely related to the institutional topics are included in the transcripts. Altogether 49 episodes are transcribed which accounts for 7031 words with the help of the transcription software FOLKER Editor 1.1, the data is transcribed according to the transcription convention (Heritage & Clayman, 2010, pp. 286–287) which makes visible the paralinguistic features such as pauses, intonations, overlaps, and vocal inflections (Chiang, 2011, pp. 3320). For the sake of confidentiality, the officers involved in this study are assigned as "Off-1" and "Off-2" which are the acronyms of "officer one/two," respectively. The students are coded as S-1, S-2…, which literally means student 1, student 2, etc., who took turns in interaction.

The analysis focus is on the distinctiveness of Help Desk talk. Scholars have already systemized certain dimensions of difference of institutional talk in general (Drew & Heritage, 1992, pp. 3–65):

1. Turn-taking organization
2. Overall structural organization of the interaction
3. Sequence organization
4. Turn design
5. Lexical or word choice
6. Epistemological and other forms of asymmetry

In order to manifest the idiosyncrasy of international student office talk, the data was analyzed under the following steps:

1. First, the transcripts are closely and repeatedly examined. Places of distinctive features are marked. For example, places where the officer hedges or the student interrupts the ongoing turn are marked for further inspection.

2. The marked places are then double-checked and scrutinized under Drew and Heritage's scheme. Some of them are labeled under more than one dimension due to its overlapping nature. For instance when the participants use an implicit word which helps form a devised turn, it can be categorized as both "turn design" and "lexical choice." The frequency of occurrence of episodes under each category is also recorded.
3. The marked segments are then investigated within its own context. For example, during a negotiation for payment, cultural backgrounds, social status, as well as financial state should be put into consideration (Table 1).

We can tell from the table that the three dimensions including turn-taking system, sequence organization, and turn design are most conspicuous in the data. For limited space, the present analysis is based on these three aspects, attempting to identify the more specific details of distinctiveness of the international office's Help Desk context.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Normative Accountability in Turn-Taking

When we ask a question, we know that this action put the recipient under the obligation of answering it. Questioners get the right to an answer and recipients ought to present it. They are "normatively accountable" for doing so. Heritage and Clayman (2010, p. 23) concluded two ways that normative accountability manifest itself in talk-in-interaction: questioners will claim their right to an answer by repeating the question and failures to provide the answer are often justified. As discussed above, the institutional goal in the international office's Help Desk is to seek solution to a variety of problems. Therefore, the two parties need to cooperate to accomplish this overarching goal which is imbedded in the question–answer exchange: a question is expecting an answer or a request expects an offer. Anyone who departs from the order of speakership is subject to sanctions. In the dyadic counseling interaction of

Table 1 Distinctive dimensions of Help Desk talk and their frequencies

Distinctive dimensions of institutional talk	Frequency
Turn-taking organization	14
Overall structural organization of the interaction	5
Sequence organization	12
Turn design	10
Lexical choice	7
Epistemological asymmetry	5

office Help Desk setting, the students are normally the agents to propose hidden request/questions as in (1):

(1) 16-11-18 (negotiation for registration and tuition fee)

1 2	S-1:	Ok. I think now I should be (0.2) uh I don't have income uh like now (0.6) the money (.) for get paid.
3		(2.0)
4	Off-1:	mm hm.
5 6 7	S-1:	On hh on Monday (0.4) just give me living here (0.3) on Monday I call and take money (0.6) from the bank because I don't have <u>now</u>.
8		(2.0)
9	S-1:	I just arrived yesterday.
10	Off-1:	Mm:: I know [but=
11	S-1:	[yeah I can have list just give thuh
12 13	Off-1:	=I am so sorry because you haven't paid for the tuition fee. We cannot register you [to our university.
14	S-1:	[Mm hm.

In this scenario, the student tried to negotiate with the officer for several days' accommodation without official registration because of the unpaid tuition fees. After being confirmed that he wouldn't be allowed to pay half the amount of the tuition fee first and make up the rest later, he explained that he was unable to pay the money right now (line 1–2), which is actually a hidden request asking for understanding of his situation. At this time the student has employed the prosodic (stretched vowel sound and falling intonation) and grammatical (a complete sentence has been made) resource to form a transition-relevance place (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974, p. 703), awaiting the taking over of his co-conversationalist. Note that there is a 2 s pause (line 3) between the two turns, during which the student earnestly expected the answer. The officer however finally filled in the turn with "mm hm" (line 4) which is nothing about a comment but an inference that she would not make any comments here at this turn and that she was waiting for the student to continue. His question had not been answered properly, the student continued to offer more accounts for his delay in paying the money (line 5–7) and once again stopped to welcome a possible response from the officer. Unfortunately, nothing expected happened. There was another 2 s pause indicating a rejection of the request. Receiving no response, he added one more turn for explanation (line 9), and this time successfully elicited the officer's response though not satisfying enough (line 10). The unfilled turns where the two pauses lie provide the student with motivation to ceaselessly pursue answers. These pauses are considered departure from normative turn-taking system in this institution as the officers are obliged to answer students' questions. If the officer had not responded in line 10, the students would have come up with more questions or an accusation for her noncooperation since the officer is responsible for helping students out of problems. There is another kind of sanction when a third party intruded in the conversation as in (2):

(2) 16-11-18 (negotiation for registration and tuition fee)

1 2	S-2	There is a blue paper like this to say this is a receipt. when you came here that you give back your receipt
3	S-1:	.hhh of course I have this (0.2)
4	Off-1:	This [is
5	S-1	[of course I have this
6	S-2	yes she want you [she want the bank-
7	Off-1	[U::h how much have you paid?
8	S-1	I think it's cost (0.1) itsu:h more than 400?

During the dyadic interaction between the student and the officer, another student was also present and overheard the whole conversation. When he noticed that the two interlocutors had some problems in understanding each other, he interfered and offered help without invitation to mediate (line 1 and 2). It was a successful maneuver since the troubled student completed the question–answer sequence as to whether he had the receipt from the bank (line 3). His job might have been perfectly done here but the student in trouble constantly repeated that he certainly had the receipt rather than taking it out. The officer tried to further explain but was interrupted by the student in trouble. Totally unaware of his intrusive role, the overhearer made another effort to remind the student of showing the receipt to the officer. This time, the officer did not relinquish her turn and preempted the turn right by raising another question. This action answers to the overhearer's rude manner as to intrude the dyadic conversation without invitation. The major agents of this scenario do not include the overhearer and thus sanction followed as the officer cut in student-2's ongoing turn. The officer is supposed to have the comprehensive knowledge of what the rules and regulations this institution has, in comparison with the students. In this sense, student-2 was challenging the officer's authority and ignoring the officer's higher social status.

It is special in the Help Desk that the "norm" does include not only the normative rights and obligations of question-and-answer but also who to ask or answer the questions. Due to the asymmetry in social status and administration knowledge, the officers enjoy exclusive rights in taking charge of the talk-in-interaction so that anyone who takes up the turn at inappropriate time will be sanctioned.

3.2 Negotiation in Sequence Organization

"It is through sequence organization that the activities and tasks central to interaction are managed" (Heritage & Clayman, 2010, p. 43). Sequence organization itself also carries institutional relevancies which inform its production. In this international students' Help Desk setting, the intercultural factors make the interaction a complicated flexible process—the minimal sequence unit like request and answer can be extended to request and delay-plus-request-plus-delay-plus-request-plus-answer sequence or even more lengthy trains. Still the same case, when the student came to the office for registration and accommodation, he encountered problem in paying the tuition:

(3) 16-11-18 (negotiation for registration and tuition fee)

1	Off-1:	to find Mr. xx and he can issue you one notice to do for it
2 3	S-1:	Yh (.) yh yh yh. they say I should be u:::h (1.0) u:h physical examination
4	Off-1:	yeah [of course
5 6 7	S-1:	[yea:h, I should be go all of these and this is just on Monday I will do it in (.) all of these in Monday. (0.4) Justuh I want to live in the campus now and on Monday I come_
8		(2.0)
9 10	S-1:	You can call the person?, talk to him about this thing?, maybe he will help (1.0) You can.
11		(2.0)
12 13	Off-1:	After you pay for the tuition fee and so that [you register here I can arrange the accommodation for you
14	S-1:	[mm hm

Here, after being recommended to go to his college first, the student acknowledged that he had already been there and was asked to do the physical examination (line 2–3). The officer then gave a consent as "yeah, of course" which indicates her alliance with the other teacher in the student's college and stamped the student with a "non-cooperative" sign. The student admitted his fault and put forward a plan that he would do all the required procedure on Monday but previously allowed to move in to the apartment (line 5–7). Although without any rising tone typical of a question or a request, the student here was actually asking for permission of his proposal, thus forming the first pair part of the request sequence. However, the officer showed no signs of taking up the turn. Not receiving a preferred second pair part, the student successively proposed another scheme (line 9–10) which he thought was possible and to some extent necessary for the officer to carry out. The officer, on the other hand, not willing to contribute to this sequence, delayed to gave her answer (line 12–13). The whole request sequence was thus expanded to five turns including two pauses. The difference in culture background as well as both parties' deficiency in intercultural communication prolonged the communication process. The student was unconsciously steeped in his own culture which has a strong influence of Western philosophy. As a result, he deemed it reasonable to negotiate with the officers for "humanistic concern." However, the administration system of Chinese universities states highly of "regulations." The interactional malfunction will be more evident when the officer could not give instructions in well-organized English:

(4) 17-4-5 (Leaving registration)

1 2 3 4 5 6	Off-2	Xxx? Eh you should go to the xxx dormitory. E:h first floor to (1.0) leaving registration e:h to for to <u>do</u> leaving registration. <u>Leaving</u> (.) because you just uh last time we do the registrate. It's thuh nex- it's the first one first the visa, now you have already checked the visa. You must need a new visa (.) <u>now</u> your visa to extend the visa. Do you get the meaning?
7	S	E:h
8	Off-2	You have the you have already take your passport?
9	S	Ahxxx (.) I must go to xxx.
10	Off-2	Yes, yes you must go to xxx. Now do you have the passport?
11	S	Yeah, I have my passport.

The student posed a question first and the officer was trying to explain a solution to the problem. However, the officer's lack of proficiency in English language translated into prolonged turn and frequent self-repair during the production of the utterance. The worst part of it is that the student did not return a promising sign of understanding (line 7). Realizing that the student was probably still in the mist, she proposed a question which was in essence a request for passport (line 8). However, the student seemed to be lagged behind and still stuck in the previous lengthy turn made by Off-2. He was reporting what he had deciphered from the officer's preceding instruction instead of answering Off-2's following question (line 9). This is considered a dispreferred response so that Off-2 repeated her question (line 10) and finally got the response. So we see here that the officer's previous lengthy explanation was considered null due to the poor language organization. So the original question-and-answer sequence grew into question-and-answer-plus-delay-plus-question-plus-answer sequence. Linguistic competence plays a great part in the transformation.

The extended sequences introduced above are different from Lee's (2009, pp. 1248–1271) observation of the airline service context where the interlocutors collaborate to make a request. However, there do exist occasions where participants cooperated to make a request in a series of sequences as in (5):

(5) 17-1-3 (Refund the money)

1	Off-2:	I mean you come to this office to for what?
2 3 4	S-2:	u:h fo::r I think she did Chinese Language. So it's like she paid for Chinese business s:o it's like she change later to Chinese language in the office but she paid <u>here</u>
5 6	Off-2:	u::m I get the information that this semester she is Chinese Language student, not the Chinese business student?
7	S-2:	Yeah Chinese language
8	Off-2:	And she pay (.)I know she paid all (.) paid all
9		(2.0)
10 11	Off-2:	I I mean she paid more [then I know Chinese language for one semester, so?
12	S-2:	[yeah Hh. paid more

13	S-2:	So you want the refund? ((to student 3))
14		(4.0)
15	Off-2:	So (.) so? Hhh..
16	S-2:	Is it possible to refund or?

In this extract, two students, the male student who acts as a company of the female student, came to the office for refund of tuition fee. However, it is detectable that they came without knowing what they would like to ask. At the very beginning of this conversational segment, the officer enquired about the students' purpose of visiting, thus forming the first pair part of the ask-and-answer sequence. The male student's answer (line 2–4) is, to be sure, not pragmatically filling in the turn—he mentioned some information but did not state the exact result they anticipated. There were many discourse markers in his utterance like "it's like," "uhm," which indicate his unpreparedness. So after he positioned the issue, the officer still had no clue of what he wanted to ask for. Therefore she initiated another turn seeking clarification (line 5–6), and the male student proffered a positive response (line 7). Then she made further guess about the aim of the students from line 8 to line 10. At line 11, she raised her tone and tried to elicit the students' real reason for coming. Without getting response, she asked again at line 15, which finally leads to the ultimate request (line 16). So as we see in this example, the original ask-and-answer sequence possibly lies at lines 1–2. However, due to the lack of language proficiency, the exchange is extended to 16 lines. But both parties contributed to the settlement of the problem as the officer made reasonable guess and the student offered timely responses.

3.3 Institutionalized Turn Design

As Drew and Heritage (1992, p. 49) characterized, institutional interactions have "role-structured, institutionalized, and omni-relevant asymmetries between participants." They are not equipped with the same amount of knowledge to direct the interaction "in desired and organizationally relevant ways." So it is quintessential in institutional interactions that "a highly practiced representative is talking with a very much less practiced layperson" (Heritage & Clayman, 2010, p. 45). In the international office setting, the officers know how to deal with the general issues after a large amount of repetition and are familiar with controlling issues within the limits of regulations of the institution. When issues are not done according to the rules, responsibility will never be claimed by the officers as in (6).

(6) 16-11-18 (Negotiation for registration and tuition fee)

1 2	S-1:	Uh should be (0.6) Its (.) I I should be paid (.) [wh- when will it close?
3	Off-1:	[yes=

4	Off-1:	= here? Five o'clock.
5	S-1:	Where where I pay?
6 7	Off-1	In the bank. I think we've already asked you to go to your college (0.3) twenty-four building (.) The room 409=
8	S-1:	Yea:h (.) they they
9	Off-1	=to find Mr. Fu and he can issue you one notice to [do for it
10 11	S-1:	[Yh (.) yh yh yh. they say I should be u:::h (1.0) u:h physical examination
12	Off-1:	yeah of course

The student consulted the closing time of the bank at lines 1 and 2 but used the vague reference "it," causing misunderstanding as the officer answered with "Here? Five o'clock" (line 4). The student was more confused now since the officer mentioned the office instead of the bank. Therefore, he sought clarification of the exact place to pay the tuition fee (line 5). At lines 6 and 7, the officer confirmed that tuition fee should be paid to the bank but an advance notice was needed. This is actually a highly designed turn to rid herself out of responsibility for the student's delay of payment. First, she used first person plural form of the pronoun "we" (line 6), which indicated that she was speaking on behalf of a larger organization, thus mitigating her personal responsibility for the present issue. Besides, though ended with a level tone, it is in effect a designed question projecting yes answer which she finally managed to get (line 8). By receiving the expected answer, she totally shifted the responsibility to the student himself since it was the student who had already been informed to go to Mr. Fu's office beforehand. At line 12, she once more stated the student's misconduct in this issue by using "of course." The officers' meticulous design of the turn is the product of a large amount of repetition of managing issues in similar contexts. Based on a robust quantity of practice, the officers form a routine way of acting:

(7) 17-1-3 (Refund the money)

1	S-1	Hello
2	Off-2	Hi_
3	S-1	((something indiscernible))
4	Off-2	First I need your information.
5	S-1	From?
6	Off-2	I need your passport.
7		(6.0)
8	Off-2	Chinese language? Boliweiya?
9	S-1:	Yes.
10	Off-2	You come here for what? Next semester for Chinese language?
11	S-1	No.

At the beginning of the interaction, the student greeted the officer and probably made an account of his purpose which was indiscernible (line 3). The officer, obviously not understanding what the student wanted, made a request for the student's information, instead of asking for clarification. It is very much a sophisticated action since there were no better ways to figure out what the requester wanted than refer to the digital information at that moment. The computer had stored every student's personal information and study record; therefore, the officer easily retrieved the student's major and nationality (line 8). It was then that the officer started to ask "you come here for what?" (line 10). Not willing to impart the turn, she made a reasonable guess "next semester for Chinese Language?" It is a possible speculation after countless Help Desk encounter and also an adventure to minimize the conversation as much as possible. Though failed, the officer had tried her best to enhance the efficiency of her work.

The officers make use of their working experience to manage talk within the limits of international office context and meanwhile promote work efficiency. Their turn design is primarily based on the international office setting where they have to deal with a large number of cases every day and where the officers are loaded with certain responsibility for the students.

4 Conclusion

This study has explored the interaction at a university's international office's Help Desk. Located at a university setting, it is within the region of academic discourse and displays the features of service encounter. Its dynamic social cultural resource provides rich analytical resource for this study. Different from other studies focusing on specific conversational practice and their relationship with the context, this study contributes to institutional CA to uncover how the interlocutors orient their talk to the specific institutional goals such as settling financial issues, checking in and out of the dormitory, requiring for information, etc. With the help of CA technique, the present study is able to disclose that transactions at the office Help Desk all go along with the hidden principle that officers should take care of the students' demand and students must obey the rules of the institution. Therefore, even when conflicts break out, the co-interactants adjust their conduct to better fit in this context.

Findings are based on the three dimensions, namely turn-taking system, sequence organization and turn design. It is found that the students assert their rights to ask for service in the office but also suffer from their inferior social status in this setting. They are able to pursue a response ceaselessly while the officers, on the other hand, are tougher in their stance to control the interaction and will deliberately claim their rights to take the turns. The rights and obligations are considered normative in the Help Desk so that anyone departs from them is subject to sanctions. In terms of sequence organization, the most remarkable sequence in the Help Desk interaction is request sequence. It is not necessarily two turns but often extended due to misunderstanding and inappropriate way of expressing. However, in spite of the communication handicap, the two parties can always cooperate to reach their own goals. Working in an environment where the officers have to deal with internationally delicate things in a repetitive basis, they have developed the ability to design the turns which guide interactions to the preferred direction.

All these aspects of interactions between international office staff and the international students manifest affiliation with the institutional background. People who communicate in such context have to calibrate their behavior according to the tacit rules existing in this institution and collaborate with each other to better fulfill their own goals.

5 Implication

By unveiling the covert operation of interactions in an international office's Help Desk setting, this study also hopes to promote the conversational efficiency in this context. As disclosed by the previous analysis, interactions between the international students and the office staff are in effect not without problems. Students, due to lack of adequate intercultural knowledge, do not apply proper politeness strategies in face of the more "polite-oriented" Chinese office staff, causing tensions in the process of negotiation or proposing a request. The officers, on the other hand, are not equipped with sufficient English competence as well as the knowledge of cross-cultural communication. The Help Desk conversations which could have been made more concise and efficient are often extended to unnecessary length. Examples of impasse in communication between the two parties infer that both the international students and the office staff are in desperate need of intercultural knowledge input.

In a practical sense, international office staff should be proffered training on the culture background of the target countries such as African and Mid-east countries which export the most students to this university. The comparison of the Chinese culture with the target culture can provide the working staff with resource when dealing with communicative problems. It is a solid understanding of the opposite culture that helps to promote the intercultural interactional results. On the other hand, since the targets of Help Desk service are non-Chinese, the English competence of the officers should be examined before and after recruitment. The institution could set annual evaluation of the office members not only in terms of working efficiency but also the feedback from the students so that the interactional failure could be reduced. In a similar vein, international students should be given courses in intercultural communication so as to promote their communicative competence in Chinese cultural background. With the improvement from both sides, the international office interaction would be more fluent and successful.

Appendix: Transcription Conventions

[Overlap]	Square brackets indicate onset and offset of overlapping talk
=	Equal signs indicate no gap of silence between utterances
(0.5)	Numbers in parentheses indicate silence, measured in seconds and tenths of seconds
(.)	A period in parentheses indicates a micropause of less than 0.2 s
.	A period indicates a falling, or final, intonation
,	A comma indicates continuing intonation
?	A question mark indicates rising intonation
?,	A question mark and comma or an inverted question mark indicates a rising intonation stronger than a comma but weaker than a question
::	Colons indicate the prolongation or stretching of the sound just preceding them. The more colons, the longer the stretching
-	A hyphen indicates that the preceding sound is cut off or self-interrupted
word	Underlining indicates some form of stress or emphasis, either by increased loudness or higher pitch. The more underlining, the greater the emphasis
WORD	Upper case indicates especially loud talk
_:	If the letter(s) preceding a colon is underlined, there is an inflected falling intonation contour
:	If a colon is underlined, there is an inflected rising intonation contour
.hh	H's with a superscripted period indicate in-breaths. The more, the longer
Hh	H's indicate outbreaths, and sometimes laughter. The more, the longer
(word)	When all or part of an utterance is in single parentheses, it indicates uncertainty on the transcriber's part
()	Empty parentheses indicate that something is being said, but no hearing can be achieved
(try1) (try2)	Two parentheses separated by a slash indicate alternative hearings of the same strip of talk
((pause))	Double parentheses indicate transcriber's descriptions of events

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