

**Proceedings of the International  
Conference on Business  
Linguistics and Intercultural  
Business Communication**

**November 17-19, 2017  
Guangzhou, China**

**The American Scholars Press**

Editors: Lisa Hale, Ruiqing Liang, Wei Cheng, Jin Zhang,  
Cover Designer: Wei Cheng

Published by  
The American Scholars Press, Inc.

The Proceedings of “*The International Conference on Business Linguistics and Intercultural Business Communication*” is published by the American Scholars Press, Inc., Marietta, Georgia, USA.

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**ISBN: 978-0-9721479-9-6**

Printed in the United States of America

## Preface

The business world is becoming more and more complicated, and stake-holders with diversified concerns and understandings are contesting power and dominance in various professional and workplace settings. The evolution of business communication reflects a linguistic, pragmatic, rhetorical and discursive challenge. Before, the major consideration of companies and corporations was to share information with a narrowly cut and considerably small group of stakeholders (e.g. clients, share-holders, manufacturers, and regulative bodies) on problems of the monetary and managerial dimensions of the business, but, now business professionals have to cater and interact with a much more broad community of business players on issues that cover culture and political fluidity from national and international perspectives.

Some argue that the ecology of business is changed because of the increasingly prevailing power of globalization in business sectors and because of the increasingly paramount impact of business activities on the society, culture, nature, and environment across the globe. Others note that the awakening mass cognition of the contradiction of professional/expert elites and the mass public leads to the apparent face-to-face encounters between business elites and non-expert ordinaries. The combination of the two factors creates new challenges to participants of business communications, force them to re-consider the traditional aim of getting across the business information to their equally literate business experts, and push them to new territories where interaction is less generic, less structured, and less governable. The discovery of new ways of speaking and new ways of thinking becomes indispensable. It is already evident that members of business community, nowadays, are paying more and more attention to the creative and imaginative kinds of interaction and are showing more and more acknowledgement on the multiple and inherently contradictory discursive roles and identities of business communication.

To address these issues, the first International Conference on Business Linguistics and Intercultural Business Communication (BL-IBC) was held November 17-19, 2017, at Jinan University in Guangzhou, China. This conference invited colleagues from national and international research communities and from a variety of research paradigms and disciplinary fields to deliver nine keynote speeches and 98 papers. It turned out to be an encouraging opportunity for constructive academic engagement. During the conference, national and international business linguistics and communication experts discussed new changes and challenges of business linguistics and cross-cultural communication, proposed, as a unity, possible responses and solutions, and re-mapped the developing route of the discipline. Keynote addresses and contributing papers made great efforts in order to search and widen our knowledge of business linguistics and cross-cultural communication. Traditional research methods and theoretical underpinning were submitted to animated and vigorous discussions. Particularly, business discourse was analyzed and deconstructed as not purely linguistic exchanges connoting information production and reception, but as complex symbolic/semiotic spaces where socio-cultural powers negotiate, align, and contradict each other. The conference also covered a lot of new issues in the field, such as business translation, business English teaching, and business English program development, etc. Keynote speakers and contributors, together, demonstrated a resolution of looking into the future and reflecting the past performance of the community, both critically and constructively.

The proceedings were selective. Among the 98 papers presented at the conference, 37 papers, together with three keynote articles, have been included in the proceedings. These papers, representing the cores issues discussed in the conference, are divided into five categories of business discourse, business andpragmatics, business English teaching, business translation, and business communication. It is hoped that the selected proceedings of the conference will provide insights for future research in business linguistics and communication.

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## *Keynote Speech I*

### **Rapport Management in Business Negotiation: A Case Study**

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*[Abstract] Contrary to popular belief that business negotiation is merely a site of transactional practice, the activity may sometimes involve diverse forms of relational work, an area inadequately addressed in the pragmatics literature. Based on a case study, this paper reveals how business people manage rapport in positive directions along different dimensions by means of various discourse strategies whose choice is influenced by an array of factors including their interactional roles, direction of benefit, sociopragmatic principles and the like.*

*[Keywords] business negotiation; rapport management; case study*

#### **Introduction**

Business negotiation is a kind of commercial activity in which “at least two participants with some divergent (but also some shared) goals try to arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement” (Koester, 2006, p. 42). Despite the fact that the negotiation of business is generally conducted linguistically, linguists have contributed much less than scientists in behavioral science, psychology and management science, as reported in Wang and Zhang’s (2014) survey about the existing research on business negotiation from 2004 to 2013. This paper wishes to make a linguistic contribution, however small it is.

The fact that business negotiation features highly dynamic interaction underscores its suitability for pragmatic analysis. Indeed, as shown in literature, it has been studied extensively from various pragmatic perspectives (e.g., Luo, 2005; Yuan, & Mao, 2016), particularly in light of politeness theories (e.g., Qiu, 2000; Yang, 2009), such as the Politeness Principle (Leech, 1983) and Face Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987). However, since the relational aspect of language use in business negotiation is coupled with, or even driven by, interactants’ consideration of commercial benefits, unlike interpersonal communication in daily life, an analysis based on these traditional politeness theories may not account sufficiently for the mechanisms of business negotiation. Therefore, it seemed worthwhile to reconsider the business activity within a more comprehensive theory of relational work, namely Rapport Management Model, proposed by Spencer-Oatey (2000, 2002, 2008), which we shall elaborate upon in Section 2.

Thus, based on the qualitative analysis of two typical cases of business negotiation, the present study aims to reveal how the two parties involved in the activity achieved smooth development through multi-directional and dynamic management of rapport so as to verify the explanatory power of the Rapport Management Model, on the one hand, and inform the practice of business negotiation on the other. The research questions to be addressed in the study are as follows:

- 1) What kind of rapport do the two parties manage in the business negotiation?
- 2) What strategies do the two parties employ for rapport management in the business negotiation?
- 3) What affects the two parties’ management of rapport in the process of business negotiation?

## Theoretical Framework

The research on linguistic politeness has been the focus of pragmatics to date. Against politeness theories put forward by Brown and Levinson (1978/1987) and Leech (1983), Spencer-Oatey proposes a fuller consideration of the concept of face work as understood by Brown and Levinson, by subdividing it into three facets (namely, individual face, relational face and collective face). As she points out, face concerns can be personally oriented, group oriented or relationally oriented. She argues that Face Theory has overemphasized the notion of individual freedom and autonomy and ignored the interpersonal or social perspective on face. Consequently, she reconceptualizes Brown and Levinson’s concept of negative face by drawing a distinction between equity rights and association rights, thus incorporating Western and Eastern face concerns. Speech acts such as requests and orders are interpersonally sensitive because they can threaten the interlocutor’s sociality rights and obligations instead of face. Basically, she argues that linguistic politeness is not merely for protecting face, as it is only a relatively small part of interpersonal rapport. In addition, she takes interactional goals into the scope of relational work, which goes beyond traditional theories of politeness and face. As for politeness maxims proposed by Leech (1983), Spencer-Oatey argues that they are best seen as pragmatic constraints that help manage the potentially conflicting face wants and sociality rights of interlocutors; the fundamental purpose is to accomplish the interactional task rather than to manage the interpersonal rapport. For reasons as noted above, Spencer-Oatey adopts Watts (2003)’s ideas and believes that the principles of politeness are rooted from rapport management of interlocutors, including the management of sociality rights and obligations, the management of face (and the management of interactional goals). Concentrating on the management of social relations, she proposes Rapport Management Model (RMM). In her initial model (Spencer-Oatey, 2000), the bases of rapport have two components: face sensitivities and sociality rights (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Rapport Management Model** (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, p. 15; 2002, p. 541)

<b>Rapport Management</b>		
	<i>Face management (personal/social value)</i>	<i>Sociality rights management (personal/social entitlements)</i>
<b>Personal/independent perspective</b>	Quality face	Equity rights
<b>Social/dependent perspective</b>	Social identity face	Association rights

Later, Spencer-Oatey (2008) further developed her theory of rapport management, taking into account the management of interactional goals, which refers to “the specific task and/or relational goals that people may have when they interact with each other” (p. 14). Broader in scope than Brown and Levinson’s face management framework, the Rapport Management Model includes attempts to be both polite and impolite in interpersonal relations, providing an appropriate theoretical framework for the research on interpersonal relations. However, though comprehensive as it is, there are some questions worth consideration: 1) How can we highlight the core position of (im-)politeness in the model so as to underline the pragmatic property of the model? 2) How can we incorporate the analytical tools in other theories of politeness so as to improve its operability? 3) Is it justifiable to include the factor of “benefit and cost” together with “autonomy and imposition” under the category of “sociality rights”? Taking the above questions into consideration, we attempt to propose a modified version of the model, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Modified Model of Rapport Management**

(Im)politeness evaluations	Rapport Management					Choice of discourse strategy	Context constraints
	Rapport orientations	Dimensions of management					
		Face	Benefit	Rights and obligations	Interactional goal		
polite  impolite	rapport enhancement  rapport protection  rapport neglect  rapport challenge  rapport impairment	enhance face as much as possible  downgrade face as much as possible	give as much benefit as possible  deprive as much benefit as possible	give as many rights as possible  Impose as many obligations as possible	advance interactional goal as much as possible  deter interactional goal as much as possible	Speech act domain, discourse domain, participation domain, stylistic domain, non-verbal domain	Power relations, social distance, interactional roles, number of participants; rank of imposition, direction of benefit; time and space of interaction, circumstances; sociopragmatic interactional principles, pragma-linguistic norms; activity types; etc.

In the modified model, (im-)politeness is conceptualized as a discursive practice through interlocutors' perception and judgment of their own and others' verbal behavior, which is classified along a continuum ranging from politeness to impoliteness. Such assessments of (im-)politeness depend on how rapport is managed in interpersonal communication. As people interact with each other, they make dynamic judgments as to whether their rapport has been enhanced, protected, neglected, challenged or even impaired. These judgments are based to a large extent on assessments of the four bases of rapport: face sensitivities, benefit, rights and obligations, and interactional goal. The management of the four bases can be achieved through multiple aspects of language use in speech act domain, discourse domain, participation domain, stylistic domain and non-verbal domain. The decisions on which rapport orientation to pursue, which dimension of rapport to manage, which strategy to choose all depend on a number of contextual factors relating to participants (e.g., power relations, social distance, interactional roles, and number of participants), features of the communicative activity (e.g., rank of imposition and direction of benefit), interactional variables (e.g., time and space of interaction, circumstances), and other aspects like socio-pragmatic interactional principles, pragma-linguistic norms, and activity types. By and large, such a modified framework is suitable for interpreting and analyzing the interpersonal interaction in business negotiation.

### A Case Study

This section reports a case study involving two businessmen at two stages of negotiation. Dan Smith is an American distributor of fitness products. In his first negotiation with Dan, Robert realizes in a few minutes of talk that beneath the rough appearance this man is a professional and veteran negotiator. Their first negotiation is shown below:

*Dan: I'd like to get the ball rolling by talking about prices.*

*Robert: Shoot. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.*

Dan: Your products are very good. But I'm a little worried about the prices you're asking.

Robert: You think we should be asking for more?

Dan: That's not exactly what I had in mind. I know your research costs are high, but what I'd like is a 25% discount.

Robert: That seems to be a little high, Mr. Smith. I don't know how we can make a profit with those numbers.

Dan: Please, Robert, call me Dan. Well, if we promise future business – volume sales that will slash your costs for making the Exec-U-Ciser, right?

Robert: Yes, but it's hard to see how you can place such large orders. How could you turn over so many? We'd need a guarantee of future business, not just a promise.

Dan: We said we wanted 1000 pieces over a six months period. What if we place orders for twelve months, with a guarantee?

Robert: If you can guarantee that on paper, I think we can discuss this further.

From the above conversation, we can see how the two negotiators haggle with each other over the price at the very beginning of the negotiation. The whole negotiation is politely done, which is evidenced by the negotiators' attempts to maintain rapport, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Rapport Management of Negotiators at the First Stage**

		Dan	Robert
<b>Dimensions of Management</b>	Face	+	-
	Benefit	+	-
	Rights and obligations	+	+
	Interactional goal	+	-
<b>Discourse Strategy</b>	Speech act domain	+	+
	Stylistic domain	+	+
	Discourse domain	-	-
	Participation domain	-	-
	Non-verbal domain	?	?

For the buyer, Dan, his discursive attempts to manage the four bases of rapport (that is, face, benefit, sociality rights and obligations, and interactional goal) are mainly made in the speech act domain and stylistic domain. By praising the products as in “Your products are very good”, he enhances the quality face of Robert and his company so as to attend to Robert’s face needs. By showing consideration (“I know your research costs are high”) and making a promise (“if we promise future business – volume sales that will slash your costs for making the Exec-U-Ciser”), Dan tries to attend to Robert’s benefit needs as much as possible. In expressing his expectation or stance, Dan effectively manages the equity rights of Robert as shown in “I’m a little worried about the prices you’re asking”. Besides, he moves forward Robert’s interactional goal by trying to promote the success of the negotiation, as evidenced in “What if we place orders for twelve months, with a guarantee”. Within the stylistic domain, Dan asks Robert to call him “Dan” rather than the honorific address “Mr. Smith” so as to improve Robert’s relational face or social identity face.

For the seller, Robert, what he attempts to do is to maintain the interpersonal relationship with Dan while bringing benefits to his company. Unlike Dan, his strategies of managing rapport are mainly employed to preserve Dan’s sociality rights and obligations in the speech act domain and stylistic domain.

In response to Dan’s request of talking about price first, Robert shows his willingness and affectively associates himself with Dan with a view to managing the latter’s association rights. When bargaining with Dan, Robert tries to protect Dan’s equity rights through expressing his worries as in “Yes, but it’s hard to see how you can place such large orders”. In addition, Robert also preserves Dan’s association rights in the stylistic domain through making a humorous comment as in “You think we should be asking for more?”

The efforts to manage rapport on both sides lead the negotiation to proceed smoothly. Now, let’s discuss what happens next.

*Robert: How about 15% for the first six months, and for the second six months at 12%, with a guarantee of 3000 units?*

*Dan: That’s a lot to sell, with very low profit margins.*

*Robert: It’s about the best we can do, Dan. We need to hammer something out today. If I go back empty-handed, I might be coming back to you soon to ask for a job.*

*Dan: OK, 17% the first six months, 14% for the second?!*

*Robert: Good. Let’s iron out the remaining details. When do you want to take delivery?*

*Dan: We’d like you to execute the first order by the 31st.*

*Robert: Let me run through this again: the first shipment for 1500 units, to be delivered in 27 days, by the 31st.*

*Dan: Right. We couldn’t handle much larger shipments.*

*Robert: Fine. But I’d prefer the first shipment to be 1000 units, the next 2000. The 31st is quite soon – I can’t guarantee 1500.*

*Dan: I can agree to that. Well, if there’s nothing else, I think we’ve settled everything.*

*Robert: Dan, this deal promises big returns for both sides. Let’s hope it’s the beginning of a long and prosperous relationship.*

In the second stage of negotiation above, the two negotiators continue to strategically manage their interpersonal relationship, which contributes to reaching their business goal for making a satisfactory deal, as shown in Table 4:

**Table 4. Rapport Management of Negotiators at the Second Stage**

		Dan	Robert
<b>Dimensions of Management</b>	Face	-	-
	Benefit	-	+
	Rights and obligations	+	+
	Interactional goal	-	+
<b>Discourse Strategy</b>	Speech act domain	+	+
	Stylistic domain	-	-
	Discourse domain	-	-
	Participation domain	+	+
	Non-verbal domain	?	?

While both the buyer and the seller manage rapport within the speech act domain and participation, Dan uses “Ok” and “Right” to show his listening and willingness to maintain a harmonious atmosphere of negotiation before he makes his own proposals. For the seller, Robert, what he needs to do at this stage is to settle everything down for the deal. When making an offer, he attends to Dan’s equity rights so as to avoid imposition. During the process of settlement, he constantly shows his consideration of Dan’s

association rights by employing the inclusive “we” (e.g., “we need to hammer something out today”) and “let’s-” structure as the indicators of involvement and cooperativeness. Besides, as shown in “we need to hammer something out today”, he manages to fulfil Dan’s interactional goal through emphasizing the ultimate purpose of the negotiation. At the end of the negotiation, he effectively takes care of Dan’s benefit needs by predicting the bright future of this deal for both parties (“this deal promises big returns for both sides”).

### **Discussion**

Language is not used exclusively to convey information and achieve concrete objectives relating to the transactional dimension of communication (Brown & Yule, 1983). Rather, it is also used to attain interpersonal goals that involve the management of social relations. In business negotiation, relational work plays an important pragmatic role in constructing a harmonious context to fulfil the speaker’s communicational goals (Xie, 2017).

From the analysis of rapport management in the case above, we can see how the two negotiators strategically manage the interpersonal relationship and how such relational work helps reach their business goal of a satisfactory deal. Crucially, however, it is important to note that their different choices of linguistic strategies are influenced by a set of contextual factors.

First, the competitive type of communicative activity where the above conversations occur matters. In business negotiation, its specific conventions and characteristic patterns dictate how participants compose and interpret talk. To accomplish a commercial goal in such a competitive situation, the two parties both need to establish their relationship and create an agreeable communication climate through rapport management, as evidenced in the data.

Secondly, the social distance between the buyer and the seller also influences their use of rapport management strategies. As mentioned above, Dan and Robert meet each other for the first time and therefore, their negotiation is indeed a first encounter. This adds to both parties’ concerns at the beginning of the negotiation to display their intention of building or maintaining their interpersonal relationship. Through the change of addressing forms and the exchange of humorous comments, they effectively establish a harmonious atmosphere for further negotiation.

The third set of factors influencing the two negotiators’ choice of rapport management is their interactional roles in interaction. The role relationship of buyer-seller to a large extent specifies the rights and obligations of each role member (Spencer-Oatey, 2008), which explains the reasons for their differences in the management of dimensions of rapport at different stages of negotiation. For the buyer, Dan, what he endeavors to achieve is to get a good price on products for protecting the interests of his company. Therefore, he invests much effort in managing interpersonal relations with Robert at the initial stage of bargaining. As the seller, Robert not only wants to make the deal at the present, but also attempts to maintain the commercial relationship with his customer so as to bring benefits to his company in the long run. For such purposes, Robert employs quite a few rapport management strategies at the closing stage.

Last, but not least, the rank of imposition also plays a crucial role in influencing the negotiators’ language use for rapport purposes. During the process of bargaining, the buyer, Dan, attempts to get a good discount, thus exerting high imposition on the seller, Robert. To prevent the conflict from disrupting their short-term relationship, Dan strategically attends to the four dimensions of rapport and makes great pragmatic effort to restore the equilibrium of the interaction (Chen, 2004). In the second stage, where the two parties negotiate the remaining details, the seller, Robert, mainly gains the initiative and offers

decisions on price quotation and shipment. To avoid imposing too much on Dan, Robert effectively shows his consideration of Dan's benefit needs, sociality rights and interactional goals, thereby achieving the pragmatic balance of the interaction for the sake of his communicative needs (Chen, 2004).

### Conclusion

Business negotiation involves more than transactional information. Indeed, the analysis of the successful business negotiation in the studied case indicates that: 1) during the process of negotiation, both sides have made much effort to improve interpersonal relationship through the management of face, benefit, sociality rights and obligations, and interactional goals, not only for the individuals but also the company they belong to; 2) both parties of negotiation have employed various strategies of language use in several rapport management domains such as speech act domain, participation domain and stylistic domain; 3) how rapport is managed by negotiators changes dynamically in the course of negotiation; 4) the contextual features of business negotiation play a fundamental role in shaping the ways negotiators manage rapport; 5) rapport management by both sides have facilitative effects on the business negotiation.

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## Biography

**Professor Xinren Chen** graduated from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies in 1999 with a PhD degree in linguistics and applied linguistics. He is currently professor of linguistics and assistant dean of School of Foreign Studies, director of Institute of Foreign Linguistics at Nanjing University, and adjunct professor of 14 foreign or domestic universities. His major research interests include pragmatics, L2 pragmatic acquisition, and language policy and language planning. He is author of *The Pragmatics of Interactional Over informativeness* (2004) and *Critical Pragmatic Studies of Public Discourse* (2013), and coauthor of *Contemporary Pragmatics* (2004), *English Grammar in Use* (2004), *Foreign Language Education and National Identity in the Context of Globalization* (2008), *The Use and Nativization of English in the Chinese Context* (2012), *Politeness Theories and Foreign Language Learning* (2013), *Pragmatics and Foreign Language Teaching* (2013), *Linguistic Memetics: Theory and Application* (2014), and *Language Planning and Security Issues in the Context of Globalization* (2015). In addition, he has published over 130 articles and compiled numerous textbooks. Now he is president of China Pragmatics Association (CPrA), vice president of China Association for Discourse Studies (CADS), China English Language Education Association (CELEA), and Jiangsu Foreign Languages and Linguistics Society (JFLLS), as well as an executive board member of several other national associations. He is co-editor of the newly launched *East* domain; they work along different dimensions of rapport in the domain of *Asian Pragmatics and CPrA's Studies in Pragmatics*, and he is an associate editor of *International Journal of Progressive Education*. He also serves on the Advisory Board of *Crossroads: A Journal of English Studies, Poland*, Editorial Board of the *LITU (Language Institute of Thammasat University) Journal, Thailand*, *Applied Linguistics in China*, *Language and Semiotic Studies*, *Studies in Second Language Learning*, and *Language Policy and Language Planning*.

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## ***Keynote Speech II***

### **A Theoretical Model of Intercultural Business Communication Competence**

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**[Abstract]** *Although there exists much study on communication, intercultural communication and intercultural communication competence in the intercultural scholarship, the research on the key components of intercultural business communication competence is limited. This paper attempts to address this gap. Based on the literature review about international business practitioners' intercultural competence, the interpersonal communication competence model and the results of a semi-structured interview with Chinese international business practitioners, the authors propose a theoretical model of intercultural business communication competence. Three dimensions are included in the model: the cognitive ability, the motivation dimension and the behavioral ability.*

**[Keywords]** *model; intercultural business communication competence; semi-structured interview*

#### **Introduction**

With the increasing globalization and economic integration in the world, more Chinese international business practitioners are taking part in the communication with business partners from other cultural backgrounds. Effective communication has become a necessity for international business practitioners and their intercultural business communication competence has become an important competence in the multicultural international workplace.

Intercultural communication takes place in many fields such as medical, educational, science and technological communication and international business constitutes one important dimension. One of the most important contexts for intercultural interaction in the twenty-first century is the global workplace (Martin, & Nakayama, 2015, p. 14). For any kind of international business activity, wide cross-border or cross-cultural international business communication takes place everywhere and has become a necessity for everyone (Holla, 2013). Hall (1959) is one of the few who specifically examined the relationship between business and intercultural communication (Varner, 2000). He argued that the study of intercultural communication is helpful in dealing with the problems in communication and management caused by cultural differences in international business activities. Geert Hofstede proposes his famous cultural dimension theory based on the survey on the differences in work-related values among the IBM employees of about 40 countries in the world.

Intercultural business communication (IBC, also called cross-cultural commercial communication (Hernandez, 2014); intercultural and international business communication, IIBC (Palmer-Silveira & Juan Carlos, 2013, p. 11); intercultural communication in global business (Washington, Okoro & Thomas, 2012) is a “young field of study compared with some of its contributing disciplines such as intercultural communication, business communication, social psychology and most recently, discourse studies.”

(Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 2003, p. 3). It refers to the communication among individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds in a business environment (Varner, 2000, p.39).

The reasons for some international business ventures' failures are concluded as lack of intercultural skills and competence, inability to communicate effectively at a global level, and failure to practice acceptable etiquette in business negotiations (Washington, et al., 2012, p. 217). To decrease the probability of failure, international business practitioners should be equipped with "intercultural business communication competence" to communicate effectively and appropriately with business partners from different cultural backgrounds. What is intercultural business communication competence? What key components constitute this important competence? The authors searched in SSCI with the keywords "intercultural business communication competence" or "cross-cultural business communication competence". In the related 56 articles, few authors have provided detailed discussion on "intercultural business communication competence" or "cross-cultural business communication competence". Some discuss the related topic of international business practitioners' intercultural competence but with different wordings. Varner and Beamer (2014) stress the importance and necessity of "intercultural business communication competence" in their book *Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace*.

## **Literature Review**

### ***International Business Practitioners' Intercultural Competence***

Although few scholars have provided detailed discussion on "intercultural business communication competence", some have researched the related topic of international business practitioners' intercultural competence but with different wording such as intercultural competence and expatriates (Gertsen, 1990), cultural intelligence (Early & Ang, 2003), the perceptions of cross cultural communication competence by American and Russian managers (Matveev & Nelson, 2004), the cross-cultural competence in international business (Johnson, Lenartowicz, & Apud, 2006), the Mexican managers' perceptions of cultural competence needed in doing business in America (Grosse, 2010), the intercultural competence in international business arena (Morley & Cerdin, 2010), the intercultural communication skills required by the Japanese business people (Yoshida, Yashiro, & Suzuki, 2013), the intercultural competence in the workplace (Martin & Nakayama, 2015), and the issues of language and competence in intercultural business contexts (Nair-Venugopal, 2015).

As international business practitioners' intercultural competence is an important competence in international business activities, many scholars have discussed the components of it. Three methods are applied in extracting the components of this competence: generalizing the components based on literature review and the researcher's experience and viewpoints; exploring and confirming the factors of the competence facilitated by the statistical software such as SPSS, AMOS or Mplus; summarizing the main components based on a survey, focus group discussion or behavioral event interview. The first method was applied representatively by Johnson, et al. (2006, p. 530) in their study to define the cross-cultural competence in international business. "Cross-cultural competence in international business is an individual's effectiveness in drawing upon a set of knowledge, skills and personal attributes in order to work successfully with people from different national cultural backgrounds at home or abroad." In addition, to be cross-culturally competent, a business practitioner should overcome the impact of institutional ethnocentrism and cultural distance. Ang, et al. (2007) and Matveev and Nelson (2004) introduced the statistical method in their study. In their study to develop the Cultural Intelligence Scale, Ang, et al. (2007) explored four dimensions of cultural intelligence with statistical approach: meta-cognitive cultural

intelligence, cognitive cultural intelligence, motive cultural intelligence and behavioral cultural intelligence. Matveev and Nelson (2004) construct a cross cultural communication competence model suitable for cross cultural team members. The model is composed of four dimensions: interpersonal skill, team effectiveness, competence to deal with cultural uncertainty and cultural empathy. Yoshida, et al. (2013) summarized the intercultural communication skills required by Japanese business people based on the discussion results of five focus groups. The intercultural communication skills include attitude, awareness, knowledge, affection and skill. Based on the results of the interviews with Mexican global managers, Grosse (2001) listed five main cultural differences to work more effectively with Mexican partners. They include the differences in building business relationships, attitudes towards time, family and religious values, communication patterns and government-business relations. Grosse (2010) also examined the cultural competence necessary to do business with the American business partners among Mexican managers. The subjects of the survey felt that understanding the business culture in Mexico and America is very important and that five points are vital: understanding the business conduct, attitude towards time, business communication pattern, laws and regulations and other cultural knowledge.

Communication is a need in today's business world (Palmer-Silveira & Juan Carlos, 2013, p. 9). Language is a basic instrument for communication. Scholars can reach a consensus on the importance of linguistic proficiency in the international business practitioners' intercultural competence, but with different opinions on the importance level of linguistic proficiency. In Europe, the role of English as business lingua franca is undoubted (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 2003, p. 4). Some scholars believe that it is very important (Kankaanranrta & Wei, 2013; Grosse, 2001, 2010; Ehrenreich, 2010; Evans, 2013; Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 2003; Yoshida, et al., 2013; Van Meurs, Korzilius, & Den Hollander, 2006). Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2003, p. 8) argued that although the technological advancements have accelerated the business globalization, it has not, and will never, replace the face to face business communication totally. Kankaanranrta & Wei researched the origin and basic status of Business English as Lingua Franca or English as Business Lingua Franca. They felt that the English is undoubtedly the lingua franca in business and the proficiency of business English as lingua franca is one of the required competences for international business talents (2013, p. 11). English is often used as lingua franca in the world-wide negotiations for most business people (Ehrenreich, 2010; Evans, 2013). But some scholars hold that compared with communication competence or individual experience, linguistic competence is not very important. "Communicative competence is far more important for business professionals than linguistic accuracy" (Palmer-Silveira & Juan Carlos, 2013, p. 12). Bargiela-Chiappini, et al. (2003) believed that students' life experience proves that in successfully accomplishing a transaction, the students with only wide linguistic and grammatical knowledge can't rival with personnel with 20 years' experience of business negotiation. So, she stresses the importance of real-world knowledge such as organizational expectations, individual's life and career experience and national cultural values (p. 83). Contrasted with linguistic accuracy, business personnel are more interested in communicating successfully, although the former is paid more attention by college teachers (Palmer-Silveira & Juan Carlos, 2013, p. 14).

Many scholars have recognized the importance of cultural knowledge (Bargiela-Chiappini, & Nickerson, 2003; Grosse, 2001, 2010; Varner, 2000; Ang, et al., 2007; Yoshida, et al., 2013; Johnson, et al., 2006). Some especially have stressed the importance of business culture (Bargiela-Chiappini, et al., 2003; Grosse, 2001; Varner, 2000). The knowledge factor in competence is the information needed by the appropriate and effective interaction and the cognitive tendency required to gain the information (Zhang, 2003, p. 26). Iris Varner points out that for people involved in intercultural business communication, they

should not only understand the general cultural knowledge but the specific country's business cultural knowledge. They should learn to deal with the differences between their native and target cultures in the business activities. Bargiela-Chiappini, et al. (2003) felt that in the intercultural business settings, the business practitioners should consider some aspects of the business settings but not only the national cultural backgrounds of different participants (p. 75). Here, the cognition about the specific business settings is stressed. Bargiela-Chiappini, et al. (2003) argued that for most business transactions the factor of profession culture is the most remarkable among the many cultural factors (p. 85). In their study of the intercultural business conference, they found that when a business meeting is held among business people from different countries, the national culture counts less than the business culture at that time. According to Bargiela-Chiappini, et al.'s knowledge about the business personnel, the most remarkable factor is professional culture for many business transactions (2003, p. 85).

In conclusion, to be inter-culturally competent in international business activities the business practitioners should be equipped with the knowledge and cognitive ability about the counterparts' culture, business culture and professional culture. They should know themselves (culture, communication style, cultural identity), the counterparts (culture, communication style, cultural identity) and the communication rules of certain communication settings.

The behavioral ability is also stressed (Grosse, 2001, 2010; Johnson, et al., 2006; Matveev & Nelson, 2004; Ang, et al., 2007; Yoshida, et al., 2013). The explicit behaviors are important indicators of intercultural competence which include the linguistic competence such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating, non-speech skills, interpersonal skills and operating skills of modern communication media.

The factors such as intercultural attitude, awareness and empathy are considered important in business personnel's intercultural competence (Grosse, 2001, 2010; Johnson, et al., 2006; Yoshida, et al., 2013). Positive attitude and awareness are intangible but important dimension of intercultural competence. The positive attitude includes open-mindedness, multi-perspective, willingness to accept change, non-discrimination, reflection, free from stereotypes (Grosse, 2001), self-awareness and cultural difference awareness (Yoshida, et al., 2013).

In addition, the motivation in intercultural communication was also emphasized by Ang, et al. (2007) and Kupka, et al. (2009). In Kupka, et al.'s study, the three dimensions of intercultural communication motivation are intercultural anxiety, intercultural trust and intercultural self-efficacy.

The scholars' viewpoints about the business practitioners' inter-cultural competence can be summarized as follows. The cognitive ability includes the communicators' knowledge on culture, language, business, specific business setting, the counterpart's standpoint and attitude, empathy. The behavioral dimension includes the inter-personal skills, the linguistic skills and the non-verbal skills. The attitudinal dimension includes getting rid of ethnocentrism and stereotypes, putting the feet in the other's shoes, patience and tolerance to cultural differences etc. Many researchers specifically stress the knowledge on the features of business context (Bargiela-Chiappini, et al., 2003; Bargiela-Chiappini, & Nickerson, 2003; Grosse, 2001; Varner, 2000; Yoshida, et al., 2013). Some propose the importance of certain aspects such as personal attributes (Johnson, et al., 2006), meta-cognition cultural intelligence and motive cultural intelligence (Ang, et al., 2007) and promoting team effectiveness and dealing with cultural uncertainty (Matveev, et al., 2004).

### ***Intercultural Business Communication Competence***

Varner and Beamer (2014) are two of the few scholars who stress the importance and necessity of “intercultural business communication competence”. Although they don’t provide a clear competence model, they propose a five-step foundation for successful intercultural business communication. The first step is to know oneself in communication. To communicate effectively the communicators should take a self-analysis and have self-awareness and understanding. The second step is the understanding and acceptance of differences. The “acceptance of differences” involves learning what motivates others and how other cultural priorities are reflected in the counterparts’ behaviors, attitudes and values. The third step is to challenge the gained knowledge, avoid stereotypes about others’ cultures and stay curious and flexible towards other cultures. The fourth step is to reflect about the success and failures of communication activities. The final step is enacting the knowledge about a different culture. In summary, an effective and appropriate intercultural business communicator should have cognitive ability to know himself, the cultural differences and reflect about what he has learned. The attitudinal or affection dimension is also important: the communicator should be tolerant and objective to the cultural difference and open-minded to the cultural variations and uncertainties in the real world. To behave in an acceptable and appropriate manner and put what one has learned about a culture into practice constitutes another important dimension of the communicative competence.

### ***Interpersonal Communication Competence Model by Zhang (2003)***

As a special interpersonal communication activity, the intercultural business communication takes place in the settings of international business through the face-to-face form or modern business communication media. The communication partners are business people with different cultural backgrounds and the goal of communication is to reach a business goal or establish or keep business rapport. The theory on interpersonal communication competence can shed some light on the study on intercultural business communication competence. Zhang’s Interpersonal Communication Competence Model (2003) is composed of three dimensions: communication skills (communication behavioral dimension), communication cognition (communication cognitive dimension) and communication propensity (communication motive dimension). The communication skills include the ability to send out and receive information. Communication cognitive ability is composed of the ability to know oneself, to know others and the communication situation. The communication propensity includes communication motivation, communication anxiety, trust and confidence.

### **Semi-Structured Interview**

In November of 2015, a semi-structured interview was implemented by the author with four experienced Chinese international business practitioners who discussed their opinions on what are the components of intercultural business communication competence. The authors draw a conclusion on the results of the interview. The intercultural business communication competence is composed of three dimensions: cognitive, affective and behavioral abilities. The cognitive ability is the ability to know the general cultural knowledge, business knowledge, industry knowledge, the other party’s corporate culture, communication rules, differences in communication styles, strategies of business communication and individual’s professional experience. The business communication strategy includes the strategy of negotiating prices, demonstrating and recommending corporate advantages, keeping business rapport with affective bond. As far as the affective ability is concerned, the international business practitioners should be client-oriented: knowing the clients’ needs, putting feet in the clients’ shoes, getting rid of the thinking and behaving

patterns of the native culture. Chinese international business interns are encouraged to speak out and speak up in the organizations' activities. The paralinguistic competence, including the mood and tone, and linguistic competence such as E-mail writing are very important intercultural business communication skills. The writers should keep the E-mails brief and effective based on the best knowledge and analysis of the counterpart's needs. The communicators should pay due attention to their non-verbal communication behaviors, which should not violate the counterpart's cultural taboos.

Based on the literature review and the semi-structured interview, the author proposes a theoretical model of intercultural business communication competence (IBCC), see Figure1.

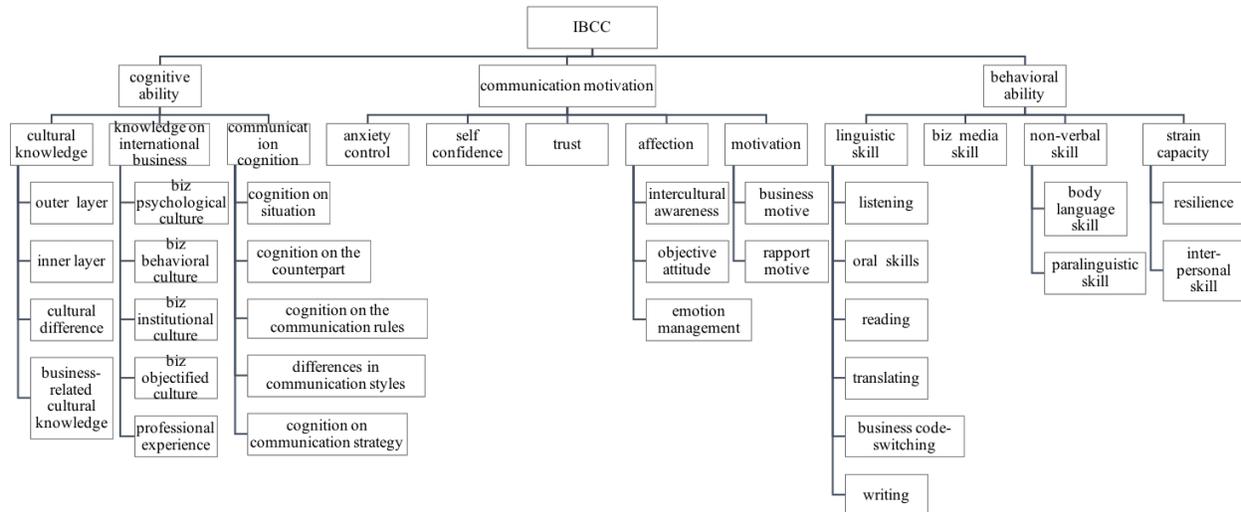


Figure 1. A Theoretical Model of Intercultural Business Communication Competence (IBCC)

### Conclusion

Based on the literature review on the international business practitioners' intercultural competence, the model of inter-personal communication competence and a semi-structured interview with Chinese international business practitioners, the authors proposed a three-dimension theoretical model of intercultural business communication competence. This theoretical model serves as a better understanding on a different, new construct of intercultural business communication competence compared with intercultural medical, technical communication competence and other intercultural professional communication competences and a framework for further exploratory and confirmatory study facilitated by statistical method.

### Acknowledgement

This research was funded by Guangdong Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Science "thirteen five" project (GD16XWW26).

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### **Biography**

**Professor Dejin Xu** received his PhD in English from Peking University in 2003 and finished his post-doctoral research at Beijing Normal University in 2007. He is currently professor of English in the School of Foreign Studies at Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangzhou, China. Before joining Sun Yat-Sen, he served as professor of English and associate dean of School of English Studies at University of International Business and Economics (UIBE) in Beijing, China. At UIBE, he also served as a team leader in the humanities section of the national Business English teaching team, director of the Beijing Liberal Arts Comprehensive Autonomous Learning Center, and director of Beijing Innovation Base for Business English Talents. He has published 4 monographs, over 20 textbooks, and more than 40 research articles in national and international journals.

**Jing Jiao** is a lecturer in the School of Economics and Management of Shanxi University, Taiyuan, Shanxi, where she teaches undergraduate business English, intercultural business communication for the majors of international economy and trade. Her PhD is from the University of International Business and Economics and her BA and MA are from Shanxi University. She is also an intercultural trainer of The Intercultural Communication Institute in USA and consultant and business English trainer for management consulting companies. Her research has focused on cultural industry, soft power theory, cultural capital theory, the measurement and assessment of intercultural business communication competence. She has published about ten articles on these topics and two translated works (Chinese to English) on the culture of the ancient Pingyao and the Jin merchants of Chinese Qing Dynasty. Jing Jiao is also the recipient of several research grants on the study of business English, cultural products and cultural industry. She received the Outstanding Key Research Project Award granted by Shanxi Social Science Research Association in 2013.

***Keynote Speech III***  
**On Construction of Faculty Team of Cross-Border E-commerce**  
**for the Business English Undergraduate Program:**  
**A Case Study of Xinhua College of Sun Yat-sen University**

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**[Abstract]** *The on-line silk road developed along with the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. The establishment of bonded areas of various localities has further promoted the rapid development of cross-border e-commerce in China, which particularly has injected new vigor to the conventional manufacturing industry in Dongguan. However, the lack of cross-border e-commerce talents has aroused the concerns of business enterprises as well as universities. A stable and high-quality cross-border e-commerce faculty is a prerequisite for cultivating talents qualified for current society. Taking the Business English Undergraduate Program of Xinhua College of Sun Yat-sen University as an example, this paper analyzes the status quo of the cross-border e-commerce faculty in terms of their teaching and scientific research abilities. Based on the analysis, this paper suggests that linguistic teachers should be aware of the crisis and realize self-upgrading through communication with teachers of other majors and experts from enterprises, and that universities should formulate strategies to strengthen cooperation with enterprises in order to develop a qualified faculty of cross-border e-commerce.*

**[Keywords]** *cross-border e-commerce; school-enterprise cooperation; teaching capability; research capability*

### **Introduction**

In 2008, a world-wide financial crisis changed the layout of the world economy, as well as the foreign trade status of Dongguan as “One of the World’s Largest Manufacturing Centers” and “World’s Largest Manufacturing Base for Export Products”. With the coming of the “Tide of Bankruptcy”, the overall profits of the manufacturing industry shrank and the year-on-year growth of economy slowed down. Dongguan is trying to elbow through a “Bottleneck”. In recent years, the cross-border e-commerce (hereinafter referred to as the “Cross-border E-commerce”) has shown great potential in development due to the growth of mobile intelligent terminals, the popularity of the internet and the convenience of payment. According to the Business Department of Dongguan, the volume of cross-border e-commerce reached 14.3billion RMB, an increase of 680% (*Nanfang Daily*, 2018). Liu Zhuo, Secretary-General of Dongguan Industry and Business Development Association commented that the current universities can hardly train qualified talents for Cross-border E-commerce enterprises; meanwhile, the local owners of foreign trade enterprises have a tendency to employ graduates from second-tier universities or third-tier colleges with geographical limitations, since students at that level of education are more content, stable and willing to start their career step by step (Song, 2017). According to the *Report on Cross-border E-commerce Talents in China* (2017), enterprises with more foreign trade are in greater need of talents with comprehensive capabilities such as

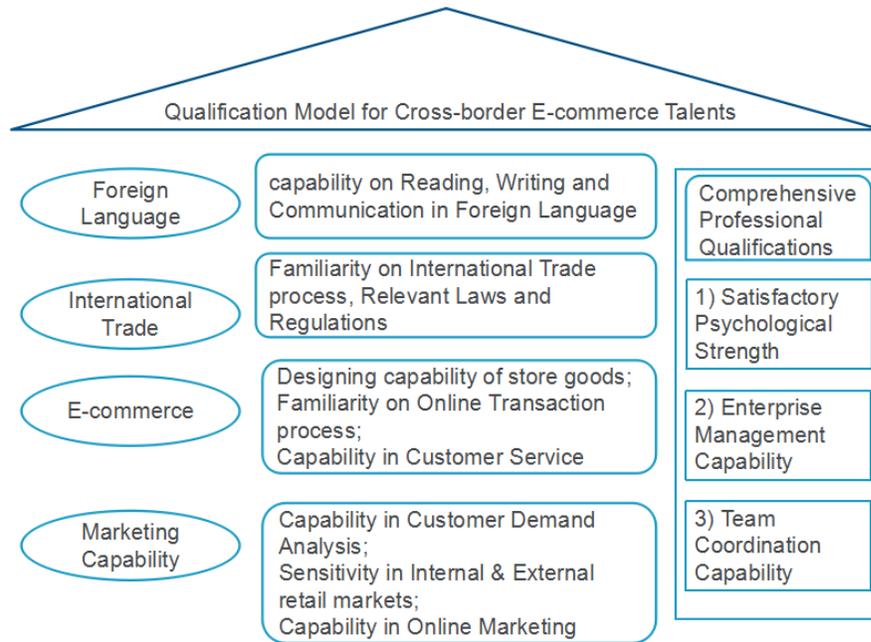
foreign languages and platforms. For enterprises whose foreign trade accounts for over 60%, 62.5% of such enterprises have put great importance on foreign language capabilities and 42.0% have placed it on talents with comprehensive capabilities. Foreign languages are especially important in cross-border e-commerce. The Xinhua College of Sun Yat-sen University, as an independent college, is located in Machong of Dongguan and shall make full use of its geographical advantages and its strengths of foreign language to seize the opportunity to train more talents in cross-border e-commerce.

Professional education is indispensable for training qualified cross-border e-commerce talents. Roger (2004), an American educator, felt that the design of discipline should be matched with and supported by teachers once it meets social or market demand. It is impossible to train students required in markets through divisions of discipline in a university if the teacher is of no market awareness.

By considering the actual needs of enterprises in Dongguan and the requirements as prescribed in *National Standards for Undergraduate Teaching Quality of Business English Major in Institutions of Higher Learning*, the ideal faculty team of cross-border e-commerce in Business English Major shall include those with educational background either in linguistics or business disciplines or those with industrial experience, with a proportion of these three kinds of people at about 6:3:1 (Chen, & Wang, 2009). In China, there are few relevant studies over business English teachers and even less research on teachers for cross-border e-commerce. Search results of “Cross-border E-commerce Teachers” on cnki.net only included 49 essays, all of which were published during the period of 2015 to 2017. Since 2015, based on the design of discipline for cross-border e-commerce talents, the Xinhua College of Sun Yat-sen University has started the construction of such a faculty team and achieved preliminary results, while still facing tremendous challenges. This study is mainly about three aspects, i.e. the status quo of teachers of cross-border e-commerce in business English major, the problems to be solved, and the model for future development.

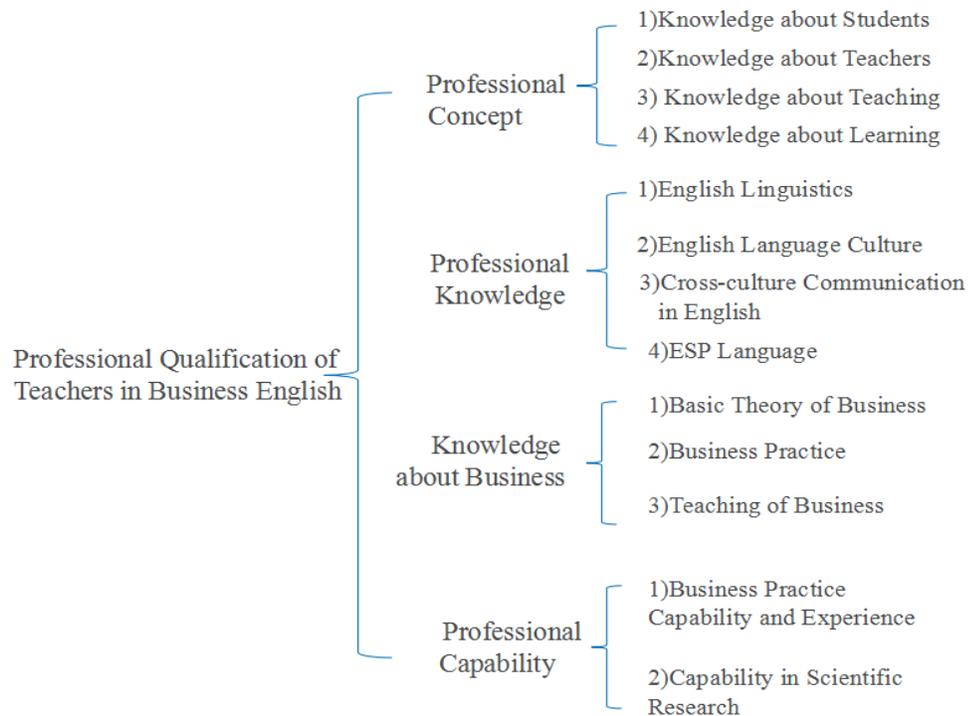
### **Theoretical Framework**

Su Man (2015) randomly selected 50 cross-border e-commerce enterprises for investigation (see Table 1), and provided that talents in such area should possess the capacity of foreign languages, international trade, e-commerce and market promotion. And enterprises prioritize on their communication ability, familiarity of online transactions, capability of reading and writing in foreign languages and online marketing. The training of talents relies on the professional teaching of teachers. Therefore, the cross-border e-commerce teachers shall have a mastery of foreign languages and knowledge and skills in international trade, e-commerce and market promotion.



**Figure 1. Qualification Model for Cross-Border E-commerce Talents**

Guo Guihang and Li Dan (2015) provided qualifications of teachers in Business English major, i.e. professional concept, professional knowledge, business knowledge and professional expertise (see Table 2).



**Figure 2. Professional Qualification of Teachers in Business English**

Considering the demand for training the professional talents of cross-border e-commerce and the fundamental quality of teachers in Business English, the authors believe that a teacher in e-commerce

should possess the following features: 1) the teachers in Cross-border E-commerce Programs (e.g. Market Promotion, E-commerce, and International Trade, etc.) should have an educational background from excellent foreign universities and a powerful capability in bilingual or English-only teaching; 2) the teachers in English (linguistics and culture) should have rich experience in English teaching and sufficient knowledge about cross-border e-commerce, and the teachers in practice programs should have rich experience in cross-border e-commerce.

## **Status Quo of Cross-border E-commerce Faculty in Business English Major**

### ***Fundamental Information***

At present, we have 35 teachers in the Business English Department, the proportion of male and female teachers is 17% and 83%. Teachers above 50 years old account for 8.6%, and teachers with a Master degree or above account for 100%. Three teachers have a professorship and linguistic background; lecturers account for 34% and assistants - 57.1%. Teachers with overseas learning experience and a Master degree of Economy and Management account for 17%; those with undergraduate degrees in Business English and Master degrees in English in foreign countries account for 22.8%; those with only language and culture educational background account for 60%; three teachers enjoy practical experience in cross-border e-commerce, accounting for 8.6%. In line with the qualification of cross-border e-commerce talents summarized and collected by Su Man, the teachers should have knowledge of foreign languages, international trade, e-commerce and market promotion. Currently, 17% of our teachers in Business English major enjoy education background of international trade and market promotion, and 8.6% are familiar with platform operation and sensitive to markets. What is lacking is the capability of designing goods in e-commerce stores, which is now being solved through optional courses taught by teachers from other departments.

### ***Teaching Capability***

Currently, our department, in light of the demand for talents in cross-border e-commerce, has designed such programs as Practice and Communication in Cross-border E-commerce, Online Marketing, Consumer Psychology, International Commercial Law, Correspondence, International Business Negotiation, Cross-cultural Communication and Etiquette, Photography and Image Editing. Guo Guihang and Li Dan (2015) believe that teachers of Business English should have the following knowledge about business, including fundamental theoretical knowledge of business, practical knowledge of business and teaching methods. Currently, among all of our teachers of cross-border e-commerce in Business English department, 17% of them are awarded with a Master degree in Economy and Management and are able to interact with students in class by citing real-world cases. These teachers should be able to explain the theory in classes while referring to practice in cross-border e-commerce, thus realizing more vivid and direct results and promoting the combination of theory and practice. Some of our teachers, although having Master Degree in Economy and Management, have insufficient experience in cross-border e-commerce. Their capability in terms of business practice should be enhanced in order to strengthen students' comprehensive ability and competitiveness. Meanwhile, as an independent secondary university, the students suffer from a relatively unsatisfactory capability in English language. In 2015, only 43% Business English majors passed TEM-4, which makes it difficult to promote English-only or bilingual teaching. Then, teachers are required to have sufficient teaching methods to explain business subjects while practicing students' language skills in an

effort to realize teaching goals with suitable learning methods and materials and keep improving teaching capability.

### ***Capability of Scientific Research***

Guo Guihang and Li Dan (2015) believe that the professional expertise of Business English teachers should include the practical experience and research capability in business. Among all of our teachers in Business English major, 8.6% have practical experience, and 11.4% have experience in management of national trade. Teachers with such experience can better design tasks of practice, help more team members to participate and cultivate their team-teaching awareness. They provide active guidance for students in the National Business English Contest and have received preliminary results. However, their research ability is still insufficient. Though we are a pacesetter in this regard, the teacher emphasize more on the application of languages in the business environment and lack experience in the practice of business. Teachers with linguistic background are weak in business and are focusing more on literature and languages. At the same time, teachers with business background are incapable in terms of academic research. Until now, there have only been two papers about cross-border e-commerce published by our teachers.

### **Suggestions for Improving Qualification of Teachers of Cross-border E-commerce in Business English Undergraduate Program**

We have many young teachers with weak academic research ability and heavy teaching workloads. On average, they spend 16 hours on classroom teaching. Therefore, apart from their own efforts, various relevant policies of our university should be established to effectively improve their teaching and scientific research capabilities.

### ***The Linguistic Teachers Awareness of the Crisis and Realizing Self-Upgrading***

Teachers with only linguistic background must be aware of crisis in an effort to cope with the pressure and impetus created in the process of self-transformation and self-improvement. Now, such teachers are being threatened, considering the demand of social enterprises and the universities.

Many universities have started to squeeze English programs from 8 to 4 credits, cutting the demand for such teachers. Many professions are now opening unique English programs by taking advantage of their own faculty resources. These teachers have systematic business knowledge, overseas experience or the opportunity for learning English on the job, so, their capability in bilingual teaching is gradually improved. They have more potential compared with those linguistic teachers who have no knowledge about business. All of these factors result in a shrinking of demand for linguistic teachers. The linguistic teachers must be aware that they will lose jobs if they do not upgrade their knowledge.

### ***Integration of Resources, Communication of Teachers from Various Universities***

Teachers in foreign language colleges, international trade and management colleges can communicate with each other and learn from each other. Colleges can encourage teachers of foreign language to participate programs of international trade and management on a regular basis by the way of converting certain amount of teaching hours. Therefore, linguistic teachers can obtain some business knowledge in a relatively short period of time. The business programs in the college of foreign languages and the bilingual teaching programs in the colleges of international trade and management can be jointly completed by two teachers from different colleges, from which the linguistic teachers can learn some professional knowledge of business, enrich their ways of teaching and give insight to scientific research.

### ***Stipulating Favorable Policies to Train Young Teachers as Planned***

The most convenient way to settle the problem of teachers with double qualifications and double degrees is to recruit teachers by following National Standards of Teaching Quality for Undergraduate Business English Majors. But, talents with such capability are reluctant to become teachers due to unsatisfactory remuneration. Even though there are some who are willing to stay, they have more chances to hop jobs. But, the stability of the faculty is quite important to the development of a major. Therefore, training of existing teachers should be emphasized. Though it is hard to receive results in the short term, they are more loyal to university and the cycle of return is longer.

The university should stipulate plans for sending key linguistic teachers to other countries for training in order to help them learn more authentic language and gain a better understanding of culture of the target countries. TCL's acquisition of THOMSON company of France ending in failure, and Lenovo's acquisition with IBM of America in 2005 developing prosperously prove that culture is crucial in the process of Merger and Acquisitions of enterprises, particularly cultural shocks in overseas investment that mainly result from difference in culture and communication. Similar problems are also common in the development cross-border e-commerce. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the culture of target countries. The language is a media of culture, which means the teachers in conventional language teaching may enhance their study in cultures. Previously, the cross-culture teaching is mainly about daily communication instead of business communication. Therefore, the gap in this regard is huge.

The plan for visiting scholars and exchange programs should be stipulated. The Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press and Foreign Language Education Press will organize high level training classes in business English each year, and the universities should dispatch key young teachers to participate in the training. Every year, the Ministry of Education will determine the numbers of visiting scholars and the universities should work out relevant policies to encourage teachers to apply to study in other universities as visiting scholars. For example, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies will invite some visiting scholars majoring in business English, and the headquarter of Sun Yat-sen University will also invite many visiting scholars majoring in economy and trade. The visiting of scholars at nearby universities will not halt normal teaching and will not affect the welfare of teachers, which is a win-win selection. Through mutual visits, advanced teaching methods are introduced and corresponding professional knowledge is learned.

### ***Strengthening Cooperation between Universities and Enterprises***

An incentive mechanism should be established to encourage teachers (both teachers of linguistic programs and those with business background) to go out and cooperate with enterprises. Now, Machong of Dongguan as China's largest e-commerce base has attracted JD and Alibaba. Currently, we have five practice bases of cross-border e-commerce for our students majoring in Business English, and we have reached an agreement with Guangdong Cross-border E-commerce Co., Ltd. to organize "Customized Classes" and will send 1 to 2 teachers to learn on-site for one month. We cooperate with Shenzhen Puty Science and Technology Co., Ltd. and send 3 to 4 teachers to participate into the training program of "Cross-border E-commerce Communication" on a regular basis. We cooperate with Dongguan Deyongjia Textile & Garment Co., Ltd. to organize training programs in which our teachers are responsible for the training of business correspondence, negotiation and international etiquette. The teachers can collect first-hand information and apply this into their teaching. Each year, we will send 3 to 4 teachers for training. Such teachers are highly appraised by enterprises. Their programs, such as Business Writing and Cross-Culture Etiquette, have been

chosen among the top ten most popular programs by our students. Our teachers, through taking posts in enterprises, receiving training and lecturing the training, have accumulated much experience and materials for scientific research in this process, thus enriching the resources of cross-border e-commerce teaching and improving their scientific and research capability.

### Conclusion

Therefore, a stable and quality faculty of cross-border e-commerce in Business English Department is required to train talents with good employability to meet social demand. With regard to the academic background of our teachers in cross-border e-commerce, young teachers account for a majority of all faculty. They lack scientific and research capability and suffer from insufficient teaching experience. Therefore, we must rely on well-known universities in Guangdong, such as Guangdong University of Foreign Studies and Sun Yat-sen University, to train teachers with double degrees or enrich their teaching experience. And, we need to select our key teachers to receive training overseas and cultivate their cross-culture awareness of linguistic teachers to facilitate their better application of learning into their business English teaching. We must hold the chance of booming development of e-commerce in Dongguan and take full use of the advantages of Machong as China's largest e-commerce base to train qualified cross-border E-commerce teachers through comprehensive cooperation between universities and enterprises.

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## Biography

**Professor Guihang Guo** is Professor in accounting and Dean of School of English for International Business (SEIB) at Guandong University of Foreign Studies. He is a CIMA member, Vice Director of the Business English Teaching Advisory Board under the Ministry of Education, Vice Director and Secretary General of China Association of International Business English, Vice Director of Guangdong Provincial Business English Teaching Advisory Board, Executive Member of the English for Specific Purposes Committee affiliated to China Association for Comparative Studies of English and Chinese, and Advisor of China National Business English Training and Testing Center. In 2009, he was awarded the title of “Nan Yue Excellent Teacher” by the Guangdong Provincial Government. He has published more than 20 academic papers in domestic and overseas journals and more than 20 textbooks. He has completed a national accounting research project funded by the Ministry of Finance, one general program of National Social Science Fund, five projects on educational reforms funded by the Guangdong Provincial Government, and five applied research projects funded by business enterprises. In 2013, the course Accounting Principles, which was designed and offered by Professor Guo to the undergraduates, was awarded as one of the “Model English-instructed Courses in Chinese Universities” by the Ministry of Education and the “Best Open Course” by Guangdong Provincial Government. In 2015, his course Accounting (including financial and management accounting) offered to the MBA students was awarded by Guangdong Provincial Government as the “Model Course for Postgraduates Education”.

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# Dynamic Construction of Express Companies' Advertisements: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis Perspective

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*[Abstract]* Aiming to attract customers, the advertisements of express companies tend to employ various semiotic modes, such as sound, color and image. Since visual grammar can clearly represent the constructed semantic relations and the interaction between image elements, and multimodal metaphor can provide a comprehensive cognitive mechanism for the conceptualization of multimodal information, this paper applies them to analyze the dynamic construction of express companies' advertisements (ECA). The findings show that the combination of modes contributes to the realization of representational and interactive meanings of ECA. In regard to representational meaning, the narrative process and conceptual process have the potential to construct metaphors by the replacement of certain grammatical units or the substitution of conventional elements with concrete ones. As for interactive meaning, the metaphor that the image-viewer relation is camera positioning is built. Such dynamic construction of ECA can effectively attract viewers and help obtain good commercial interest.

*[Keywords]* dynamic construction; visual grammar; multimodal metaphor; express companies' advertisements

## Introduction

Modality or mode refers to the communicating channels and media that people perceive through different organs, which usually falls into 5 types: visual, auditory, smell, taste and touch. Information transfer nowadays is no longer confined to the single modality of written language, but also through the combination of modes like sound, color and image. The dynamic cooperation between these modes of communication can vividly visualize and meanwhile simplify the expression of meanings, bringing into existence various multimodal texts. Undoubtedly, commercial advertisements, with the function of information dissemination, persuasion, building image and simulating consumption, can be classified into this type of text (Torben, 1985). Commercial advertisements are discourses of strong practicality. In today's world of highly advanced commodity economy, advertisements are magic weapons for the merchants to defeat their enemies and catalysts for the sale of goods. Designers of advertisements take full use of sensory stimulation, such as vision and hearing to attract the attention of the potential customers, aiming to achieve the purpose of persuasion and promotion. Research into advertisement discourses so far have been focused on language features, rhetorical devices and translation, which tend to probe commercial advertisements from the perspective of structural linguistics, rhetoric and functional grammar. Studies on advertisements under the frame of multimodal discourse analysis are few and far between. Therefore, under the frame of visual grammar evolved from Halliday's Systemic-Functional Linguistics and the theory of multimodal metaphor, this paper discusses the meaning construction of advertisements of famous world-wide express companies, thus, in turn, proves the massive explanatory power of multimodality theory in the analysis of advertising discourses.

## Multimodal Discourse Analysis

The rapid development of science and technology demands that we should have a systematical thought on meaning construction. It is insufficient to only focus on language while ignoring other semiotic resources. Halliday's Systemic-Functional Grammar (2001) made great contributions to the establishment of social semiotics and stirred many researchers to penetrate other semiotic modes other than language. Grammar of visual design which was proposed by Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) and multimodal metaphor by Forceville (1996) are eminent representatives that stretch Systemic-Functional Grammar into multimodal discourse.

### *Visual Grammar*

The main idea of visual grammar is applying the three metafunctions of language presented by Halliday to visual communication. In visual communication, image and other visual modes can represent objects and their relations in the world. The three metafunctions of language in Systemic-Functional Grammar are extended to three brand-new functions of images: representational meaning, interactive meaning and compositional meaning. The present research into multimodal advertisements of express companies will take representational meaning and interactive meaning as the main aspects. It is believed that the analysis of image from the perspective of visual grammar is beneficial to the overall understanding of texts and messages transferred by images.

**Representational meaning.** In the eyes of Kress & Leeuwen (2006), the images which belong to the semiotic edifice are endowed with representational meaning, representing objects and relevant relations in the world. The representational meaning has been further divided into two categories: narrative process and conceptual process. Narrative process refers to the process that participants connected by a vector are doing something. Conceptual process is a more stable process which represents participants in terms of their types, classes or structures. What distinguishes them is that conceptual process contains no vector at all. Narrative process is a dynamic process that can be classified into an action process, reactional process, speech process and mental process. Conceptual Process can be distinguished into three main processes: classificational process, analytical process and symbolic process.

**Interactive meaning.** Interactive meaning corresponds to the interpersonal function of language. As mentioned by Kress & Leeuwen (2006), social relation is bound to exist between the producer of a sign or complex sign, the reviewer, and the object represented. There are two kinds of participants involved in an image: the represented participants and the interactive participants. The former refers to people, places and things depicted in the image. The latter includes people who transfer information through the image, namely designers and viewers. There are three kinds of relationships between represented participants and interactive participants: the relationship among represented participants, the relationship between represented participants and interactive participants, and the relationship among interactive participants.

### *Multimodal Metaphor*

Metaphor, as an abstract mode of thinking, not only occurs in words, but also can be represented by other semiotics like image and color. Forceville's *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising* (1996) initiated multimodal analysis of metaphor in the field of cognitive linguistics. Multimodal metaphor is considered a specific manifestation of conceptual metaphor whose target and source are represented in more than one mode, simultaneously. Forceville (2009) claims that multimodal metaphor refers to "a metaphor whose target and source are exclusively or predominantly rendered in different modes/modalities" (Forceville, 2009, p. 24). Multimodal metaphor can be divided into different types in terms of different standards. One

of the most frequent varieties is the type combining a pictorial and a written term. According to Forceville, a multimodal metaphor can only function if the perceived source domain is recognized and evokes one or more connotations. In this way, meaning integration of diversified modes becomes possible (2009).

Visual grammar and multimodal metaphor approach multimodal texts differently. A combination of these two methods can make the meaning explanation more comprehensive and convincing.

### **The Dynamic Construction of Express Companies' Advertisements**

Express companies have played a vital role in our daily lives. The advertisements of express companies deserve much attention, while an analysis of only one single mode will not sufficiently interpret the complete meaning conveyed by these advertisements. Thus, a multimodal discourse analysis will be of great help.

#### ***Research Methodology***

This study built a corpus of 17 advertisements, which were all from a famous website of pictures Huaban (<http://huaban.com/>). The selection of these advertisements followed certain principles. Firstly, these advertisements were exquisitely and imaginatively designed with reasonable matching of images and words, manifesting to full maturity the essence of advertisements of express companies. Additionally, all these advertisements were designed by and for world-famous express companies, such as FedEx, Xpressdirect, and Sedex. Specifically, five of them were from FedEx, three from Sedex, four from Xpressdirect, four from DHL and one from DIKI. They used kinds of modes to reveal to potential customers their companies' service concepts and advantages.

A qualitative analysis approach was mainly applied in the study. First of all, a comprehensive overview of the corpus was made to figure out the common use of diversified modes in the advertisements, especially words and pictorial image. Then, based on the theories of visual grammar and multimodal metaphor, further study was conducted to analyze how representational meaning and interactive meaning are realized with the dynamic integration of different modes and how metaphors work in this process. Examples from the corpus were chosen to be analyzed in detail, and are named in the order in which they appear in the paper.

#### ***Realization of Representational Meaning***

The most fundamental function of express companies' advertisements is to convey certain information to the audience and attract them to the express service, therefore they are undoubtedly full of rich representational meanings that can be realized through narrative process and conceptual process. And in these processes, especially in the narrative process, representational multimodal metaphors are sometimes constructed which definitely can be deemed as a unique and effective way of meaning expression.

**Realization of representational meaning in narrative process.** A qualitative analysis of the advertisements collected shows that their representational meanings are usually realized in the narrative process and in the meaning construction process, and the role of circumstance of setting should not be ignored. Based on the explanation of image by visual grammar, it can be figured out that most advertisements of FedEx used the narrative process to achieve representational meaning while differences still exist in the number of vectors and in the sub-types of the process. In some of the advertisements, representational meanings are realized with only one vector, whereas in another, two vectors coexist. In some, representational meanings are realized through the dynamic construction of an action process,

whereas in another, a reactional process. And some of the advertisements used the action process, and simultaneously, the reactional process. Advertisement 1 has been illustrated to support this point.

Advertisement 1 (Huaban, Ad 1, 2018) is interesting in that it depicts a courier from FedEx riding a child's bicycle in order to make a prompt delivery of a package and a child, looking at the courier's cap, who is the owner of the bicycle. The representational meaning is realized through the action process and the reaction process. In the action process, the courier is the actor and his eye line is the vector, while this is also a non-transactional process since it is not clear where the vector points to. In the reactional process, the child is the reactor and the cap in his hands is the phenomenon.



*Advertisement 1.*

**Realization of representational meaning in conceptual process.** Analysis of the corpus reveals that representational meaning of express companies' advertisements can also be realized in the conceptual process. As mentioned before, the biggest difference between the narrative process and the conceptual process is that there is no vector in the conceptual process. It was found that in advertisements whose representational meaning were realized in conceptual process, the analytical process and symbolic process were usually involved. However, as to an image where surroundings count greatly, the analytical process was not effective enough to interpret the process of meaning construction. For instance, in Advertisement 2 (Huaban, Ad 2, 2018), the symbolic process demonstrates the representational meaning.



*Advertisement 2.*

What Xpressdirect wants to show to the viewers in Advertisement 2 (Huaban, Ad 2, 2018) is obvious with the slogan "Whatever it takes" on the center of the image. The theme of the advertisement is shown through the symbolic meaning of the image. Each truck is equipped with one parachute, which flies through the sky and through the chain of mountains. The symbolic suggestive process has only one participant, which is the carrier. It cannot be interpreted as an analytical process, since in this kind of image, the details which are related to its surroundings have been emphasized. The symbolic process is not an expression of a specific moment; however, it is a generalized essence. Thus, the five trucks with parachutes could attract viewers' eyes and aid viewers to learn the slogan quickly: "Whatever it takes".

**Manifestation of representational multimodal metaphors.** Sedex and Xpressdirect have designed a series of advertisements to impress their potential customers. The following two groups of advertisements will explain how multimodal metaphors are constructed to express representational meaning. Owing to the limited space, the present study has just focused on the construction of multimodal metaphor in the narrative process. Usually, narrative patterns are concerned with three parameters: processes, participants and circumstances. When any of the three conventional factors is substituted, metaphor takes place. For instance, the substitution of a given participant will contribute to the achievement of a specific metaphor, which can be well displayed in Advertisement 3 (Huaban, Ad 3, 2018).



**Advertisement 3.**

This advertisement is from Sedex company. In the advertisement, there is no clear goal in terms of the representational meaning. However, it is very likely that viewers can infer that the goal is a glass. Multimodal metaphor is formulated by the missing image together with the symbol and the captions at the right bottom of the picture: SEDEX, “Trust us. We deliver it fast”. And the process of construction is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Representational Multimodal Metaphor in Advertisement of Sedex**

	Source domain	Mapping entity	Target domain
Pictorial elements	The setting and the substituted images of a glass		The missing image of a glass, the trademark of Sedex and the slogan “Trust us. We deliver it fast”
Construction	glass	Things people need in life, such as containers and cookers	Sedex company and its service

With the help of the metaphor constructed by substituting the participant, the advertisement will leave a deep impression to the customers that Sedex company can provide prompt service and deliver anything people need in time.



**Advertisement 4.**

Advertisement 4 (Huaban, Ad 4, 2018) is from Xpressdirect company. In this advertisement, a multimodal metaphor is also constructed, and the construction process is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Representational Multimodal Metaphor in Advertisement of Xpressdirect**

	Source domain	Mapping entity	Target domain
Pictorial elements	Ship sailing in the rough sea with rolling billows		The freight truck of Xpressdirect company, the trademark of Xpressdirect and the slogan “Whatever it takes”.
Construction	ship	courage, omnipotence	Xpressdirect company and its service

Similarly, Advertisement 5 (Huaban, ad5, 2018) from DHL also adopts a multimodal metaphor to impress the viewers that DHL can arrive everywhere, even at a snowy mountain. The metaphor is constructed by the postbox on the left, which functions as the source domain, and DHL’s logo on the right, which serves as the target domain.



**Advertisement 5.**

**Realization of Interactive Meaning**

Images can also serve to establish relations between themselves and their viewers, through which the producer develops the interaction with the audience and motivates viewers’ attitude to the images. Interactive meaning in visual communication is usually realized through contact, social distance and attitude. For instance, in Advertisement 6 (Huaban, Ad 6, 2018), the farmer, as a represented participant, is looking directly at the viewers of the advertisement. It seems that he wants the viewers to share the same feelings: to share his joy of harvesting such a large cucumber and his correct choice of using DHL to deliver it.



**Advertisement 6.**

**Manifestation of interactive multimodal metaphors.** “Interactive meanings are visually encoded in a way that rest on the competencies shared by producers and viewers,” (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 115). The interactive meaning in visual grammar mainly relates to metaphorical image-viewer relation,

which is primarily demonstrated through camera positioning. Shot distance reveals social distance; a vertical angle reflects power relation and a horizontal angle shows involvement. Specifically, the main kinds of interaction meaning are summarized in Table 3. And the metaphor that the image-viewer relation is camera positioning is shown in Advertisement 7 (Huaban, Ad 7, 2018).

**Table 3. Interactive Meanings in Images**

<b>Image-viewer relation</b>	<b>Camera positioning</b>
Intimate/personal	Close shot
Social	Medium shot
Impersonal	Long shot
Viewer power	High angle
Equality	Eye-level angle
Represented participant power	Low-angle
Involvement	Frontal angle
Detachment	Oblique angle



**Advertisement 7.**

Advertisement 7 (Huaban, Ad 7, 2018) shows a white freight truck with the trademark of FedEx is moving along the road at a very good speed. What makes it interesting is that the second half of the car is not white but yellow which is widely taken as the color of cars from DHL express company. The sight of the picture will leave the viewers an impression that a car from FedEx is going faster than a DHL truck, which can even be confirmed by two small words below the trademark FedEx – “Always First”. With three aspects of camera positioning being taken into account, the picture uses a medium shot with an eye-level angle and frontal point of view. The medium shot represents a relatively close relation between the viewer and the image, while the eye-level angle and frontal point of view implies the symbolic contact between them.

### **Conclusion**

The present express companies’ advertisements all have a feature of multimodality: words and pictorial image. These two modes interact with each other in a certain way to realize the representational and interactive meanings of advertisements, and hence, provide vivid and comprehensive manifestation of multimodal metaphors. The representational meaning can be realized by the narrative process and the conceptual process, while the interactive meaning is constructed by camera positioning. Since this study just focused on the pictorial-verbal message, and did not take other modes into consideration, more studies should be made to probe more deeply into this subject.

### Acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge support from English Language and Literature, a Key Program in Guangdong Province, 2017; Quality Construction Project in Guangdong Province (SJ-JXTD2015-002) and The Research Team in South China Business College: The Association Project of Comparative Study of English and Chinese in the New Era (2017-298).

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# A Comparative Study of Thematic Progression Patterns of Chinese Famous Enterprises' Bilingual Profiles

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*[Abstract] With the rapid development of economic globalization, more and more domestic enterprises have plunged into the fierce international competition. To better popularize themselves, an increasing number of Chinese famous enterprises have added English versions to their enterprises' official websites. The subjects of this paper are the top 20 Chinese enterprises' bilingual profiles among the Global 2000, listed by the *Forbes* magazine. From the perspective of Thematic Progression Patterns, one of the subsystems of textual function of Systemic Functional Linguistics, this paper makes contrasts between source texts and target texts of 20 enterprises' profiles, so as to find out the similarities and differences on Theme and Thematic Progression Patterns. Finally, it puts forward some suggestions for Chinese enterprises on Chinese to English translation.*

*[Keywords] theme; rheme; thematic progression patterns; Chinese famous enterprises; bilingual profiles*

## Introduction

Currently, economic globalization is developing with a strong momentum. The cooperation between China and other countries all over the world is becoming increasingly frequent, and more and more domestic enterprises are plunging into the fierce international competition. To better popularize themselves, many Chinese famous enterprises are adding English versions to their enterprises' official websites, aiming at effectively informing foreign readers or customers of enterprises' information, so that good images can be established in the international arena, and the internationalization of enterprises will be promoted. From the perspective of text, enterprises' profiles have functions of conveying topic information, and attracting investors and customers. In order to make sure that the target text has the same functions as the source text, some translation strategies should be adopted. Scores of scholars at home and abroad have studied Thematic Progression Patterns, but study on translation strategies of enterprises' profiles is rare. This paper has selected the top 20 Chinese enterprises' bilingual profiles among the Global 2000 listed by *Forbes* magazine in 2015 as the research subjects, and makes some contrasts, so as to find out Chinese to English translation strategies of enterprises' profiles from the perspective of Thematic Progression Pattern.

## Theme and Rheme

Mathesius, one of the founders of the Prague School, first put forward definitions of Theme and Rheme. He pointed out that Theme is given information while Rheme is new information. Systematic functional linguistics represented by Halliday accept this pair of terms put forward by the Prague School, but have come up with different opinions (Zhu, Y., & Yan, S., 2001).

Halliday defines Theme from the perspective of function instead of distribution of constituents. Halliday (2004) thinks that Theme is a starting point of information, and that it is a constituent related to a clause and leads it. Rheme is the other constituent in a clause, transmitting the main information. Examples of Theme and Rheme can be seen as follows.

**Table 1. Examples of Theme and Rheme (Halliday, 2004)**

Theme	Rheme
My aunt	has been given that teapot by the duke.
That teapot	the duke has given to my aunt.

In *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Halliday (2004) divides Theme into Simple Theme, Multiple Theme and Clausal Theme, according to the complexity of the sentence structures. According to Halliday, the fundamental difference between a Simple Theme and Multiple Theme is that the former possessing no internal structure cannot further be analyzed, while the later possesses internal structure and can be divided into Experiential or Topical Theme carrying experiential meta-function, Interpersonal Theme carrying interpersonal meta-function, and Textual Theme carrying textual meta-function. The Clausal Theme refers to the whole clause functioning as the Theme.

### **Thematic Progression Patterns**

Danes (1974) was the first person who put forward Thematic Progression Pattern theory. He divided Thematic Progression Patterns into five types: Simple Linear Pattern, Constant Theme Pattern, Derived Theme Pattern, Split Rheme Pattern, and Spring Theme Pattern. Xu Shenghuan (1982) came up with four types. Huang Yan (1985) put forward seven patterns. Huang Guowen (1988) summarized six types, and Hu Zhuanglin (1994) presented three types.

Kevin N. Nwogu (1989) conducted some research on medical texts. Hawes and Thomas (1996) selected editorials as a corpus from *The Times* and *Sun*, and then studied how different Thematic Progression Patterns are distributed in the two magazines. Peter Crompton (2004) established a corpus with 80 argumentations in order to find out the proportions of different Thematic Progression Patterns and the relations between Thematic Progression and Rheme Progression. Sade (2012) studied Thematic Progression Patterns in texts of Christian booklets. F. A. Marfuaty (2015) investigated thematic progression pattern of texts in the opinion section of *The Jakarta Post* so as to reveal those patterns and to relate them to the patterns of argumentative texts. Alvin P. Leong (2015) selected twenty biology-related research articles which were divided into units and analyzed them for topical themes. Zhu Yongsheng (1995) selected bank profiles as a research subject for studying Thematic Progression Patterns. Shen Weidong (1999) compared scientific and non-scientific texts.

Because of the minimal research on enterprises' profiles and the variety of Thematic Progression Patterns (hereinafter referred to as TPP), this paper applies five common Thematic Progression Patterns to studies Chinese famous enterprises' bilingual profile. The five types are Constant Theme Pattern (hereinafter referred to as CTP), Constant Rheme Pattern (hereinafter referred to as CRP), Simple Linear Pattern (hereinafter referred to as SLP), Alternative Pattern (hereinafter referred to as AP), and Irregular Theme Pattern (hereinafter referred to as ITP).

If the Theme of one clause equals the Theme of the next clause while the Rhemes are different, this is called Constant Theme Pattern. If the Rheme of one clause equals the Rheme of the next clause while the Themes are different, this is called a Constant Rheme Pattern. If the Rheme or part of the Rheme in a clause is chosen as the Theme of the subsequent clause, this is called a Simple Linear Pattern. If the Theme or part of the Theme in a clause is chosen as the Rheme of the subsequent clause, this is called an Alternative Pattern. If there is no obvious relation among the Themes and Rhemes of all clauses, then this is called an Irregular Theme Pattern.

## Methods

Quantitative research and qualitative research are applied in this paper. The specific definition and types of themes, rhemes, and Thematic Progression Patterns are chosen after the domestic and foreign researches on them are reviewed and compared. Based on these theories, further research is conducted.

The top 20 Chinese enterprises' bilingual profiles among Global 2000 listed in *Forbes* magazine were chosen to find the similarities and differences of theme choices and the similarities and differences of Thematic Progression Patterns. According to the contrastive statistics and analysis, this paper puts forward three major methods of Chinese to English translation of the enterprise's profile.

## Research Results and Analysis

### *Similarities and Differences of Theme Choices*

After comparing the statistics, this paper presents Table 2.

**Table 2. Similarities and Differences of Theme Choices**

Profile Type	Theme Statistics	Simple Theme		Multiple Theme	
		Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Source Text		396	90.00	44	10.00
Target Text		431	85.35	74	14.65

As can be seen in the table, there is similarity between Simple Theme and Multiple Theme of Source Text and Target Text. Namely, the proportion of the Simple Theme is higher than the Multiple Theme in two texts. The Simple Theme accounts for 90.00% in source texts, and it accounts for 85.35% in target texts. The causes can be analyzed from the function of the enterprise's profile and text type.

There are differences between the Simple Theme and the Multiple Theme of Source Text and Target Text. Namely, the Simple Theme of source text takes on a higher proportion than that of target text (the former accounts for 90.00% and the latter is 85.35%); the Multiple Theme of target text takes on a higher proportion than that of the source text: the former accounts for 14.65% and the latter is 10.00%). The statistics are caused by differences between Chinese and English. The syntactic feature of Chinese is Parataxis while the syntactic feature of English is Hypotaxis. Meanwhile, English is a subject-prominent language and Chinese is a topic-prominent language.

### *Similarities and Differences Between Simple Theme and Multiple Theme of Different Industries*

This paper studied 20 enterprises which are covered by ten industries: banking, oil production, telecommunications, insurance, construction, automobile, real estate, internet, household appliance and food. There are similarities between the proportions of Simple Theme and Multiple Theme of Source Texts and Target Texts. Namely, the proportion of the Simple Theme in two texts of each industry is higher than that of Multiple Theme, and the highest proportion of the Simple Theme in two texts is 100.00%, and the lowest proportions of the Simple Theme of source text and target text are 80.00% and 65.52%, respectively. Except for the internet and insurance industries, the Simple Theme in the source texts of other industries takes on a higher proportion than that of target texts. The results are caused by the publicizing function of profile text.

There are differences between the proportions of the Simple Theme and the Multiple Theme of source texts and target texts. In source texts, the industries with the highest proportion of Simple Theme are oil production and automobile, both of which account for 100.00%; in target texts, the industries with the highest proportion of the Simple Theme is automobile, accounting for 100.00% .

***Similarities and Differences of Thematic Progression Patterns of Source Text and Target Text***

Source texts’ TPP proportion order is: CTP> ITP > CRP > SLP > AP, and Target texts’ TPP proportion order is: CTP> ITP > SLP > CRP > AP. The detailed numbers and percentages can be seen as following table.

**Table 3. Similarities and Differences of Thematic Progression Patterns of Source Texts and Target Texts**

Text Type  Statistics  Pattern	Source Text		Target Text	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
CTP	56	51.85	77	36.84
CRP	33	30.56	30	14.35
SLP	16	9.52	38	18.18
AP	11	6.55	21	10.05
ITP	52	30.95	43	20.57
Total	168	100.00	209	100.00

As can be seen in the table, CTP has the highest proportion in the source texts and target texts, accounting for 51.85% and 36.84%, respectively; ITP has the second highest proportion in the source texts and target texts, accounting for 30.95% and 20.57%, respectively; AP has the lowest proportion in the source texts and target texts, accounting for 6.55% and 10.05%, respectively. The results are caused by the vocative function of the enterprises’ profiles and the differences in Chinese and English.

In the source texts, the proportion of CRP is higher than that of SLP, accounting for 30.56% and 9.52%, respectively; in the target texts, the proportion of SLP is higher than that of CRP, accounting for 18.18% and 14.35%, respectively.

***Similarities and Differences of Thematic Progression Patterns of Different Industries***

In the source texts, except for the internet and automobile industry, other industries’ CTP proportion is the highest, and the highest industry accounts for 50.00% and the lowest accounts for 25.00%. In the target texts, all industries’ CTP proportion is the highest, and the highest industry accounts for 63.64% and the lowest accounts for 25.00%. The main reasons can be also analyzed from two aspects, namely, the function and text type of the enterprises’ profile, and the obvious contrast between Chinese and English.

In the source texts, the industries possessing the highest proportion of CTP are oil production and household appliance, both of which account for 50.00%. In the target texts, the industry possessing the highest proportion of CTP is household appliance, accounting for 63.64%. In the source texts, the industry possessing the highest proportion of CRP is food, accounting for 30.77%, and in the target texts, the industry possessing the highest proportion of CRP is also food, accounting for 26.67%. In the source texts, the industry possessing the highest proportion of SLP is internet, accounting for

27.27%, and in the target texts, the industry possessing the highest proportion of SLP is automobile, accounting for 30.00%. In the source texts, the industry possessing the highest proportion of AP is insurance, accounting for 20.00%, and in the target texts, the industry possessing the highest proportion of AP is oil production, accounting for 28.57%. In the source texts, the industry possessing the highest proportion of ITP is oil production and automobile, both of which account for 50%; in the target texts, the industry possessing the highest proportion of ITP is insurance, accounting for 37.50%.

### Conclusion and Implication

Based on the theory of Thematic Progression Pattern, this paper systematically studied and analyzed the top 20 Chinese enterprises' bilingual profiles among the Global 2000 listed in *Forbes* magazine, and the major findings are summarized as follows: More Simple Themes are applied in both source texts and target texts, but the former has a higher proportion than the latter. More Simple Themes are applied in two texts of each industry. Except for the internet and insurance industry, other industries' proportions of Simple Theme of source texts are higher than that of target texts. Oil production and the automobile industry account for the highest proportion on Simple Theme of both texts. Source texts' TPP proportion order is: CTP > ITP > CRP > SLP > AP; Target texts' TPP proportion order is: CTP > ITP > SLP > CRP > AP. In source texts, except for the internet and automobile industries, other industries are more likely to apply CTP; in target texts, all industries are more likely to apply CTP. Moreover, the industry processing the highest proportion of any TPP varies from each other.

Based on the contrastive statistics and analysis, this paper puts forward three major methods of Chinese to English translation of enterprise's profile. First, various translation strategies, such as literal translation and liberal translation can be applied. Second, in the textual level, one should pay attention to textual coherence and cohesion. Third, a translator should understand the contrast between Chinese and English, such as hypotaxis and parataxis and topic-prominent and subject-prominent features.

There are some suggestions for future research. First, more Chinese enterprises' profiles can be chosen for further research; second, more types of industries can be chosen; third, both Chinese and foreign enterprises' profiles can be selected to make a contrast of parallel texts. Last, both Chinese and foreign enterprises' profiles can be chosen as parallel texts to do research.

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# A Multimodal Discourse Study of Banners on E-Commerce Websites in Terms of Information

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*[Abstract] Banner ads on E-commerce websites offer information of new goods, best sellers, and promotions, etc., which aim to guide consumers to the webpage of the advertised products. Most multimodal studies of ad discourse take traditional printed ads rather than banners as research objects although in the linguistic sense, banners are also multimodal ad discourse being composed of text and images. Further, most multimodal studies of ad discourse focus on images rather than text. In this context, banners sampled from Walmart.com, Amazon.com, TMALL.COM, and JD.COM, are multimodally analyzed in terms of information to display the way in which text and images are connected. Meanwhile, consumers' intuition about the way in which images and text in a banner are connected is investigated to test the results of multimodal analysis of the sampled banners. The results of this study provide proof that consumers build relevance between images and text with the assistance of their carried information and process them as a whole rather than independently.*

*[Keywords] multimodal analysis; banner; text; images; information*

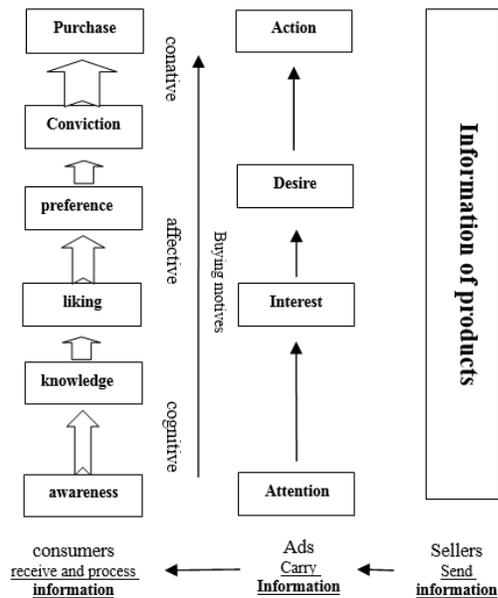
## **Introduction**

A banner is a rectangular-shaped graphic advertisement composed of both text and images (Kumar, 2015) and usually shows at the top and bottom of a webpage (Rodgers, & Thorson, 2000). Functioning just as traditional printed ads in newspapers and magazines, banners aim to inform and notify consumers about advertised products or events, arouse their interests, and guide them to the webpages of advertised products or events (Briggs, & Hollis, 1997). So far, few linguists have paid attention to or conducted the study of banners. Instead, linguists have shown great interest in the multimodal analysis of traditional printed ads, and a common feature of those multimodal analyses is that the text in ads has not been given as much emphasis as the images. In this context, Guan (2017) has employed a new discourse analysis approach and conducted a multimodal analysis of Chinese banners to demonstrate how images and text in banners are interrelated to fulfill the mission of advertising. To test Guan's (2017) finding, this paper employs the same analysis approach to analyze banners from both Chinese and English e-commerce websites, and meanwhile, investigates consumers' intuition about the way in which images and text are connected. First, the theoretical framework that Guan constructed in 2017 is reviewed and the analysis approach is described. Next, sampled banners are analyzed. Finally, the generality and the reliability of the new approach are discussed, based on the results of analysis of banners and reports of consumers' intuition investigation.

## **Relevant Literature**

According to the basic understanding that advertising is a type of communication aiming to persuade consumers to purchase advertised products (Arens, Weigold, & Arens, 2012, p. 11; Iyama, & Akpan, 2013) and that consumers' buying behavior is considered to be an ongoing process (Solomon, et al., 2006, p. 7), supported by the AIDA model, the Lavidge-Steiner model, buying motives, and Discourse

Information Theory (DIT), Guan (2017) constructed a theoretical framework to analyze banners in terms of discourse information.



**Figure 1. The Communicative Process between Sellers and Consumers through Ads** (Source: Guan, 2017)

This framework (see Figure 1) demonstrates that advertising is a communicative process. In this communicative process, sellers code information of products into ads to cast expectant cognitive, affective, and conative effects on consumers based on buying motives, and consumers decode the information of products carried by ads and decide whether to buy. When coding information into ads, designers follow the AIDA model, which identifies the three elements of a successful ad: *Attention*, *Interest* and *Desire* (Lewis, 1899); when decoding the information carried by ads, consumers follow the Lavidge-Steiner model and go through six progressive steps: *Awareness*, *Knowledge*, *Liking*, *Preference*, *Conviction* and *Purchase* (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). Since the mission of both text and images in ads is to convey information of the advertised products, it is theoretically possible to bridge images with text through their carried information. Furthermore, DIT argues that the information pattern of multimodal discourse can be analyzed based on the relevance between language and non-language discourse in multimodal discourse (Du, 2015). Therefore, the banners can be analyzed in terms of their macro-and-micro information structure. The key concepts involved in the multimodal analysis are described as follows.

#### ***Discourse Information Unit and Its Structure (Du, 2007)***

A discourse information unit is a proposition, which is the minimal and complete communicative meaning unit with a relatively independent structure. In terms of structure, an information unit can be a complete proposition or incomplete proposition. A complete proposition is a statement sentence that has a true value and can be analyzed directly; an incomplete proposition may be a statement sentence in which the subject term, predicate term or copula is absent, or may be not a statement sentence whose true value has to be decided based on contexts.

### ***Discourse Information Tree (Du, 2007)***

Macroscopically, discourse is hierarchically structured like an inverted tree. The tree is composed of only one kernel proposition that displays the central idea of discourse and functions like the root of the tree. Different types of information units at different levels support and develop the kernel proposition and function as the stem, branches or leaves of the tree.

### ***Discourse Information Elements***

Microscopically, an information unit is composed of information elements. There are three main types of information elements, which are PROCESS, ENTITY and CONDITION, and each type has its own subtypes. The PROCESS information elements relate to the predicate term of a proposition, ENTITY information elements involve the objects relating to a predicate term of a proposition, and CONDITION information elements indicate the conditions like location, time, or manner, etc., in which the process is going (Du, 2014, p. 140).

Guan's (2017) multimodal analysis of banners sampled from Chinese e-commerce websites shows that a banner is composed of three parts, which are text, presentation mode of text, and images, and these three parts are interconnected to arouse consumers' buying motives and guide consumers to click. The presentation mode of text helps to outline the information units of different levels, and images and information units are interrelated through their carried information. This type of interconnection, on the one hand, makes fewer and shorter information units possible and understandable; on the other hand, it makes the information carried by information units pictorial, which saves consumers' time and energy in processing information carried by the text, and as a result, makes it easier for such banners to trigger affective buying motives, cultivate positive feelings towards advertised products and guide consumers into conative stage.

On that basis, banners from English e-commerce websites are analyzed and consumers' intuition about the way in which images and text are connected is investigated in this study, which aims to test Guan's theoretical framework and its generality in terms of the way in which images and text are connected.

## **Methodology**

To ensure the typicality of samples, all the banners in this study (see Figure 2 and Figure 3) have been sampled on the same day from the homepages of two most welcome and visited English e-commerce websites, Amazon.com and Walmart.com, and two most welcome and visited Chinese e-commerce websites, JD.com and TMALL.com. The sampled English banners are analyzed along with 2 Chinese banners (see Figure 2). The multimodal analysis of banners involves the following three serial steps:

1. To describe the information structure of language discourse that is composed of text and presentation mode of text;
2. To build the connection between images and text;
3. To analyze the way in which images are connected with text.



Banner 1 (from JD.com)



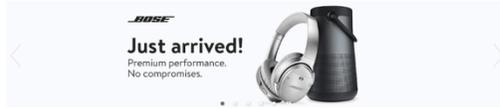
Banner 2 (from TMALL.com)



Banner 3 (from Amazon.com)



Banner 4 (from Amazon.com)



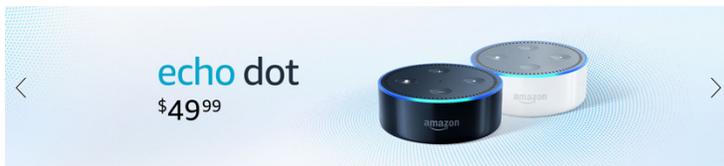
Banner 5 (from Walmart.com)



Banner 6 (from Walmart.com)

**Figure 2. Sample Banners I**

When text is analyzed, the position of each information unit in the information tree is decided by the chronological order in which it is processed. In practice, the level of every information unit is decided according to its space within the banner and the degree to which it is highlighted by color or typesetting. Generally speaking, the information units in the center of a banner and highlighted by color or the largest font size lie at the first level. Similarly, the information units at the second, third and fourth levels are decided in accordance with the space order from top to bottom and from left to right as well as font size from the largest to the smallest. The precedence order of the information units at the same level also follows the space order from top to down and from left to right. Take the banner in Figure 3 as an example, which was sampled from the homepage of Amazon. The language discourse in this banner contains two information units, “echo dot” and “\$49.99”. Based on their space and typesetting, “echo dot” lies at the first level and “\$49.99” lies at the second level.



**Figure 3. Sample Banner II (from Amazon)**

When an image is analyzed, it is related to the information units containing the same information as its carried information. Take the banner in Figure 3 as an example, the image of two echo dots on the right carries the information of what the advertised product is and looks like, which relates it with the information unit of “echo dot” announcing the advertised product.

Next, to investigate consumers’ intuition about the way in which images and text within a banner are connected, 170 consumers were invited to fill out a questionnaire based totally on their intuition. All consumers were undergraduate students majoring in English from a university in China, 151 of whom were female. In the survey, all subjects were required to first tell whether the very first thing to catch their attention was text or an image, and then to sequence information units and images in the chronological order that they processed them. About 15 seconds was given for the subjects to process each banner. Among 170 returned questionnaires, 158 questionnaires were valid that included 146 female and 12 male subjects.

### **Analysis Results and Discussion**

Multimodal analysis of all sampled banners shows that the discourse information pattern of banners from English e-commerce websites is identical to that of banners from Chinese e-commerce websites. First, the

main images in 4 banners from English e-commerce websites are all connected with the first-level information units (see Table 1). Secondly, most information units in the banners from English e-commerce websites are also incomplete propositions just like those in banners from Chinese e-commerce websites illustrated in Guan’s (2017) study. These incomplete propositions are supplemented into complete ones with the information carried by their neighbor or subordinate information units and images.

**Table 1. Images and Their Connected Information Units for Sample Banners II**

	<b>Images</b>	<b>Connected UUs</b>	<b>Level of UUs</b>
<b>Banner 1</b>	treadmill	周年店庆 (annual business anniversary)	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Banner 2</b>	figure	惊喜女装 (surprising women clothing)	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Banner 3</b>	three echo dots	echo dot; BUY 3 SAVE \$20	1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Banner 4</b>	cloud cam	amazon cloud cam	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Banner 5</b>	headphone & speaker	Just arrived!	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Banner 6</b>	a shining coin and a money can	Pickup Discount to save even more	1 <sup>st</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup>

NOTE: UU stands for information unit

For instance, in Banner 1 in Figure 2, the ENTITY element clarifying the exact advertised product is absent in the first-level information unit “周年店庆” (annual business anniversary), but through being connected with the image of a girl jogging on a treadmill, the advertised product of the announced promotion, the treadmill, is displayed. In Banner 2, the image of the figure is connected with the first-level information unit “惊喜女装” (surprising women clothing) to make the advertised product, women clothing, pictorial, which concretizes the abstract concept of women clothing and makes the delivered message easier to be processed and consumers’ affective buying motives easier to be triggered.

Similarly, the first-level information units “echo dot” in Banner 3 and “amazon cloud cam” in Banner 4 contain only ENTITY information elements, clarifying advertised products, with which the images of advertised products are connected. This image in Banner 3 is also connected with the ENTITY information element of the second-level information unit “BUY 3 SAVE \$20” to confirm the number that consumers have to buy in order to enjoy a special offer. In Banner 5, the first-level information unit “Just arrived!” makes an announcement without clarifying advertised products, but through being connected with the image of the headphones and speaker, the complete message is delivered that headphones and speakers have just arrived. In Banner 6, the image of a shining coin and a money can is connected first with the first-level information unit “Pickup Discount” and then with the information unit “to save even more” to convey the concept of discount and present a tempting picture of money-saving.

Table 2 displays the statistics from the questionnaire survey. The first row in Table 2 reports the percentages of subjects who related the main images of the sampled banners in Figure 2 with the first-level information units. It shows that over 80 percent of the subjects intuitively connected the main image in a banner with the first-level information unit. The data from the survey also display that the subjects process text, by and large, according to the spatial positions and the degree to which each information unit is highlighted by typographic methods as DIT assumes. As for the chronological order in which consumers process information units, the results from the questionnaire survey support the way in which information units are labeled. However, it is not always the first-level information unit that is designed to catch attention from consumers. The last two rows in Table 2 report the percentages at which

text and images in sampled banners are noticed at first sight. It is obvious that the attention-catcher in a banner may be either the first-level information unit or its connected image, which depends on both their spatial position and typography.

**Table 2. Statistics from Questionnaire Survey**

	<b>Banner 1</b>	<b>Banner 2</b>	<b>Banner 3</b>	<b>Banner 4</b>	<b>Banner 5</b>	<b>Banner 6</b>
<b>Image/Text</b>	84.4	91.1	80.0	90	85.6	81.5
<b>Text (%)</b>	73.9	26.1	9.9	5.6	28.0	76.4
<b>Image (%)</b>	26.1	73.9	90.1	94.4	72.0	23.6

As far as spatial position and typography are concerned, the analysis of the sampled banners demonstrates that an image or an information unit in the center tends to be noticed at first sight. Besides, the color contrast between an image/text and the background of a banner also greatly matters. Usually, the more strongly the color of an image or an information unit is contrasted with the background color the more attention it tends to catch. For instance, in Banners 1 and 6 in Figure 2, over 70 percent of the subjects noticed the first-level information units that were in the center and highlighted with bright colors contrasted with the background color. In Banners 3 and 4, over 90 percent of the subjects noticed the main images at first sight that are in the center, much bigger than the first-level information units and whose colors are contrasted with the background color more strongly than text does. In Banner 2, 73.9% of the subjects noticed the big main image, the figure, on the left at first sight whose color is strongly contrasted with the background color. In Banner 5, 72% of the subjects noticed the image on the right, a headphone and speaker, at first sight, and it may be due to its much larger size. The above results provide proof that consumers process text and images as a whole instead of separately, just as Guan’s (2017) study illustrates – that images function as elements of information units and work with their connected information units as a whole to fulfill the mission of advertising.

Generally, there are three ways in which images are connected with information units in banners. First of all, images may be the demonstration of advertised products and connect with the information units stating advertised products as they do in Sample Banners 2, 3 and 4. This type of combination gives consumers a more concrete impression of advertised products while notifying, and as a result, enhances the objectivity of the delivered messages and further strengthens the buying motives that information units aim to activate. Next, images may provide the information that some absent information elements are supposed to provide as they do in Sample Banner 5. This type of combination not only creates a more concrete impression of advertised products, but also makes shorter and stronger information units possible, which catch attention more easily. In addition, images may picturize the messages delivered by information units as they do in Sample Banners 2 and 6. This type of combination makes the static text and images live, which makes the delivered messages more convincing.

### **Summary**

Although banners as the most common, well-known and productive form of online advertising appear on every e-commerce website, they have not caught as much attention from linguists as traditional printed ads have done. As far as traditional printed ads are concerned, linguists, in their analyses, have not placed as much emphasis to the text as they have done to the images. In this context, a theoretical framework has been constructed to build the connection between text and images within a banner, which has been used to

analyze banners from Chinese e-commerce websites and proved that images do connect with text through their carried information.

To further test the generality of this theoretical framework, this study applies the same analysis method to the analysis of banners from English e-commerce websites, which is compared with the analysis of banners from Chinese e-commerce websites. To test the reliability of the findings, a questionnaire survey was conducted to investigate consumers' intuition about the way in which images and text are connected.

On one hand, this study summarizes the ways in which images may be connected with text in banners, and on the other hand, the results from the analysis and survey together provide evidence that text and images in a banner are indeed interrelated through their carried message and they should be analyzed as a whole. The theoretical framework is a practical tool to display such interrelation. For the future studies of banners, it is suggested that more banners from different types of websites of different languages be analyzed and eye-tracking equipment be employed to provide more objective view.

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# Discursive Construction of Chinese National Identity in Belt and Road Initiatives by American Mainstream Press

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*[Abstract] This paper examines how the Chinese national identity is constructed in The Washington Post against the background of One Belt One Road Initiatives using a discourse-historical approach. It is found that China is constructed negatively as an ambitious rising superpower, trying to rebuild the geopolitical order in Asia-Pacific region. The Washington Post attributes the reasons of the Belt and Road Initiatives to China's political and strategic motives to fight against U. S. rebalance toward an Asia-Pacific strategy, and this is threatening to America's leading role in the area. The negative discursive construction of the Chinese national identity reflects the growing concerns and worries of America and is determined mainly by the underlying ideology of America to protect its own national interests and international leadership.*

*[Keywords] discursive construction; Chinese image; Belt and Road Initiatives*

## Introduction

National identity refers to a set of ideas, concepts and perceptions of related emotional attitudes and behavioral dispositions shared by a group of people within a community. Its discursive construction is realized through national image construction via discursive strategies and linguistic devices in discourse (De Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999, p. 153). National image is an important part of a country's soft power and represents the international influence of its comprehensive strength. Therefore, how it is constructed discursively could influence international understanding of the country and affect its political relations and economic corporations in the international society. One Belt One Road Initiatives, put forward in 2013, is one of China's most important economic strategies to boost economic cooperation along the ancient Silk Road belt. It aims to promote international cooperation in all fields and works to build a community of shared interests, mutual political trust, economic integration and cultural inclusiveness. As the most developed media in the world, American media shows great concern to the plan and reports it from different perspectives. However, these reports are not always positive and friendly. Considering the crucial role of American media in shaping public opinion and setting policy agenda, it is informative to know the construction of China in it so as to adopt effective strategies to promote the plan. How does American media construct China in reports of the Belt and Road Initiatives and what are the reasons behind their position? To answer those questions, an up-to-date critical discourse analysis was carried out on this against a background of economic, political and defensive changes brought about by the Belt and Road Initiatives.

## Theoretical Framework

Media discourse is one of the most popular discourses to convey national identity to the public by means of language. Media reports the social reality in a far-from-neutral way, following a set of man-made selection standards. It frames natural facts through selection, framing, evaluating and explanation (Tankard, 2001). By doing this, the media can construct knowledge, reflect social value, form social norms and shape social understanding. The norms and common understandings will become the meaning framework of

social events, once they are accepted by the information receivers. Media discourse shapes public opinions towards social issues by linguistically manipulating the discourse and presentation approach. Linguistic and semiotic manipulation can be achieved through varying chosen words, presentation ways and discursive strategies.

Media discourse is not a pure linguistic form but has strong social features. It is the historical social practice corresponding to the related community and culture. The careful selection of linguistic forms and discursive strategies in news reports reflects the underlying culture, ideology and social values. Reisigl and Wodak (2001, p. 90), in their discourse-historical approach (DHA), propose that “intertextual and interdiscursive relationships between utterances, texts, genres and discourses, as well as extra-linguistic social/sociological variables, the history of an organization or institution, and situational frames” should be taken into account when interpreting a discourse on certain topic. DHA approach provides a better analyzing framework to understand the discursive construction of an issue in the background of social and political circumstances, and examine how discourse changes when there are social political changes.

The construction of a national identity is not always consistent and stable, but discursively different in different social contexts. Studies on China’s image construction are by far inadequate and not updated. As the Belt and Road Initiatives gain increasing support from the international world, what is the position of the American media in their construction of China when the U.S. always views China as its major competitor? The present paper addresses this issue through corpus analysis of American media reports in a discourse-historical approach.

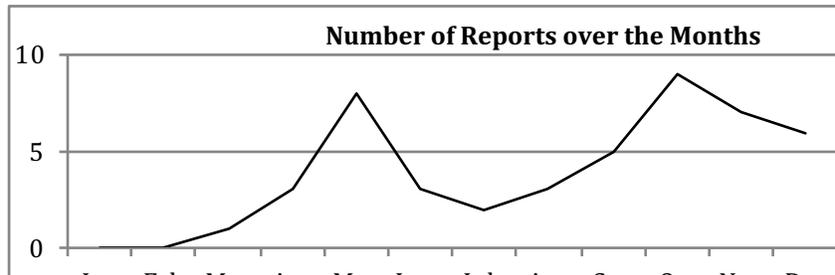
### **Research Design and Data Analysis**

The source materials in this study are from an American mainstream newspaper, *The Washington Post*. It is one of the most influential newspapers in the U.S., with a large circulation and wide coverage. Its reports represent the major opinions of Americans. Opinions and editorial pieces on the Belt and Road Initiatives from January 2017 to December 2017 were analyzed. Data used was obtained from the official website of *The Washington Post* by searching “Belt and Road” keywords. We examined how *The Washington Post* constructs China and the Belt and Road Initiatives against the social political background by analyzing the following: 1) the quantity of reports and their distribution over different months; 2) the categorization of issues reflected by topics; and 3) the frameworks used to depict the Belt and Road Initiatives and the words and expressions chosen.

#### ***Quantity of Reports and Their Distribution Over the Past 12 Months***

Figure 1 shows the quantity change in reports over the course of 2017. There were 52 reports on the Belt and Road Initiatives in total and the number increased steadily, showing American’s increasing concern. The number of reports reached a peak in May and October, with 8 and 9 pieces, respectively. The number of reports in November (7 pieces) was also high compared with that of other months. Discourses are closely related with extra-linguistic sociological variables (Reisigl, & Wodak, 2001, p. 90), so the change in the number of reports corresponds to the social political changes in China. Three important political events happened in China in 2017: the Belt and Road Summit, the reelection of President Xi, and Donald Trump’s visit to China. The Belt and Road Summit was held in Beijing in May, attracting thousands of investors from the world. It signified the expansion of the Belt and Road plan and its wide acceptance by the world. So, the reports on China’s plan increased greatly during this month and all were related to the economic summit. October was an important period in Chinese politics with the reelection of Chinese president Xi

and his organizing committee. Xi proposed a clearer and stronger plan for Chinese future development and presented a clear image of China's role in the world. All reports were about Xi's reelection and its influence on China's rising. American President Trump visited China in November, bringing more cooperation opportunities. Those events were reflected in the number of reports in *The Washington Post*, suggesting the influence of historical background on the discursive events embedded in it.



**Figure 1. Quantity of Reports and Their Distribution**

### ***Categorization of Issues Reflected by Topics***

A topic is the most important part of news because it summarizes the key information of the reports and reflects the underlying ideology of reporters and society. Topics of news are usually short and concise, carefully written to include the key information in the subject. A good title can inform the reader of the contents of the news at a glance. Table 1 shows the titles of reports on the Belt and Road Initiatives in 3 peak months, May, October and November. There are direct reports on the Belt and Road Initiatives and its effects, and indirect reports on it through discussions of bilateral and multilateral relations between China and other countries. Topics covered in those titles can be categorized into three types: 1) reports on the Belt Road Initiatives and its geopolitical effects on world politics and economy; 2) bilateral relations between China and other Asian countries against the background of the Belt and Road Initiatives; and 3) reelection of President Xi and its influence on China's national power.

It is easy to tell the worrying tone of Americans on China's rising from the news topics. The reports refer to China's Belt and Road plan as an ambitious plan to become a global superpower, and the plan lays a "worrying version of the world" and will reshape world order by "blazing a new trail for the world". America worries about China's "challenge" to its leading position with this giant economic plan by "filling the void" left by the U. S. in the Asia-Pacific area. The reporters were concerned about geographical changes brought about by the plan. It was dragging America's ally Turkey away and endangering America's "cold war alliance". Reports also emphasized America's worry about being left "alone" in the international cooperation brought about by the Belt and Road Initiatives. The comment on President Xi's reelection was quite negative when reports compared Xi to Russian President Putin and referred to Xi's ruling to "totalitarianism".

### ***Frameworks Used to Depict the Belt and Road Initiatives***

News topics provide us with a primary idea of the identity construction of China, but a thorough analysis of media discourses is needed to gain a deeper understanding. Reports are, therefore, categorized into different frameworks based on the focus of the reports. Linguistic identifiers were picked out to illustrate the position of the reports. The focus of the reports were mainly on the underlying motives, feasibility and potential influence of the scheme. Generally speaking, the tone of the reports on the Belt and Road Initiative

was more negative, full of concerns, doubts and worries about the giant plan. Despite some positive and neutral reports on the plan, the reports mostly focused on the problems brought about by the scheme, such as the security risks, defensive threats, negative influence and possible competition. Three frameworks were established to summarize the major discourse opinions of *The Washington Post*:

**Table 1. Reports on Belt and Road Initiative in May, October and November**

Date	Report
May 9	China invites North Korea to major economic summit, despite U.S. pressure to isolate Pyongyang
May 12	As U.S. retreats in Asia-Pacific, China fills the void with an ambitious global plan
May 15	China has a plan to become a global superpower. It probably won't work.
May 23	China says it hasn't imported any coal from North Korea for two months
May 15	Silk Road forum showcases China's power — and the power of its propaganda
May 16	U.S. ally Turkey may have a new best friend in Beijing
May 15	President Trump, desperate dealmaker
May 24	Larry Summers: Trump's 'China deal' is only a good deal for China
October 11	China treats its foreign aid like a state secret. New research aims to reveal it.
October 14	As Xi Jinping gets a second 5-year term, Chinese wonder if he'll be another Putin
October 18	A 'new era' of power: Xi Jinping kicks off China's 19th Party Congress
October 18	China's president just laid out a worrying vision for the world
October 18	Why the world is watching Xi Jinping and China's party congress
October 17	A dazzling spectacle of China's totalitarianism
October 19	Move over, America. China now presents itself as the model 'blazing a new trail' for the world.
October 24	Western media is still wrong. China will continue to rise.
October 27	Why do nations invest in international aid? Ask Norway. And China.
November 6	Bankers Hoping for a China M&A Thaw Get a Cold Shower: Gadfly
November 6	China's panda-shaped solar plant is part of a bigger challenge facing Trump
November 11	Trump's 'America first' looks more and more like 'America alone'
November 13	China's three new economic challenges for the U.S.
November 14	Trump's new Cold War alliance in Asia is dangerous
November 27	China Needs to Make Sure Pakistan Isn't Venezuela: Gadfly
November 28	China has a plan to rule the world

**Framework 1 – Political and defensive motives behind the scheme.** The motives behind the Belt and Road Initiatives were emphasized in the reports. Some of the reports held that the Belt and Road Initiative was driven primarily by China's motive to reshape the economic and political order in Asia, Europe and Africa. That China aims to break the orders set up by the United States, which has "*checked China's expansion into the South China Sea (allowing perpetual U.S. domination)*" (Ignatius, 2007). China is going to "*lead and write the rules in Asia*" in finance, investment and foreign trade through the Asian Investment Bank, Silk Road funds and the Belt and Road Plan. This will change America's leading role in international finance and bring a new economic order in Asia, Africa, Middle East and Europe. It will increase China's presence and its political role in those areas and start a new era of globalization. China is now trying to fill the void left at the heart of economic leadership in Asia after Donald Trump "*rejected the Trans-Pacific Partnership*" and "*ceding the United States' role as regional economic leader*" (Editorial Board, 2017).

*The Washington Post* also attributed the intention of the plan more to the security, and strategic and defensive purpose rather than the economic purpose. Reports termed the plan as the "*Chinese version of Marshall Plan*", through which a massive infrastructure investment is to be carried out across countries in southeast Asia, Africa and even Latin America. The infrastructure construction in the Belt and Road

Initiatives, together with Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is used to “consolidate a sphere of influence across Eurasia” in the name of facilitating the economic development in the countries. The plan will also help China win support of smaller countries on international issues, and the infrastructures being built, such as the ports, could be used to “project its military power” one day. The plan is also considered as the “instrument of Chinese neocolonialism” to turn some areas (such as Pakistan) into its colony. Reports repeatedly mentioned India’s reaction, the only country boycotting the Belt Road Plan, saying that the passing-through of Kashmir, a territory that India regards as sovereign, in the plan has a defensive purpose “to threaten India on possible interference in the Kashmir Valley, in support of Pakistan” (Denyer, 2017b). *The Washington Post* also termed the plan as the “Chinese version of NATO” to pull the Middle East countries into its alliance and affect their NATO membership and willingness to join the EU (Fulton, 2017).

**Framework 2 – China’s threat and challenge to the United States.** *The Washington Post* spent much effort in discussing the potential threat brought about by the Initiatives, anticipating that it would develop China into “a superpower with global influence rivaling, if not exceeding, that of the United States”. The American media considered China as a potential competitor to “rule the world” and worried that a “war between a rising China and a dominant America” is inevitable. The most frequently used words to describe the plan were “ambitious, giant, big, massive, enormous and sweeping” to show its grand scale and massive influence on world economy. *The Washington Post* worried that the Initiatives would “dwarf the sums the United States invested in Europe after World War II under the Marshall Plan”, and “expand links between Asia, Europe and Africa” and turn China into a “global player” (Rauhala, & Denyer, 2017).

American press was also full of hand-wringing, worrying that Trump’s foreign policy would facilitate China in their international success. *The Washington Post* criticized the weakness of the Trump’s government in not being able to cooperate with America’s traditional allies and the rejecting of TPP would hurt America’s strategy of ruling Asia. While “China is winning a global competition for resources, market share and ideological influence”, America is losing its traditional allies who are “drifting apart in a number of key policy areas”. For instance, Turkey, one of the allies of the United States, is drawn closer to Beijing by the Belt and Road Initiatives, which helps Turkey to build a high-speed rail network and thus, facilitate its cross-continental trade. The growing tie between Turkey and China threatens the US-Turkey relations, and Turkey’s close relations with China will also arouse interests from the Middle East to cooperate (Denyer, 2017a).

**Framework 3 – Doubt about the feasibility of the plan.** *The Washington Post* expressed its doubts on the giant plan, saying it was “skeptical” about its possibility of success and considered it as “more rhetoric than reality”. *The Washington Post* emphasized the difficulties of the plan ahead, attributing the unlikely success to a “top-down, autocratic nature of the Belt and Road plan and the inadequacy of democracy” (Editorial Board, 2017). It held that “the project will mostly benefit China rather than its partners,” and “the huge projects will be plagued by inefficiency and corruption (Taylor, 2017). To show the challenges that the Belt and Road Initiatives are facing, *The Washington Post* highlighted the negative responses from the surrounding countries, especially India. It kept reporting the tense border disputes between India and China, and emphasized India’s suspiciousness of the plan, the dispute over the Tibetan issue and the possibility of war between India and China (Doshi, & Denyer, 2017). *The Washington Post* also included a lengthy report on the backlash from Australia and Japan on the scheme (Pomfret, 2017).

Despite the worrying tone, there were some different voices on the plan. Some reports admitted the positive influence of an economic cooperation and world economy, to some extent, confirming the great impact to the Asia-Pacific region, Africa and Europe. The scheme will provide great help to those backward

regions such as India, Pakistan, and Turkey by improving local transport and infrastructures. The U.S. is not reconciled to be excluded from the giant plan and massive benefits, showing great interest to seek possible cooperation in business.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The tone of *The Washington Post's* reports was mostly negative and worrying, the position was tough, and words chosen were not friendly. China was depicted as an ambitious rising superpower rewriting the political order in Asia-Pacific region and threatening the leading rule of the United States in these areas. *The Washington Post* rarely mentioned the responsibilities and contributions of the scheme to world development but focused mostly on China's geopolitical attempt behind the plan. Questioning the underlying motives, the doubt and worry have far exceeded the professional ethnics of normal media and are more of the ideological biases and downward pride from a dominant media.

Factors affecting media discourse framework in international communications include the social system, organizations, media regulations, media producers, political and economic relations, cultural inclination, and national features (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Though American media advocates its objectivity and justice, and includes various information resources, the reports on China have been more biased and discriminated. The biased standpoint comes from a deeply rooted American ideology, complex feeling to the rising of non-western countries, and more importantly, the core intention of protecting its own national interests. To America, maintaining the leading role in the world and stopping any competitor parallel to its power is the key national interest. The regions covered by the Belt and Road Initiatives in Asia and Europe are also important regions of interests for America, which stimulates the sensitive nerves of American politics. It is the last thing for America to see a competitor rising in the region and replace it. The competitive and challenging perspective adopted by America, and the intention to stop China from rising is the key reason for the negative construction of Chinese in Belt and Road reports.

Those biased reports will damage China's image and its participation in international affairs severely. Considering the great power that the American media exerts on shaping public opinions and policy agenda, we should be conscious of its biased position, and adopt effective strategies to promote the Chinese image in our own way. One way to do so is to introduce China through "offshore communication", publicizing China positively through media in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Malaysia, thus fostering a supportive environment of public opinion.

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# Genre Analysis of CSR Assurance Report: What Assurers Write and Why They Write the Way They Do

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**[Abstract]** *Through a corpus-assisted discourse analysis of CSR Assurance Reports released by professional consultancies, detailing the most frequently used content words and their collocate patterns, this study tries to unveil how schematic moves and certain lexico-grammatical elements are employed in assurance statements to increase the reliability and credibility of reporting. The main findings point to the characteristics of highly conventionalized moves and rhetorical patterns. The analysis highlights how the assurance statement is enacted to project a positive corporate image for the assured company, and meanwhile stress a constant commitment to the competence and independence of the assurer.*

**[Keywords]** *genre analysis; professional discourse; assurance reports*

## Introduction

A Corporate Social Responsibility report (henceforth CSR report) with its other realizations as a Sustainability or Environmental Report, is designed to respond to different stakeholder expectations on the non-financial aspects of corporate performance. CSR reporting has become increasingly relevant and popular in the full spectrum of corporate communication. Given the debate over the level of confidence from stakeholders and information transparency in CSR reports, third-party assurance started to provide valuable insights into reliability and credibility of reporting performance and improve stakeholder confidence in the information provided. Seeking independent assurance demonstrates the companies' commitments to corporate responsibility as the process opens them up to scrutiny of their management systems. This external perspective can be illuminating for a company used to only seeing issues from its own standpoint.

An assurance report, embedded within the CSR report as one component, has been evolving into a subgenre following its parent genre. Academic studies focus primarily on the contents of assurance statements (Cooper, & Owen, 2007; Simnett, et al., 2009) and then seek to venture beyond the content analysis, referring increasingly to the complexities underpinning this professional practice, especially the rigorous independent verification processes (O'Dwyer, & Owen, 2005; Zoria, et al., 2013). However, the gradual shift from informing and reporting to increasingly promoting the companies to their stakeholders has made corporate accountability an instrument for the maintenance and enhancement of a favorable reputation (Bhatia, 2017; Aiezza, 2015). CSR reports are, therefore, under critical scrutiny that they decrease, as opposed to increase, the visibility of corporate social and environmental impact (Gray, 2010). Equally as the way CSR reports are viewed, assurance statements are regarded as merely limited to perceive the companies' social and environmental images, which makes assurance a symbolic practice (Cho, et al., 2014). One strand of research in CSR reporting is discursive (e.g., Garzone, & Gotti, 2011; Aiezza, 2015), but has been quite few in both breath and width until now.

Based on briefly sketched CSR assurance literature, this study aims to describe the generic features and selected lexico-grammatical features in CSR assurance reports and calls for recognizing how formal

features are used to facilitate professional communication. The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows: The next section illustrates the theoretical framework with an attempt to specify the scope of generic features to be pursued. The research methods are then outlined, and data analysis follows afterwards. The final section presents the conclusion based on the findings of analysis.

### **Genre Theory**

The notion of genre has been discussed in a range of different areas, including folklore studies, linguistic anthropology, rhetoric, literary theory and applied linguistics. Over the past three decades, researchers working across these varieties of disciplines and contexts have revolutionized the way genres are perceived, challenging the idea that genres are simple categorizations of text types and proposing, instead, genre as a social action (Bawarshi, & Reiff, 2010, p. 3). The linguistic tradition that we draw upon in genre analysis is influenced by three main approaches. The ESP approach to genre, originated by practitioners working in the field of English for Specific Purposes, defines genre as a type of communicative event with a particular purpose identified by the discourse community. Genres develop through a sequence of moves and component steps to formulate schematic structures. Some moves may be optional; some may occur in different orders; some may be embedded in others; and some may be repeated. However, a prototypical schematic structure will be recognizable in terms of the most typical realization pattern (Swales, 1990).

Besides the ESP School, there are two other rather distinct frameworks in genre studies, which are the Sydney School of systemic-functional approach, drawing on Halliday's theory to identify relations between forms and functions, and the New Rhetoric School, which is situated within the American tradition of genre study and is more social in its preoccupation. Regardless of the different focuses, the three schools have a common understanding that genre is a useful communicative tool in reflecting and coordinating how humans perceive and engage in world affairs. It focuses mainly on how different discourses function in varying contexts and how people respond to them appropriately. Genre is a classification of communicative events, which helps to produce discourse schematic structure and put constraints on both form and content of the discourse type, based on shared communicative purposes of discourse communities (Bhatia, 2004). In other words, the generic integrity restricts lexico-grammatical selection and linguistic resources at the discourse level, and ultimately constitutes a stable structure with recurring features that can be identified, repeated and processed by expert community members.

Research in professional genres are organized mainly around three communicative functions: supporting sales, developing a shared vision and maintaining trust in the corporation's leadership, and establishing a positive corporate image. Multiple studies have focused on genres, aiming at generating sales, while research on genres articulating corporate vision, leadership and image is relatively scarce (Gillaerts, et al., 2011, p. 7).

### **Methodology and Corpus**

Researchers in business discourse are more interested in saying something useful about a set of data through reference to an appropriate theoretical approach and associated methodology (data-driven research), rather than the other way around (theory-related research) (Bargiela-Chiappini, et al., 2013, p. 18). This present study proceeds from a compilation of a specialized corpus of a newly evolving subgenre in corporate communication. The methodological approach of this study is based on an integration of quantitative and qualitative techniques that draw on corpus linguistics and discourse analysis, respectively.

The corpus used for the present research consisted of 50 authentic stand-alone Independent Assurance Reports (henceforth IAR), randomly chosen from 50 company websites. Amongst the sample collected, 33 reports were assured by Big 4 firms, while the other 17 reports were provided by other specialist consultancies. Increasing corporate disclosure practices are invariably realized through the publication of typical documents including IAR. Despite easier access to these documents, the coverage of these 50 IAR was uneven because the assurance practice started late and only some large corporations published IAR. Most of the reports in this corpus were, thus, between 2008 and 2016. Moreover, without considering contrastive analysis of industrial differences or cross-cultural analysis of this genre, the limited number of the randomly selected reports can be considered uninfluential in general genre analysis of the structural and lexico-grammatical features of the discourse community. Our analysis necessarily has its limitations, given the small sample size (a total of 54,939 tokens). We, nevertheless, claim that this study is mainly intended to investigate the moves, as Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) did, to reflect the structural features in IAR. Furthermore, co-occurring with the generic structures are discourse elements and relations, amongst which we analyze salient aspects of pronouns, verbs and nouns, and illustrate how they relate to the communicative purpose of the assurance reports.

## **Analysis**

### ***Macro-Textual Move Structure***

The IAR corpus was analyzed in terms of the moves that occurred in each text. Proto-typicality of the IAR structure was investigated and we found that assurance reports comprised 12 recurrent schematic moves, most of which seemed characteristic of the communicative action in question and were combined to serve the overall communicative purpose of the genre. They are to inform a variety of stakeholders and other readers the corporate performance in CSR reporting, covering the date presented, the systems used to manage performance or even the materiality of the information provided.

The majority of the reports in the corpus had an OPENING SALUTATION move, mostly realized through “To the Board of Directors and Management of COMPANY”. And a SIGNATURE BLOCK move appears at the end of each report, ended by either a personal, or often an institutional, signature of assurers. These are typical signals of a letter, which, as a genre, are to inform the readers about the corporate sustainability performance. In all the reports, the OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE move, coming after the OPENING SALUTATION, identifies the two engaging parties, coupled with time span and selected information around the assurance engagement.

The following moves, then, state the responsibilities on the part of the assured and the assurer, respectively. In this part, REPORTING CRITERIA by the COMPANY and ASSURANCE STANDARD by the assurer are added. These two elements are either embedded as one component within the RESPONSIBILITY move or they may sometimes be taken as a self-standing move. Because the reliability of the reported information and data is subject to inherent uncertainties, the LIMITATIONS move seems necessary to draw a borderline by claiming exclusion from the scope of the assurance. Once the scope, standard and reciprocal responsibilities of the engagement have been stated, the PROCEDURE move, including a methodological summary of the work performed, comes up with visual variety through indented listing. Illustration of the procedures that assurers have performed leads naturally to the CONCLUSION move. The seemingly symbolic CONCLUSION move does not complete the assurance practice as accounts of future actions and expected outcomes are provided in the RECOMMENDATION move.

The market for assurance provision has been divided between certification bodies, specialist consultancies and the Big 4 professional service firms. One thing to note here is that more reports assured by non-Big-4 services (12 of 17) rather than the Big 4 accounting firms (7 of 33) introduced a RECOMMENDATION move. It seems that more professional consultancies than Big 4 “have the courage” to openly explore problems and dilemmas, and their need for error correction or further improvement.

Another interesting aspect in terms of organization within the RECOMMENDATION move is that the steps typically began with past achievements observed by the assurer, introducing how well the company performed in sustainability-related aspects in the preceding year. The account was then followed by “the way forward” or “further improvement” as the step of recommendation, which, in effect, projects future expectations rather than admitting failures of whatever kinds, their conflicting priorities, or their need to make hard decisions.

THE INDEPENDENCE AND COMPETENCE of the assurer is important in establishing credibility. And this is a compulsory move, declaring the assurer’s faith of objectivity and their specialist experiences. Despite positive language describing the responsibilities of the assurer, doubts remain about the ability of independent assurance practices to enhance the transparency and completeness of and public confidence in CSR reports (Michelon, et al., 2015, p. 64).

As a typical instance of a report genre, the assurance report has a number of conventional indicators, such as assurance level, scope, limitations and responsibilities. It has the opening and closing as a letter format. In terms of the body, the report has a fairly standardized move structure with some scope for variation within the general discourse structure. The rhetorical structuring for each move is often expressed by formulaic sentences. Identification and description of lexico-grammatical resources within the move structure of assurance report could provide an insightful indication of discursive resources employed in this professional genre.

### ***Micro-Textual Lexico-Grammar***

The corpus was processed by means of AntConc3.4.1, a freeware corpus analysis toolkit for text analysis. The absolute frequencies were obtained for content words. Wordlists can provide a general picture of the subjects involved in the representation of the facts. Table 1 reports edited extracts of the wordlists including only content words within the first 50 positions, especially personal references, verbs and nouns which this study focuses on. These most frequent words were then analyzed in terms of co-occurrence patterns in order to investigate discursive formations.

**Table 1. Wordlists (Selected Items)**

N	Word	Frequency	N	Word	Frequency
7	assurance	917	51	GRI	154
9	report	653	52	review	147
11	our	602	53	based	141
13	reporting	536	54	internal	138
15	information	498	55	was	138
16	data	484	56	scope	137
17	we	456	58	been	133
18	sustainability	437	59	all	130
19	is	417	60	emissions	130
23	engagement	311	63	standard	130
24	performance	290	64	any	128
26	selected	273	65	processes	124
27	management	268	66	be	123
28	limited	258	67	guidelines	123
30	this	238	68	year	119
32	work	223	70	issues	113
33	are	214	71	international	112
34	procedures	214	72	which	109
35	criteria	207	73	environmental	107
36	has	206	74	relevant	107
37	have	199	75	subject	107
38	responsibility	191	76	company	105
39	its	188	77	responsible	103
40	accordance	186	78	financial	102
41	material	182	79	requirements	102
43	corporate	167	80	materiality	101
45	independent	162	81	quality	101
46	level	162	82	engagements	100
47	performed	158	83	including	100
50	other	155	84	indicators	98

**Personal references.** Personal references are a means by which subjects position themselves in relation to the readers, establish their perspective and affiliation, negotiate discursive identities, express stances, and attribute responsibilities and credits (Aiezza, 2015, p. 70). Pronouns with the highest frequency in the corpus were *our* and *we*. These first-person plurals are usually preferred choices in institutional communication indicating the writer as representative of a whole community. The writer, then, assumes the role of being a spokesperson for the entire corporation rather than for him/herself. Assurance reports are intended as expressing the voice of a corporate assurer, rather than real subjects of individual accountants working for them.

The identity of the corporate subject reinforced though *our* and *we* constitute a powerful identification strategy as it presents commonality of interests and values between management and employees (Lischinsky, 2011, pp. 262-266). Clusters or lexical bundles reveal a remarkably high degree of the assurer's performance. Competence and independence of assurance providers in readers' eyes could be enhanced with corporate identity, which is regarded as a strategic resource for building credibility and support amongst different stakeholders and gaining competitive advantage (Melewar, 2003, p. 195).

**Verbs.** One important aspect that becomes immediately noteworthy for verb usage in the corpus are the patterns of verb tense and voices, inferred by the high frequency of *is, are, has, have, was, been, and be*, listed in order of their occurrence. Although these words are not always used as tense or voice indicators, a large percentage of incidence and search of right hand collocation proves that assurance report contains an extremely high incidence of present perfect tense on the one hand, such as *have obtained/complied with*, and passive voice on the other, such as *have been demonstrated/observed*.

Using perfect tense seems to be a common phenomenon when referring to achievements of the company in the past year (Bhatia, 2017). The assurance concentrates on both what the company has done in the preceding year and what the assurer has done to audit the company's CSR performance, with all requested and relevant information needed. In terms of the passive voice, a frequent collocation of passive pattern is modals such as *may, should, need, could*, used with passives. We noticed a high usage of passives in the RECOMMENDATION move. These passives give the appearance of objectivity by suggesting an impression of a factual situation to be improved while not attributable to any person or corporate subject who might otherwise be thought responsible.

**Nouns and adjectives.** In the selected wordlist, we found nominals such as *assurance, information, sustainability, engagement*. These nouns are combined, strongly indicating that the text is embedded in professional context of assurance auditing. Together with positive verb use, a forward-looking image is projected. It is interesting to find the high frequent use of adjectives *selected* and *limited*, forming noun terms such as *selected information, selected procedure, limited level* and *limited scope*. These skillfully controlled lexical choices could shield auditors against accusations that they have overlooked some relevant aspects in assurance reporting. Last, but not least, rampant use of loose vocabulary makes the language in assurance report vague and ambiguous (Gazdar, 2007, p. 185). As in some cases, it is not clear what the assurers really mean in saying, e.g. *good data collection system*, in accordance with *core* requirements of the G4 Guidelines, a *more formalized* approach.

## Conclusion

The “triple bottom line” of social, environmental and financial consideration is a prime sustainability reporting concept. However, ecological and social ratios hardly exist as opposed to universally accepted economic ratios like EPS or cost/income ratios (Gazdar, 2007, p. 184). Narratives are relatively thin on hard evidence compared to financial accounts. The lack of clear reporting parameters leaves ample room for social auditors to manipulate discursive resources when assuring a company's performance. Genre-based discourse analysis, aiming at demystifying professional practice, can offer a detailed description of use and abuse of linguistic resources in assurance report to demonstrate “why members of a specific disciplinary community communicate the way they do” (Bhatia, 1993, 2004). This study has demonstrated a traditional genre analysis in the description and explanation of the structure and lexico-grammar in CSR assurance report. Moreover, it also explains why the assurance discourse is developed the way it is.

Nevertheless, this study has only addressed the general generic patterns in the sustainability assurance practice, and the small corpus has only allowed us to touch on the issue of how generic resources in assurance report functions in affecting this emerging practice. More focused examination of discursive performance indicators and larger corpus are likely to add to our understanding of the accounting discourse community.

## Acknowledgments

This study was supported by Key Project of Scientific Research from Xi'an International Studies University under grant No. 17XWZD04, as well as the Doctoral Research Fund of Xi'an International Studies University under grant No. syjsb201702.

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# Critical Discourse Analysis on Guangzhou's Food Shelf-Life Management Hearing

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**[Abstract]** *The main concern of critical discourse analysis is the relationship among language, power, and ideology. With the aim of contributing to a theoretical, and critical framework, this paper, using the theory “discourse power” as the main and critical discourse analysis, sets out to take the hearing in Guangzhou on food shelf-life management as the object. It explores the pros and cons for food’s shelf life related to the provisions of the discourse construction and analyzes how to construct social reality through the discourse, thus highlighting the relationship among language, social culture and power. On the basis of qualitative research and other methods, the author points out: On one hand, the discourse analysis of the representatives in the hearing is conducive to our thinking about the nature of social facts expressed by the excavation of the hearing, and the deep ideological problems contained in it. On the other hand, it can further present social effects of the hearing discourse, thus achieving a better understanding of how to conduct a critical revision for food legislation.*

**[Keywords]** *critical discourse analysis; discourse power theory; hearing; hearing representative; Food Shelf-Life Management*

## Introduction

In recent years, China has adopted a number of methods towards food safety issues and has set up relevant policies for the convening of hearings. The Public Hearing Meeting (PHM), introduced into China’s political process in 1996, is an institutional innovation to solicit public input, increase political participation, and enhance transparency in policymaking (Shanruo, 2013). Tracing the previous studies of hearings, most focused on system formulation; few systematically analyzed the sociality reflected in the debate discourse from the perspective of critical discourse. In view of this, this paper analyzes a public hearing on the application of *Food Shelf-Life Management in Guangzhou*, aiming to highlight the relationship among language, social culture and power. For now, the term “food safety” has become a distinctly reflective and critical concept. With critical discourse analysis, it empirically develops insights into the three components during the process (participation, general interest, and rational evaluation). As such, this analysis reveals that public hearings create images of legitimation that conceal power and normalized risk (Beck, & Holzer, 2007).

## Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), represented by Fairclough and Wodak, uses interdisciplinary research including linguistics, sociology, history, political science and psychology to explore the relationships among language, ideology and power, revealing phenomena like social power tilt, inequity and discrimination in the language (Wodak, & Meyer, 2001). In other words, critical discourse analysis is taken as a means of revealing the ideological and power relations behind the discourse (Tian, 2013). To this extent, the paper is built on this critical theory critique. Since critical discourse analysis itself has the academic mission of explaining, criticizing and transforming issues, this study focuses on the “what” and

“why” aspects of the theoretical discussion while paying due attention to the “what should be” level of relevance, which is essentially a combination of sociological and critical theoretical paradigms.

### **Discourse Power in the Hearing**

Public hearings, allowing affected parties to engage in discussions and contestations, has been regarded as an instrument for governments to create a sense of legitimacy. It is, on one hand, a key social mechanism channeling demands that are difficult for governments to accommodate due to a lack of consistency of discourse in different social groups. On the other hand, it provides a public platform where dominant discourses can be questioned and contested and where other kinds can appear. Therefore, it is viewed as a setting where participants engage in sense-making (Gephart, 1997).

According to Foucault (1984), power is a network of mobile social relations. The power of a hearing involves various types of politics, economy, culture and society. Spicer (2005) explored the discursive struggle on the use of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)’ website among different interest groups in a public inquiry, indicating the legitimacy claim on different groups and the distortion of free communication. While Elliot and Smith (2006, 2007) questioned the effectiveness of public inquiries, arguing that it has side effects on cultural readjustments and radical changes. This current study aims to conceptualize the hearings as an important mechanism for citizens to exert their power in the decision-making. In the hearing, representatives can mobilize their own professional knowledge and experience and even other resources to make favorable demands on the government. Their voices can represent voices of different social groups and reflect their own interests and ideologies, which can be seen as a concentrated reflection of the concrete running-in process for the political culture of Chinese hearings. Thus, three general research questions emerge:

1. How do participants in a public hearing make sense of their views on food safety?
2. How to examine in detail the role of social representations in the minds of the representatives in this hearing?
3. What is the relationship between representatives’ discourse and the outcome of the food policy?

### **Methodology**

According to Fairclough’s discourse analysis framework (2003), discourse analysis has four main directions (Fairclough, 2014): discourse, critique, power and ideology. These four words generally manifest a research process: taking the discourse in social practice as the research object, reflecting the power and ideology in social practice through the research objects, and trying to correct the malpractice in society in a critical way. But in the specific analysis method, Fairclough’s social culture analysis (1992) is the most influential. He promotes three dimensions for discourse analysis: text, discursive practice and social practice. Discursive practice is regarded as the connector for discourse and society. So, from a discourse analytical and sociopolitical point of view, and on the basis of qualitative research, this paper attempts to study the relations between discourse structures and power structures, which thereby determines how different positions are played out against each other in the hearings. With a particular focus to understand whether and in what ways representatives engage with social expectations, and the aim to examine the discourse exchanges among all the representatives, the author offered discourse analysis, arguing that examining the discourse created by the representatives will enrich our understanding of the challenges of practicing science-based public policies in a society for the pursuit of food safety.

## Data and Analysis

### *The Hearing's Data*

In this paper, the author reported on a study of the hearing's content and dynamics accessible via the internet. The primary data in this study are organizational documents, a process of open qualitative coding applied in the hearing related into the food shelf-life management. Since discourses can be realized in texts (Wodak, 2001a), the texts examined here are corpus from the debate in the hearing that was open to all in the Dayoo website from Nov 9-18, 2014. Twenty representatives of food producers, food traders, lawyers, college teachers, residents, municipal officials, municipal CPPCC members, as well as experts and scholars in law and food safety were identified to discuss the necessity and feasibility of the proposed food shelf-life adjustments.

The debate resolved: 1). Is Guangzhou's food shelf-life management reasonable? 2). Should it be prohibited to return the goods in excess of the shelf life? And two tasks were set up here: to vote on the proposed food shelf-life adjustment initiative and to argue on the "for" and "against" votes. The affirmative side in the first debate were, respectively, two NPC deputies, one CPPCC members, four experts, one industry association person, three food producers, and two citizens, with one expert, one industry association person, four food operators, and one food producers on the negative side. In contrast, there were one NPC deputy, four experts, one industry association person, two food operators, three food producers and one citizen in the affirmative side in the second debate, with one NPC deputy, one CPPCC member, one expert, one industry association person, two food operators, one food producer and one citizen on the negative side.

### *Discourse and Sociocultural Practice Analysis of the Representatives*

At the legislative hearings, representatives were most qualified to discuss the various provisions and circumstances in the draft. And their most important task was either to express consent or disagree, or to support the argument. Because of different interests and corresponding ideologies and attitudes, power relations, and motivations, representatives' discourses played a double role in the debate. On the one hand, their debate contributed to the conduct of the food safety policy; On the other hand, they provided a forum for defending the fake discourse, which, to some extent, mirrored both the representatives' and consumers' dominant position of discourse in the hearing. The basic assessment for the hearing discourses are partly as follows :

*Discourse 1: (based on a food operator to the first debate)*

*It's not very reasonable. The definition period should be adjusted to be above 3 days while less than 15 days, and 1 day prior to the expiration. If not, it will cause a great loss of the fresh food with 2 days shelf life.*

*Discourse 2: (based on a lawyer to the first debate)*

*It's reasonable. It is in line with the actual situation to set the definition of the food which is near the shelf life according to the time for different shelf life.*

*Discourse 3: (based on a CPPCC member to the first debate)*

*It's reasonable. It is reasonable to define the boundary of different adjacent shelf life according to different shelf life.*

*Discourse 4: (based on a citizen to the first debate)*

*It's basically reasonable. He suggested changing the time for the shelf life of the food above one year to 30 days.*

*Discourse 5: (based on an expert to the second debate)*

*He, individually, thought that the disposal of destruction should be made.*

*Discourse 6: (based on a doctoral student to the second debate)*

*The recycled package should be encouraged to be recycled, and overdue food should be destroyed.*

*Discourse 7: (based on a food producer to the second debate)*

*1). The perishable food exceeding the shelf life period shall be destroyed on the day after the expiration of the shelf life.*

*2). Food that is not easily rotted and deteriorated over the shelf life can be used for other purposes.*

*Discourse 8: (based on an NPC deputy to the second debate)*

*He suggested that it should be defined from different perspectives of producers, sellers and consumers.*

*1). The legislation should specify the requirements and responsibilities of the production and business operators to deal with the overdue food.*

*2). The legislation should guide and publicize to consumers and strengthen the guidance of garbage classification .*

On the basis of Fairclough's mode (1992) for CDA, as the discourses above indicate, what the representatives said and how they said it directly reflected their concern about the matters and the ways in which they exchanged dialogue with the government. The first debate shows that professional scholars are relatively more in agreement with the "approach's definition for shelf life, which to some extent shows their professional judgment, reflecting their discourse power. However, four food business executives were opposed to the definition of the shelf life, which perhaps is related to their sales interests and to some extent becomes their "discourse weapons". So, based on Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (1992): At the text level, the discourses above show how the representatives treated and dealt with the approach towards food shelf life. According to Halliday's functional linguistics (1985), based on the discourse distribution, representatives' linguistic descriptions reflected their discourse control in the debate. At the discourse practice level, the discourses reflected the stakeholders' behavioral logic, thus indicating the social impact. In addition, these discourses have obvious intertextuality characteristics, revealing the representatives' interaction on the usage of other members' genres, styles, activity types, or utterances in the process of production. While at the sociocultural practice analysis level, the individual identities in the hearing present a clear purpose and tactics. And the discourses have a reflection on the representatives' initiative on their ideology and power. All of this conducts the differences both in political commitment and in the emphasis critique among representatives. It, thus, guides the audience to a critical and constructive understanding of the hearing, clarifying the purpose of the hearing and personal social responsibility. While on the other side, it could not be ignored that based on the discourses above, the hearing does not have enough access to the key project information to exert public voices and is consequently less informed about food policy in the debate process. Thus, given the essence of 'food security', there is a need for more systematic hearings for

the masses to understand and construct their own roles in relation to creating sustainable and secure food systems. Without this understanding, policies responding to food insecurity will still remain incomplete and ultimately ineffective.

### **Conclusion**

The hearing has, to some extent, sketched a picture of power, attitude and ideologies and their relations to discourse. By drawing on CDA analysis, this study contributed to a more contextually sensitive understanding of the hearing, enabling us to gain insights into unnoticed phenomena for food safety policy. From a discourse analytical point of view, this article highlighted the representatives' typicality in this hearing on the choices in "what to say or how to say it"; and the representatives' arguments which were mainly through facts, knowledge, their own professionalism and practical observation mirrored that they spoke not only for themselves, but also for the public at large.

It then can be sketched out that the function and the scope of representatives can largely define the effect and "authority" of their speech acts in the debate, representing different voices of their fields. Thus, we may conclude that the development of an institution or a system is directly related to the discourse conducted by the representatives through the system platform. Representatives' political participation behaviors in "what to say and how to say it" in the long run will subtly affect the progress of the entire hearing in China. But for sure, some limitation exists. From the citizen's perspective, to make their voice heard, public participation should be gradually gained in the hearings.

### **Acknowledgments**

The author wishes to acknowledge the support from the Key Program of the English Language and Literature of Guangdong Province (GDTX170109), the project "2018 Annual Yangcheng Youth Scholars", Guangzhou Federation of Social Science" (18QNXR73), the project "Research on the Development of College Students' Cross-cultural Pragmatic Competence Based on the 'Reading-Writing Integration' Teaching Mode" (2018JG08), and the project "The Association Project of Comparative Studies of English and Chinese in the New Era" (2017JG) from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, South China Business College in the writing up of this paper.

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# **Multimodal Distribution in Urban Linguistic Landscape**

## **– The Case Analysis of Han Street, a Commercial Area in Wuhan**

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*[Abstract] In recent years, with the rapid development of multimedia technologies, urban linguistic landscapes have gradually shown a multimodal ideographic tendency of combining colors, images, audio and video. In multimodal context of urban linguistic landscapes, different configurations of contextual parameters will influence ultimate ideographic effects. Taking Han Street, a commercial area in Wuhan as an example, this thesis aims to adjust according theoretical basis, confirm the relevant multimodal contextual parameters and investigate the configuration through statistical result of multimodal distribution of linguistic landscape in this area initially.*

*[Keywords] linguistic landscape; multimodal; contextual parameter; register; cultural context*

### **Introduction**

Linguistic landscape refers to a language collection within a certain area, including traffic signs, advertising boards, street names, place names, shop signs and slogans on public posters of governmental institutions (Landry, & Bourhis, 1997). That is to say, an urban linguistic landscape consists of all language placards in that urban space. In recent years, with the rapid development of multimedia technologies, urban linguistic landscapes are no longer limited to single modal text signs. Contrarily, it shows a multimodal ideographic tendency of combining colors, images, audio and video. The research on Chinese urban linguistic landscape is also gaining more attention, and some relevant achievements have been made (Li, 2011; Tian, & Zhang, 2014; Wang, & Ye, 2016; Zhang, & Zhang, 2016; Li, & Xia, 2017), but most of them are limited to text modality.

In 2016, Wegener pointed out that “modality appears being a single ideographic modality but on the contextual level as the context of discourse on expressive level” (Zhang, 2016). Professor Zeng Lisha stated that the traditional, abstract and vague context is a series of contextual parameters that can be generalized qualitatively. He also defined contextual parameter as “locutionary or illocutionary parameters that either reflect or restrict the formation process of contextualizing the concept argument in the discourses in the form of visibility or invisibility” (Zeng, 2011). Here, we borrow the concept “contextual parameter” in these translation theories to analyze the multimodal context in the urban linguistic landscape. This thesis first, taking Han Street, a commercial area in Wuhan as an example, investigates and counts its multimodal distribution of linguistic landscape. Second, it infers the components and configuration of relevant multimodal contextual parameters, such as field parameters, tenor parameters and mode parameters. Finally, by comparing two specific examples, it concludes that different configuration of contextual parameters will influence ultimate ideographic effects in multimodal context of urban linguistic landscapes.

## Research Methods

### *Survey Site*

The commercial area, Han Street, is located in the Wu Chang District in Wuhan. It is a part of Wuhan's Central Culture District with catering, shopping and entertainment. There are three reasons for choosing this area as the survey site:

1. There are a great variety of shops located here, which can guarantee the sample size of urban linguistic landscape.
2. The daily visitors flow rate is high, which can representatively reflect the kind of multimodal context that is universally accepted by local consumer groups.
3. Positioning differentiations between domestic brands and foreign brands, mass consumption and small consumption are more visual and obvious in this commercial area. Therefore, the differentiation in the cultural context is more obvious and it amounts to two different groups of business context provided here.
4. Based on the considerations above, the writer further chose the first block, a transition area, and the second block and an outer street in Han Street as concrete survey sections to carry out universal sampling of all language placards in this area.

### *Sampling Methods*

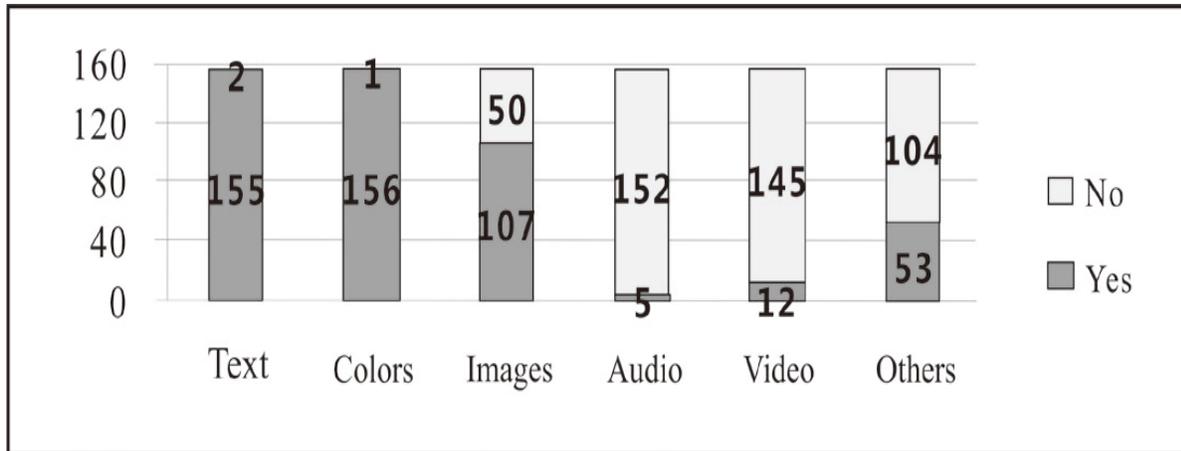
The research basis of the thesis is the syntagmatic relationship among those modalities that make up urban linguistic landscape, so the method applied by Cenoz, Gorter, and Shohamy (2009) was borrowed here to take each independent institution or organization (that refers to each shop owner or individual) as a complete sampling unit. On November 13th, 2017, the writer started her field investigation there and recorded all language placards in the selected area with photos, video and audio. She also marked the corresponding sampling sites and survey route with satellite positioning technology on a map.

### **Multimodal Distribution of Urban Linguistic Landscape**

According to data statistics, there were, in total, 157 shop owners or individuals in the first block, transition area, the second block and outer street of the commercial area, Han Street. Among them, there were 64 sampling units in the first block, 26 in transition area, 37 in the second block and 30 in the outer street. This area showed a distinctive multimodal linguistic landscape.

### *Statistics of Modalities*

The multimodal component of the urban linguistic landscape in the commercial area, Han Street, can be concretely seen in Figure 1. The linguistic landscape in this area mainly contains text, colors, images, audio, video and other modalities. In these, text, colors and images were most frequently used in ideographical modalities of shop owners and individuals and they played a leading role in immediate multimodal context. Of the five modalities above, shop owners and individuals in this area usually chose light, QR code, three-dimensional contouring and other forms to express the potential discourses.



**Figure 1. Multimodal Component of Urban Linguistic Landscape in Han Street**

### ***Concrete Distribution of Text Modality***

In the 157 sampling units, only 2 language placards were short in text modality. This phenomenon shows that as symbols of language in written form, text is still a key component of language placards and it is an important constitution foundation of modern urban linguistic landscape.

As for the majority of the sampling units that had text modality, different languages were used in language placards and different languages occupied different rates among all placards in the same section because they were located in different sections. Text modality of linguistic landscape in the central district (including the first block, transition area and the second block) mainly had English and Chinese-English bilingual languages as the main languages. Meanwhile, Chinese only occupied a small part. Moreover, the language placards of most sampling units in the second block only applied English. However, among the linguistic landscape in the outer street, the text modality mainly used Chinese and no foreign language was used alone. This differentiation is closely related to their cultural positioning, and band constitution, as well as their ideographic requirement and other factors. The central block has a modern European style and it contains all kinds of international fashion and popular brands, while the outer street has catering as its most important function. Many small shops are in dense distribution with a strong native characteristic of Wuhan. From this, it can be concluded that cultural context is related to pragmatics and it will influence the language choice of urban linguistic landscapes.

### ***Concrete Distribution of Visual Modality***

Visual modality includes colors, images and videos. Its main function is to attract and strike the target group visually so as to assist text modality to comprehensively express its meaning. Judging from the distribution of samples, visual modality of the commercial area, Han Street, mainly gives priority to colors and images.

In order to further discuss the ideographic contributions of colors, images and videos in the construction of multimodal urban linguistic landscape, this writer separately collected the amount and content and draws the following conclusion.

**Color modality reflects brand style and the quantity of colors generally decrease.** Actually, with the increase of color quantity in language placards, the corresponding sampling units gradually decreased, and most language placards only consisted of 1-3 colors, which can be divided into two situations. One is corresponding to some international or emotional popular fashion brands which stress their tastes and

styles through simple and even an indifferent design style, such as “ZARA”. The other refers to some local brands that have simple ideographical requirement instead of complex ornaments to meet the daily consumption of the public, such as “Cai-Lin-Ji Restaurant” and “Fresh Fruit Bar”. Some other language placards consisted of 4-7 colors. Judging from the statistics of brand categories, most of them were food and beverage brands, which have a high requirement in affinity and need to express the characteristics of goods through some rich and bright colors, such as “Pizza Hut” and “Dairy Queen”. In addition, some other special language placards were extremely rich in colors, and aim to stress the cultural style that the brands contain through strong visual effect, such as “Hong Kong Speciality Casual Restaurant”.

**Image modality reflects brand image and solidifies the ideographical content.** Through collecting and analyzing the image content on language placards in the area, it can be concluded that the brand’s logo, recommended products, and the image of the spokesperson together make up the major image modality of the linguistic landscape in this area. As a dynamic supplement for images, the video has a complementary ideographical relationship with image modality in reflecting brand image. That is to say, it attaches more importance to expressing the design concept of the products and the cultural concept of the brand through advertising video, advertisement, quality goods presentation, interview memoir and relative films.

A paragraph of text will inevitably be limited by the number of words. Meanwhile, language itself is abstract symbol, so the ideographical space of text modality will be limited. However, it is obvious that image and video modality have more descriptive space and symbolic functions. Moreover, in some extreme cases, image modality entirely takes the place of text modality and becomes the subject of language placards. Taking ‘Nike’ in the second block as an example, on its apparent and visible language placard, there is only its famous logo.

### ***Concrete Distribution of Auditory Modality***

Auditory modality consists of all audio in the public area of the survey scope, including background music and voice advertisements. There were a few audio modalities collected in this survey (6 samples). They mainly were distributed in the outer street of the commercial area, Han Street, with rather obvious location characteristics. This phenomenon really doesn’t mean that the auditory modality doesn’t have any influence on the urban linguistic landscape. Instead, some foreign music with fine and smooth and subtle music style will be broadcast uniformly in the central block of the area as the background music, such as *Casablanca* recorded by this author. Compared with down-to-earth background music that has a lively rhythm, and a high familiarity among the public in the outer street, this also reflects the constructive influence of the cultural context on the urban linguistic landscape from another aspect.

Meanwhile, in this field investigation, the author also found a relatively special case – in a grocery shop in the outer street; it only used single modal audio as its “language placard” and the audio content is shown as below (Language Material 1. As characters are symbols to record voice, although text modality is the most common and traditional ideographical subject in multimodal linguistic landscapes, audio can often reflect the most original and essential ideographical purposes (that is to make the goods prominent). In addition, in all audios collected by the writer, those that contained voice content present strong colloquial diction and applied words and rhetoric that have a rather strong affinity to express the meaning directly (shown in the following language materials).

1. Umbrella, umbrella, ten yuan each, ten yuan each (Grocery store).
2. To be in the same picture with the most famous idol stars... (Madame Tussauds in Wuhan).

3. You ask whether the chestnuts are delicious, the line in which people wait for chestnuts is to the Huangpu River (Wang Yong's chestnut roasted with sugar).

### **Parameter Configuration of Multimodal Context in Urban Linguistic Landscape**

The definition of urban linguistic landscape is based on the language collection of all placards in the urban space. That is to say, in addition to text modality and voice modality, color modality, image modality, auditory modality, video modality and other modalities on the whole are nonverbal and subsidiary expressions. And the practical significance to multimodal linguistic landscape is to establish a multimodal context that will bring together text, color, image, video and so on in the urban linguistic landscape. It is pointed out that “Language is not the only ideographic resource in the translation of subtitle text. And it is a complex resultant process for subtitles’ semantic generation. In many cases, the language signs and non-linguistic signs need to be ‘collinear’ and ‘co-construction’ to express inextenso.” (Lu, 2016). So is the multimodal context in the urban linguistic landscape. The construction of contextual meaning in the linguistic landscape is often influenced and restricted by some elements (i.e. the multimodal contextual parameters discussed in this paper). When mapped to the linguistic landscape, the differences of configuration of these contextual parameters (including their composition and proportion) manifest as different multimodal combinations of text, colors, images, audio, and video, etc.

Through the analysis above, it can be concluded that the ideographic demand in the urban linguistic landscape is composed of brands’ cultural image, commodities recommended, consuming subject and other aspects. The corresponding set of contextual parameters should include the social background parameter, historical background parameter, cultural parameter, geographical location parameter, brand type parameter, subject-object relation parameter, and other parameters directly related to the multimodality (such as language type parameter, language rhetoric parameter, color parameter, visual parameter and auditory parameter). According to Halliday’s view of register (Halliday, & Hasan, 1985), these parameters can be divided into three broad categories from top to bottom, namely:

1. Field parameters – Field of discourse refers to the social activities in progress, and their nature (Halliday, 1978). The field parameters in the context of urban linguistic landscape mainly include social background parameter, historical background parameter, cultural parameter, geographical location parameter, etc.
2. Tenor parameters – Tenor of discourse is also called “role structure”, which refers to participants in communicating and their essence, status and roles, namely “the role of relationship in the situation in question” (Halliday, 1978). The tenor parameters associated with urban linguistic landscape are mainly brand type parameter and subject-object relation parameter.
3. Mode parameters – Mode of discourse refers to “the means of communication” (Halliday, 1978). In other words, it refers to “the function and manifestation of the symbol system in the communication and interaction” (Lu, 2012). The mode parameters in multimodal context include language type parameter, language rhetoric parameter, color parameter, visual parameter, auditory parameter and so on.

These multimodal contextual parameters have prominence and level property (Lu, 2016); in other words, in the generative process of concrete contextual meaning, there will certainly be one or several parameters which play decisive and governing roles so as to efficiently allocate other parameters. Judging from the statistical result of multimodal distribution of the linguistic landscape in the commercial area,

Han Street in Wuhan, it can be concluded that for urban linguistic landscapes, different configurations of their multimodal contextual parameters are most prominent in their mode parameters. However, in the final analysis, it is because of the essential differences of some field parameters and tenor parameters. For convenient comparison, here, the brand “Wang Yong’s chestnut roasted with sugar”, which is located in the outer street, and “Nike”, in the central district of Han Street in Wuhan, were taken as living examples to have further illustration. See details in Table 1.

**Table 1. Different Multimodal Parameter Configurations Between Two Brands**

	<b>Field Parameters</b>	<b>Tenor Parameters</b>	<b>Mode Parameters</b>
The brand “Nike”	Cultural parameter: International popular sports culture.	Brand type parameter: Sportswear.	Color parameter: Only a rather bright color(saffron yellow).
	Geographical location parameter: Central district.	Subject-object relation parameter: Has fans and the brand effect.	Visual parameter: Only the brand LOGO.
The brand “Wang Yong’s chestnut roasted with sugar”	Cultural parameter: Typical local civil culture.	Brand type parameter: Catering.	Language type parameter: Chinese.
			Language rhetoric parameter: Use some figures of speech with obvious vernacular language and humorous and unadorned diction.
	Geographical location parameter: The outer street.	Subject-object relation parameter: Need to attract consumer group.	Color parameter: Five basic colors and choose some bright colors such as yellow, red and purple.
			Visual parameter: “down-to-earth” background music and voice advertisement

Reflected in the linguistic landscape, the configuration differentiation of context parameters is shown as different combinational relationships among each modality. The target consumer of the central street which takes “Nike” as the representative, is middle-and-upper-income sports enthusiasts. It attaches more significance to the construction of the brand culture, the experience of design and quality. Moreover, it can form a certain scale of fans effect. Therefore, its language placard is more about identifying than propaganda promotion, so there is little difference in its contextual meaning produced by either single modal or multimodal. The outer street which takes “Wang Yong’s chestnut roasted with sugar” as a representative shop, is faced with a much larger target population. It takes meeting the daily needs of the public as its main positioning. Generally, these kinds of shops don’t have much limitation in economic level, culture base, hobbies and interests and other aspects. Meanwhile, because of its particular geographic position, large visitor flow, and a rather long lingering time of the people, as well as a large number of competitive forces of the same type, it needs to attract the attention of the public through some high-strength ideographical forms that have a distinct emphatic sense. From the two shops above, it can be found that the two ideographical forms have a commonality – they both chose rather striking color modality, using either several combined colors or a single color to stress.

### **Conclusion**

Taking Han Street, a commercial area in Wuhan as an example, this thesis investigated and summarized the multimodal distribution in urban linguistic landscape, and has come to the conclusion: text modality is principal, color modality reflects brand style, image and video modalities reflect brand image, and the

auditory modality replenishes the atmosphere, etc. Then, the thesis analyzed the reasons for the differences in multimodal distribution.

On the whole, different configurations of the multimodal contextual parameters in the urban linguistic landscape are most prominent in the mode parameters and because of the essential differences of some field parameters and tenor parameters in the final analysis. Meanwhile, when mapped to linguistic landscape, the differences of configuration of these contextual parameters manifest as different multimodal combinations. If the constraint conditions of field parameters and tenor parameters are relatively simple, the richness of mode parameters will be correspondingly lower. When mapped to concrete modalities, it shows that the modal distribution in the urban linguistic landscape is monotonous and the style is more fixed, even the single modality can meet the requirements. On the contrary, field parameters and tenor parameters do not have too many restrictions, so then, mode parameters will be relatively abundant, and the urban landscape language will also be more inclined to multimodal distribution and diversified style to meet the demand of wide propaganda. However, the situation of multimodal distribution is ultimately because of the promoting effect of cultural context. Learning about it from the aspect of cognitive context theory, it means that language and other ideographical forms only have “the function of motivating knowledge script” (Xiong, 1996). As for the multimodal context in urban linguistic landscape, to a certain extent, the similarities and differences in configuration of mode parameters reflect the generality and difference of target groups on knowledge script of commodity consumption. While the differentiation of the configuration of field parameters and tenor parameters directly reflect whether social mental representations in different cultural contexts are convergent.

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# An Intertextual Analysis of the Discursive Construction of Chinese Civil Complaints

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**[Abstract]** Following the model of typology of intertextuality proposed by Hatim & Mason, this paper analyzes five types of “manifest” intertextuality and four types of “constitutive” intertextuality in Chinese civil complaints. The research shows that intertextuality plays a crucial role in the discursive construction in Chinese civil complaints and reveals how intertextuality helps lawyers process information in writing civil complaints.

**[Keywords]** intertextuality; Chinese civil complaints; discursive construction; intertextual chain; information processing

## Introduction

It is acknowledged that language plays a very important role in the judicial process. As a judge, lawyer, plaintiff, defendant, or even an ordinary citizen, we are inevitably exposed to legal language. It is difficult to imagine a context where language plays a more crucial role (Harris 1994). In the judicial process, written language is used in various kinds of judicial documents. Writers of judicial documents try to achieve various communicative purposes when writing them, and readers try to understand those judicial documents according to the writers’ intentions and detect their implied meaning.

Among the various kinds of judicial documents, complaints are always regarded as a very important kind of judicial document. A complaint is a written statement usually drawn up by a prosecuting lawyer charging a party with the commission of a crime or other offense. Complaints are the starting point of lawsuits.

Complaints fall into the category of non-literary texts. Like other literary texts and non-literary texts, complaints should not be regarded as isolated texts. In fact, they are closely related to other texts. In other words, complaints have intertextuality with other texts.

Derived from the Latin *intertexto*, meaning to intermingle while weaving, intertextuality is a term first introduced by the French semiotician Julia Kristeva in the late 1960s. In essays such as *The Bounded Text* (Kristeva, 1980, pp. 36-63) and *Word, Dialogue, Novel* (Kristeva, 1980, pp. 64-91), Kristeva broke with traditional notions of the author’s “influences” and the text’s “sources”, positing that all signifying systems, from table settings to poems, are constituted by the manner in which they transform earlier signifying systems. A literary work, then, is not simply the product of a single author, but of its relationship to other texts and to the structures of language itself. “Any text,” she argues, “is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.” (Kristeva, 1986)

Intertextuality is a way of accounting for the role of literary and extra-literary materials without recourse to traditional notions of authorship. It subverts the concept of the text as self-sufficient, hermetic totality, foregrounding. All literary production takes place in the presence of other texts; they are, in effect, palimpsests (Allen, 2000).

The present paper analyzes the phenomenon of intertextuality in the discursive construction of Chinese civil complaints, aiming to find out how lawyers process information by intertextuality. We intend to probe into types of intertextuality used in Chinese civil complaints and the functions of intertextuality in information processing in Chinese civil complaints.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Today, even discourse analysts' current interest in the ways in which texts and prior texts are connected is often traced to the influence of the Soviet literary theorist and linguist Mikhail Bakhtin. Bakhtin wrote (under several names) over a period spanning from the 1920s to the 1940s, but because there was little communication between Soviet scholars and outsiders, so his work did not become known in the West until the 1960s, and English translations became available only in the 1980s (Bakhtin, 1981; Bakhtin, 1986). In his work about the history of the novel, Bakhtin talked about the "dialogic" qualities of texts, the ways, that is, in which multiple voices (multiple ways of talking, multiple points of view, and multiple things to say) are transformed and reused each time something new is written. Bakhtin's most important concept is dialogism.

Kristeva incorporated Bakhtin's dialogism, his insistence on the social and double-voiced nature of language, into her new semiotics. She distinguished the "horizontal" and "vertical" dimensions of intertextuality.

After Kristeva coined the term "intertextuality" in the late 1960s, literary critics showed great interest in it and developed it. Then, intertextuality gradually aroused critical linguists' interest and was absorbed in the field of critical discourse analysis (Xin, 2000). Fairclough (1992) divided intertextuality into "manifest" intertextuality and "constitutive" intertextuality.

Some other scholars probed into intertextuality from different approaches. Jenny (1982) distinguished between "weak" and "strong" forms of intertextuality.

A typology of intertextuality, defined as "the relation that the text maintains with those texts which have preceded it, inspired it, made it possible" (pre-text) has been devised within literary studies. Sebeok (1986) believed that intertexts belong to one of the following categories:

1. Reference, when one discloses one's sources by indicating title, chapter, etc.
2. Cliché, a stereotyped expression that has become almost meaningless through excessive use.
3. Literary allusion, citing or referring to a celebrated work.
4. Self-quotation.
5. Conventionalism, an idea that has become source-less through repeated use.
6. Proverb, a maxim made conventionally memorable.

These categories do not, however, give the complete picture. They concentrate on discrete elements in the intertextual process instead of on the process itself. Lemke (1985) tackled the problem of intertextual typology on the basis of an additional set of criteria. The relationships between one group of texts and another may be described in a number of ways:

1. They can be generic (with genre membership as the basic criterion), e.g. reference to the "committee meeting" genre.
2. They can be thematic or topical, e.g. reference to the bomb on Hiroshima.
3. They can be structural, displaying affinity of form, e.g. portmanteau words such as Reaganomics.

4. Finally, they can be functional, covering similarity in terms of goals, e.g. ways of saying “I’m sorry”.

In fact, the above-mentioned six categories proposed by Sebeok fall into the category of Fairclough’s manifest intertextuality, and the four categories put forward by Lemke equal Fairclough’s constitutive intertextuality more or less (Hatim & Mason 2001). Hatim & Mason combined Sebeok’s typology of intertextuality and Lemke’s typology of intertextuality, thus providing us with a complete and detailed model to study types of intertextuality.

### **An Intertextual Analysis of the Discursive Construction of a Chinese Civil Complaint**

We attempt to reveal how intertextuality is used in the discursive construction of Chinese civil complaints, for what purposes it is adopted, and how intertextuality helps process information to achieve the communicative purpose. We will analyze a complete Chinese civil complaint chosen at random from the collected data. Due to the limit of space, not each of the intertextual parts detected in the following Chinese civil complaint will be analyzed. Only those of great importance will be selected to reveal the important functions of intertextuality in Chinese civil complaints.

#### ***Analysis of Civil Complaint (1)***

#### **[C]<sup>1</sup> 民事诉状**

I.<sup>2</sup> [C]原告：××医学院附属医院，院长：武××。电话：\*\*\*\*\*，\*\*\*\*\*。

[C]委托代理人：山东××[C]律师事务所[C]律师徐×。电话：\*\*\*\*\*。

[C]被告：王××，男，1965年12月出生，汉族，住××医学院附属医院宿舍。

[C]被告：孔××，男，1966年3月出生，汉族，住××医学院附属医院宿舍。

II. [C]请求事项：1. [C]判令[C]被告返还工资、福利费、委培费等24226.97元。

2. [C]判令[C]被告[C]赔偿[C]违约金121134.85元。

3. [C]诉讼费由[C]被告[C]承担。

III. [C]事实和理由：

一九九四年七月，[C]原被告共同[C]签订[Q&S]《定向（委托）培养研究生合同》，[Q&S]合同约定[C]原告[C]承担为培养[C]第一被告的费用和保证其毕业后来院工作的责任；[C]第一被告[C]承担毕业后来院工作十年，否则返还全部培养费用和[C]赔偿[C]原告支出费用3—5倍的[C]违约金的责任；[C]第二被告[C]承担[C]担保责任。[C]合同签订后[C]原告全面[C]履行了[C]合同[C]义务，[C]第一被告已顺利[P&I]完成学业并来院工作，但是[C]第一被告不[C]履行[C]合同关于[P&I]服务期限[C]约定，于2001年8月擅自离开医院，去××医科大学读博，已[C]构成违约。[C]依法[C]被告应返还[C]原告为培养[C]第一被告而支出的部分费用，[C]赔偿[C]违约金。[C]第二被告应依据[C]合同[C]承担相应的[C]担保责任。

一、[C]被告应返还工资、福利费、委培费等24226.97元。

[C]被告王××[P&I]在读期间，[C]原告支付工资16773元；奖金4782元；福利费1903.33元；培养费18000元；合计41458.33元。[C]根据合同的约定，[Q&S][C]被告应在医院工作十年，实际工作四年零两个月，按[C]合同计算应返还上述全部费用的58.33%，共24226.97元。

二、[C]被告应[C]赔偿[C]违约金121134.85元。

[C]被告王××的[C]违约，使[C]原告承受巨大的[P&I]经济损失。[Q&S]××医学院附属医院历来非常重视[P&I]人才培养和发挥高知识水平人才的作用，多年来[P&I]投入大量财力购买大批先进[P&I]医疗设备和建设了现代化的病房及实验室，为发挥人才的作用，提高医学研究和医疗水平奠定了坚实的基础。我院是依据[P&I]发展规划，使有计划的引进培养研究生和加强医院的基建、设备购置、重点科室建设等统筹安排、同步进行的。[CON][Q&S]由于[C]被告[C]违约，严重地影响了医院人才建设计划和专业[P&I]发展规划，影响了医院技术项目地按计划开展，也必然造成[C]原告的[P&I]经济损失；[Q&S]由于[C]被告[C]违约，引起[C]原告先进医疗设备的利用率下降，由此造成[C]原告的[P&I]经济损失；[Q&S]由于[C]被告违约，会造成[C]原告科室人员紧张，工作开展困难，由此造成[C]原告的[P&I]经济损失。如此多方面的[P&I]经济损失都是因[C]被告王××[C]违约所致，为此[C]被告王××必须[C]赔偿，仅按双方[C]合同的约定[C]被告应[C]赔偿[C]违约金 121134.85 元。

第三、本案[C]第二被告孔××作为[C]合同的[C]担保人，[C]依法承担连带责任。

[P&I]综上所述，本案[C]原被告共同[C]签订的《定向（委托）培养研究生合同》[P&I]合法有效，[C]第一被告[C]违约[P&I]事实清楚，依法理应返还工资、福利费、委培费 24226.97 元等，[C]赔偿[C]违约金 121134.85 元。[R]依据我国《民法通则》第八十八、一百一十一、一百一十二条的规定，[C]请求法庭依法判令原告的诉讼请求。

此致

××市市中区人民法院

××医学院附属医院  
二零零一年十二月二十三日

See appendix 1 for the English translation of civil complaint (1).

Note 1: In civil complaint (1): [R] stands for reference; [C] stands for cliché; [Q&S] stands for quotation and self-quotation; [CON] stands for conventionalism; [P&I] stands for proverb and idiom; the underlined parts stand for the use of thematic/topical intertextuality; the italicized parts stand for the use of generic intertextuality.

Note 2: The original civil complaint is divided into three parts by the author of the present paper for the convenience of analysis, namely: Part I, Part II and Part III.

The above example is a complete civil complaint collected at a law office in Shandong Province. In this civil case, the first defendant was accused of breach of a contract with the plaintiff, the hospital for which he has worked for several years. The purpose of this civil complaint was to bring a lawsuit against the two defendants and force them to compensate the plaintiff for its losses. To achieve this communicative purpose, the plaintiff's lawyer must present the relevant information of the case to the judge. As can be seen from the above example, the plaintiff's lawyer writes the civil complaint using various types of intertextuality, thus presenting the relevant information to the judge effectively.

In a civil complaint, it is necessary for the plaintiff's lawyer to present three kinds of information, namely: (1) the basic information of the plaintiff and the defendant; (2) the claims of the civil litigation; and (3) the facts and reasons of the case. In the above civil complaint, different types of intertextuality play a crucial role in presenting the information.

In Part I of the civil complaint (1), the author of this complaint informs the judge of the basic information about the plaintiff, the entrusted agent and the two defendants. The phrases which the author

uses in this part such as “原告” (plaintiff), “被告” (defendant), “委托代理人” (entrusted agent), “律师事务所” (law office), and “律师” (lawyer) all fall into the category of the second type of “manifest” intertextuality – cliché. The use of these clichés helps the author present the relevant information about the parties involved in this civil case. He successfully conveys the information of the three parties’ status in this civil case, thus laying a foundation for a detailed discussion of their relationships with this civil case.

However, the author’s processing of basic information about the plaintiff and the defendant is not restricted in Part I of Civil Complaint (1). In Part III of Civil Complaint (1), the author mentions: “本案第二被告孔××作为合同的担保人, 依法承担连带责任” (The second defendant of the case Kong \*\*, who is the guarantor of the contract, shall bear joint liabilities). The author still uses clichés like “第二被告” (the second defendant), “担保人” (guarantor) and “承担连带责任” (bear joint liabilities). Here, the relationship between the first defendant and the second defendant is clearly explained.

In fact, another type of intertextuality is also used in Part I of Civil Complaint (1) to help with the author’s information processing. The author of this complaint mentions in Part I: “被告: 王××, 男, 1965年12月出生, 汉族, 住××医学院附属医院宿舍” (Defendant: Wang \*\*, male, born in December, 1965, Han nationality, living in the dormitory of the Affiliated Hospital of \*\* Medical University). In this part, the author tells the defendant’s name, gender, date of birth, nationality and address. The sequence of information processing is not at random. The information processing here apparently follows the standard form of Chinese civil complaints, although the author here does not include all the elements of the standard form. The author resorts to the third type of “constitutive” intertextuality – structural intertextuality. In this way, the author not only presents the above information up to the standard, but also gives the judge a good impression of being professional.

Part II of Civil Complaint (1) also sees the frequent use of intertextuality by the author. In Part II, the author tries to inform the judge of the information about the claims of the civil litigation. The author mentions in the first sentence of Part II: “请求事项: 1. 判令被告返还工资、福利费、委培费等 24226.97元” (Litigation claims: 1. The defendant shall be ordered to pay back the salaries, fringe benefits, sponsored fees, etc. amounting to 24,226.97 yuan). The phrases such as “请求事项” (litigation claims), “判令” (order) and “被告” (defendant) are classified as clichés.

In a civil complaint, facts and reasons are usually the main body. In this part, the author should clearly explain the facts and reasons of the civil litigation. Otherwise, the plaintiff’s motive to bring a lawsuit against the defendant will not be convincing. It is not difficult to notice that the author of Civil Complaint (1) does his utmost to convey the detailed information of the facts and reasons of the civil case. In this process, the author frequently resorts to the use of various types of intertextuality. Since too many intertextual parts exist in Part III of Civil Complaint (1), we will only have a close look at those which have the most important contributions to information processing.

In the first sentence of Part III of Civil Complaint (1), the author stresses: “一九九四年七月, 原被告共同签订《定向 (委托) 培养研究生合同》, 合同约定...” (In July, 1994, the plaintiff and the defendant signed *The Contract of Cultivating Entrusted Postgraduates*. It was agreed in the contract ...) In addition to the use of clichés like “原被告” (the plaintiff and the defendant), “约定” (It was agreed...) and so on in this sentence, the author also uses the third type of “manifest” intertextuality – quotation and self-quotation. By using quotation and self-quotation, the author explains the reason for the dispute on the basis of facts, thus ensuring the validity of this civil complaint.

In the last sentence of Civil Complaint (1), the author uses another type of “manifest” intertextuality. The author writes “依据我国《民法通则》第八十八、一百一十一、一百一十二条的规定, 请求法庭依法判令原告的诉讼请求” (In accordance with the stipulations in Article 88, Article 111 and Article 112 of *General Principles of the Civil Law* of our country, we hereby petition the court to grant the plaintiff’s claims). The author uses reference here to refer to certain articles of *General Principles of the Civil Law*. The author here clearly points out the legal basis for the present civil case and stresses that the defendants’ behavior violates the stipulations in *General Principles of the Civil Law*. Therefore, the plaintiff’s claims are based on law and should be accepted.

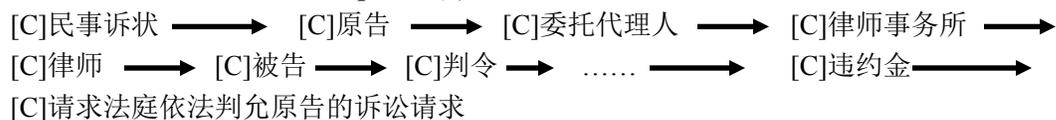
Apart from the use of “manifest” intertextuality, the author also processes information with the help of “constitutive” intertextuality in Part III of Civil Complaint (1). The italicized sentences in Part III demonstrate the use of the first type of “constitutive” intertextuality – generic intertextuality. When we read the italicized sentences, we may feel that we are reading an advertisement. The italicized parts are an imitation of an advertisement of the plaintiff. The author imitates the genre of advertisements here. In the italicized sentences, the author says that the Affiliated Hospital of \*\* Medical University has always put emphasis on the important role of talents and has tried to give full play to the talents’ professional skills. These italicized sentences give the judge an impression that the Affiliated Hospital of \*\* Medical University is an ideal employer for any talent in the medical field. Therefore, the defendant is faulty not to fulfill the contract and work for this hospital. To a certain degree, the use of this type of intertextuality here can arouse the judge’s sympathy, thus contributing to the judge’s acceptance of the plaintiff’s point of view.

In Part III of Civil Complaint (1), the underlined parts fall into the category of the use of thematic/topical intertextuality. Some parts of it overlap with the use of generic intertextuality. In the underlined parts, the author of the civil complaint informs the judge that the first defendant’s breach of contract has brought great economic losses and much inconvenience to the plaintiff. Before the author wrote Civil Complaint (1), he may have had interviews with his client. He could get some information from the client that may be conducive to the civil litigation. If necessary, the author may have had asked his client to provide some relevant written materials related to the case. Then, the lawyer could select some useful materials and transform them into the civil complaint. The underlined parts clearly have thematic/topical intertextuality with these interviews and written materials.

So, the above analysis makes us realize that intertextuality plays an important role in the discursive construction of Civil Complaint (1) and the lawyer resorts to the use of “manifest” and “constitutive” intertextuality to process information in writing this civil complaint.

If we take a close examination of the various types of intertextuality in Civil Complaint (1), it is not difficult to notice that the author uses some types of “manifest” intertextuality frequently. The following types of intertextuality form several intertextual chains. Look at the following (See Appendix 2 for the English translation of the intertextual chains):

***Intertextual Chain 1 in Civil Complaint (1)***



If we put all the clichés in Civil Complaint (1) together, we will get the above intertextual chain. In fact, there are other intertextual chains formed by other types of “manifest” intertextuality in this civil complaint:

***Intertextual Chain 2 in Civil Complaint (1)***

[Q&S]《定向 (委托) 培养研究生合同》 → [Q&S]合同约定 ..... → [Q&S]被告应在医院工作十年 → [Q&S]××医学院附属医院 ..... → [Q&S]由于被告违约 ..... → [Q&S]由于被告违约 ..... → [Q&S]由于被告违约 .....

The above intertextual chain is formed by the third type of “manifest” intertextuality – quotation and self-quotation.

***Intertextual Chain 3 in Civil Complaint (1)***

[P&I]完成学业 → [P&I]服务期限 → [P&I]在读期间 → [P&I]经济损失  
→ [P&I]发展规划 → ..... → [P&I]经济损失

The above intertextual chain is formed by the fifth type of “manifest” intertextuality – proverb and idiom.

Civil Complaint (1) shows us a complete picture of how the use of intertextuality helps the lawyer process information in a civil complaint. Through the use of various types of intertextuality, the lawyer processes information of the plaintiff and the defendant, the claims of the civil litigation and the facts and reasons of the case. In this process, we can see that three intertextual chains formed by three different types of “manifest” intertextuality run through the whole civil complaint. All of these three intertextual chains make certain contributions to the discursive construction and information processing. In addition to the three intertextual chains, other different types of intertextuality also play an important role. Various types of intertextuality coexist, intermingle or overlap in Civil Complaint (1) to serve for the communicative purpose.

**A General Analysis of Intertextuality in 20 Chinese Civil Complaints**

The analysis of Civil Complaint (1) has shown us how lawyers resort to the use of intertextuality in the discursive construction and information processing in this civil complaint. Due to limited space, we do not analyze all the collected civil complaints one by one in detail. We just make a general analysis of the use of intertextuality in 20 Chinese civil complaints and put the general result of the analysis in the following table:

**Table 1. A General Analysis of Intertextuality in 20 Chinese Civil Complaints**

	[R]	[C]	[Q&S]	[CON]	[P&I]	[G]	[T]	[S]	[F]	Number of intertextual chains
1	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	3
2	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	2
3	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	2
4	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	3
5	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	2
6	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	3
7	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	4
8	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	3
9	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	2
10	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	1
11	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	4
12	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	4
13	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	2
14	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	3
15	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	4
16	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	4
17	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	3
18	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	2
19	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	3
20	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	3

*Note: In the above table: [R] stands for reference; [C] stands for cliché; [Q&S] stands for quotation and self-quotation; [CON] stands for conventionalism; [P&I] stands for proverb and idiom; [G] stands for generic intertextuality; [T] stands for thematic/topical intertextuality; [S] stands for structural intertextuality; [F] stands for functional intertextuality; the symbol “+” stands for existence; the symbol “-” stands for non-existence.*

The above table shows us the result of a general analysis of intertextuality in 20 Chinese civil complaints. This may shed light on the role that intertextuality plays in the discursive construction in Chinese civil complaints.

As can be seen from the above table, various types of intertextuality are used in the 20 civil complaints. Among these types of intertextuality, cliché, quotation and self-quotation, proverb and idiom, generic intertextuality, thematic/topical intertextuality, structural intertextuality and functional intertextuality are detected in all the 20 civil complaints. While reference is found in 13 civil complaints and conventionalism is found in 8 civil complaints.

Intertextual chains formed by various types of intertextuality are detected in all the 20 civil complaints. There is only one intertextual chain in civil complaint No. 10. While there are as many as four intertextual chains in civil complaints No. 7, No. 11, No. 12 No. 15 and No. 16. In other civil complaints, 2-3 intertextual chains are detected.

Therefore, we conclude that various types of intertextuality coexist, overlap and intermingle in Chinese civil complaints.

### **Implications and Conclusion**

Through the analysis of the Chinese civil complaints, we have discovered that intertextuality is a common phenomenon in Chinese civil complaints. In Chinese civil complaints, lawyers use both “manifest” intertextuality and “constitutive” intertextuality. Reference, cliché, quotation and self-quotation,

conventionalism, proverb, generic intertextuality, thematic/topical intertextuality, structural intertextuality and functional intertextuality are all found in Chinese civil complaints. All types of intertextuality make positive contributions to the discursive construction of Chinese civil complaints.

The author of this paper adopts an intertextual perspective in the study of Chinese civil complaints. Thus, the phenomenon which was neglected before has been well explained. It is expected that this research can arouse lawyers' awareness of the importance of the use of intertextuality in Chinese civil complaints.

Furthermore, the investigation into intertextuality in Chinese civil complaints may be useful in shedding light on the investigations into other kinds of judicial documents or legislative documents.

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### Appendix 1

#### *Civil Complaint (I)*

##### [C] Civil Complaint

I. [C] Plaintiff: The Affiliated Hospital of \*\* Medical University. President: Wu \*\*. Telephone number: \*\*\*\*\* , \*\*\*\*\*.

[C] Entrusted agent: Xu \*, [C] lawyer of Shandong \*\* [C] Law Office. Telephone number: \*\*\*\*\*.

[C] Defendant: Wang \*\*, male, born in December, 1965, Han nationality, living in the dormitory of the Affiliated Hospital of \*\* Medical University.

[C] Defendant: Kong \*\*, male, born in March, 1966, Han nationality, living in the dormitory of the Affiliated Hospital of \*\* Medical University.

- II. [C] Litigation claims:
1. The [C] defendant shall be [C] ordered to pay back the salaries, fringe benefits, sponsored fees, etc. amounting to 24,226.97 yuan.
  2. The [C] defendant shall be [C] ordered to [C] pay a penalty of

121,134.85 yuan for [C] breach of contract.

3. The [C] legal fare shall be [C] borne by the [C] defendant.

### III. [C] Facts and reasons:

In July, 1994, the [C] plaintiff and the [C] defendant [C] signed [Q&S] *The Contract of Cultivating Entrusted Postgraduates*. [Q&S] It was [C] agreed in the contract that the [C] plaintiff shall [C] be responsible for providing the sponsored fees for [C] the first defendant and ensuring his job in the hospital after graduation; [C] the first defendant shall work in the hospital for ten years after graduation, otherwise, [C] the first defendant shall [C] bear the liability of paying back all the sponsored fees and [C] paying a penalty three to five times the amount of the cost the [C] plaintiff suffered; [C] the second defendant shall [C] bear [C] guaranty liability. After signing the [C] contract, [C] the plaintiff fully [C] fulfilled the obligations [C] prescribed in the contract. [C] The first defendant came to work in the hospital [P&I] after graduation. However, [C] the first defendant didn't [C] conform to the [C] terms of [P&I] work time in the hospital stipulated in the contract. He went to \*\* Medical University to study for a PhD degree in August, 2001 without permission, which [C] constituted a breach of contract. [C] According to law, [C] the first defendant shall pay back part of the sponsored fees provided by [C] the plaintiff and [C] pay a penalty for [C] breach of contract. [C] The second defendant shall [C] bear corresponding guaranty liability [C] in accordance with the [C] contract.

(1) The [C] defendant shall pay back the salaries, fringe benefits, sponsored fees, etc. amounting to 24,226.97 yuan.

[P&I] During the study period of [C] the first defendant, [C] the plaintiff paid for him the following expenses: 16,773 yuan for salary, 4,782 yuan for bonus, 1,903.33 yuan for fringe benefits, 18,000 yuan for sponsored fees. It is 41,458.33 yuan in total. [C] According to the contract, [Q&S] [C] the first defendant shall work in the hospital for ten years, but his actual work time is only four years and two months. Therefore, the first defendant shall refund 58.33% of the above total amount, namely 24,226.97 yuan.

(2) [C] The defendant shall [C] pay a penalty of 121,134.85 yuan for [C] breach of contract.

The [C] defendant Wang \*\* has caused great [P&I] economic losses to the plaintiff by [C] breach of contract. [Q&S] *The Affiliated Hospital of \*\* Medical University has been attaching great importance to [P&I] cultivating talents and giving a full play to highly educated talents. For many years, the hospital has paved a solid ground for the full play of the talents and improving the level of academic research and medical care by means of investing immensely in purchasing a large quantity of advanced [P&I] medical equipment and establishing modern wards and laboratories. Based on the [P&I] development plan, the hospital has systematically enrolled and cultivated postgraduates as well as strengthening the infrastructure construction, equipment purchasing and key sectors development.* [CON] [Q&S] Due to the [C] defendant's [C] breach of contract, the [P&I] development plans of talents, major sectors and technical projects have been seriously hindered. Therefore, the [C] plaintiff has [P&I] suffered great economic losses. [Q&S] The [C] breach of contract of the [C] defendant has degraded the utilization rate of the medical equipment and resulted in a shortage of hand in that sector which hindered the progress of work. All these have caused great [P&I] economic losses to the [C] plaintiff. Therefore, the [C] defendant must [C] compensate for the losses. In accordance with the [C] contract, the [C] defendant shall [C] pay a penalty of 121,134.85 yuan for [C] breach of contract.

(3) The [C] second defendant of the case Kong \*\*, who is the [C]guarantor of the [C]contract, shall [C] bear joint liabilities.

[P&I] To sum up, *The Contract of Cultivating Entrusted Postgraduates* signed by the [C] plaintiff and the [C] defendant in this case is [P&I] legal and valid. The fact of [C] breach of contract by [C] the first defendant [P&I] is explicit. According to law, the first defendant shall refund the salaries, fringe benefits, sponsored fees, etc. amounting to 24,226.97 yuan and [C]pay a penalty of 121,134.85 yuan for [C] breach of contract. [R] In accordance with the stipulations in Article 88, Article 111 and Article 112 of *General Principles of the Civil Law* of our country, [C] we hereby petition the court to grant the plaintiff's claims.

Yours sincerely,

The Midtown People's Court of \*\* City

The Affiliated Hospital of \*\* Medical University

December 23, 2001

## Appendix 2

### *Intertextual Chain 1 in Civil Complaint (1)*

[C] civil complaint → [C] plaintiff → [C] entrusted agent → [C] law office →  
[C] lawyer → [C] defendant → [C] order → ... → [C] penalty →  
[C] we hereby petition the court to grant the plaintiff's claims

### *Intertextual Chain 2 in Civil Complaint (1)*

[Q&S] *The Contract of Cultivating Entrusted Postgraduates* → [Q&S] It was agreed in the contract ... →  
[Q&S] the defendant shall work in the hospital for ten years → [Q&S] The Affiliated Hospital of \*\*  
Medical University ... → [Q&S] due to the defendant's breach of contract ... → [Q&S] due  
to the defendant's breach of contract ... → [Q&S] due to the defendant's breach of contract ...

### *Intertextual Chain 3 in Civil Complaint (1)*

[P&I] after graduation → [P&I] work time → [P&I] during the study period → [P&I] economic  
losses → [P&I] the development plan ... → [P&I] economic losses

# Moving from Logogenesis to Ontogenesis in ESP Textbooks: Using *Cambridge English for Scientists* as an Example

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**[Abstract]** *Currently, most ESP textbooks focus on the analyses of individual texts that belong to distinct sub-topics in a particular field or discipline. These analyses typically demonstrate the process of how individual texts come into being, which could be called as logogenesis. In contrast, there are few textbooks that focus on the systematic collection of texts that unfolds in the activities of a professional's career, which could be called ontogenesis. The textbook, Cambridge English for Scientists (CES), incorporated the concept of ontogenesis in writing-up of the units in the textbook. This paper attempts to use the concepts of register analysis to analyze the application of ontogenesis in CES. Through analyzing the units and activities in CES, it is argued that ontogenesis is a feasible direction in compiling ESP textbooks.*

**[Keywords]** *ESP textbook; register theory; ontogenesis; logogenesis*

## Introduction

ESP textbooks in College English typically consist of written texts that are organized by topics in a particular field or discipline (Mo, 2003). These written texts are analyzed in terms of vocabulary, grammar, structure and others, which dictate the teaching of ESP courses in a way similar to Integrated English in college English teaching in universities (Cai, 2013). This similarity between ESP courses and Integrated English, of course, is not without its benefits. For example, this similarity ensures a smooth transition to ESP teaching for College English teachers who are more familiar with analysis of individual texts. However, these textbooks, dominated by large sections of readings, put reading comprehension in the top place. In fact, even for teachers of these reading-dominated textbooks, they spend a significant amount of time preparing for textbook readings and explaining them to their students. Consequently, students take a passive role in assimilating readings and their teachers' interpretations (Mo, 2003). This teacher-centered situation in the ESP textbook writing-up needs to be addressed so that students can take on more responsibilities for their own academics, as well as professional development (Mo, 2003). This is particularly true for teachers of College English who are specialized in language but not the specific field that an ESP textbook has its focus on (Cai, 2013).

The organization of ESP textbooks by topics needs to be complemented by other methods of organization (Mo, 2003). *Cambridge English for Scientists* (hereafter called CES) authored by Tamzen Armer breaks the tradition of organizing textbook according to the sub-topics in a discipline. CES maps the academic and professional development of a scientist to typical texts he or she needs to produce. In this way, spoken and written texts are coupled with the activities that a young scientist is expected to engage in. This coupling matches the relationship between text and context that unfolds not only in the text, but also in a series of texts that a scientist is expected to engage in during a professional life. So, texts that are underpinned by linguistic system carry the possibilities of systematizing career experiences of a professional through texts. Though this potential can only be achieved through the actual participation in professional activities and the reflection upon the professional practices such as language uses (Hasan,

1996), the attempts of bringing about such possibility that develops such systems and awareness of reflective practices are, of course, admirable. The textbook of CES is exactly such a book that encourages reflective practices and nurtures the development of both linguistic and cultural systems at the same time.

The sections below first review key concepts of register, logogenesis and ontogenesis before moving to the thesis of the paper that a shift from logogenesis to ontogenesis enables ESP students to be more informed by registers that unfold in a professional's career. The thesis is then exemplified through the analysis of the implementation of ontogenesis in CES.

### **Register Theory and ESP Textbooks**

An essential step into the changes of reading-centered ESP textbooks is the implementation of register analysis in the writing-up and teaching of ESP textbooks. Register analysis emphasizes the mutual relationship between the text and context in the sense that text realizes context while context motivates text (Halliday, 1994). Of course, this relationship is not causal, but probabilistic. That is, particular linguistic patterns are significant statistically and very likely to be selected in certain system of contexts and the corresponding linguistic system, or vice versa (Halliday, 1994). The identification of register, therefore, is multidimensional (Halliday, 2007/2001). Register is a sub-system of language that can be approached from either above, round about or below (Halliday, 2007/1991). From above, register is motivated by the sub-system of the Context of Culture whose sub-systems describe meaning potentials that are construed in institutions. From all over, register consists of text types that can be semantic in nature. From down below, register and its corresponding text types can be analyzed lexicogrammatically through their metafunctional organizations.

Register theory affords the possibilities of coupling text and context, and linguistic sub-system and institutions. However, most ESP books are still organized in terms of the analyses of disparate texts that are seemingly grouped into the field (Mo, 2003; Cai, 2013). What makes this organization problematic is multifold. First, the organization of the texts by sub-topics tends to choose texts that are highly condensed in terms of specialized terms and knowledge. Teachers of College English are expected to be familiarized with terms and knowledge of this specialized field. In these classes, a significant amount of time is spent on the explanations of these terms and the preparation of background knowledge for the understanding of the texts. Some college English teachers are discouraged by these texts that are peppered with terms and concepts that require a significant amount of background knowledge. Second, if examined carefully, texts organized by topics are actually divergent from each other. Though texts may seemingly belong to one general field, such as computing, economics or others, these texts are actually specialized in their own way and distinct from each other. In addition to topics, the divergence can originate from other sources. Because the difficulty of a text is not informed by the activities that these texts are associated with or embedded in, the measurement of difficulty may overwhelmingly depend on the textual features. In turn, different texts are not differentiated by their semantic features and context, rather, they are only differentiated by textual features. Differentiations based on textual features are useful, but not sufficient. The most glaring disadvantage is the lack of relationship among units. That is, the use of such textbooks make teachers and students move from one unit to another without any significant links between units. Although teachers can manage to understand these texts and analyze them, the lack of inherent links may finally wear teachers and students down. That is, teachers can hardly remedy an ESP textbook that is not well-informed by linguistic theories such as register theory (Cai, 2013).

The next section extends register theory in two ways. First, the analysis of a text is coupled with the context where the text happens, thus contextualizing specific registers in the typical contexts. Second, the unfolding of text in context becomes the site of professional development. Text analysis enables students to appreciate professional practices with the help of the context under which these practices unfold. For example, through analyzing linguistic uses, students can infer contexts of these linguistic uses, thus leading to an initial systemic understanding of both linguistic uses and context.

### **Logogenesis in the CES**

The focus of text analysis on the unfolding process of a text is called logogenesis. According to register theory, logogenesis is inherently linked to the context of situation in which the text unfolds. This context of situation can include part of the physical context, but it is not limited to the physical context. Actually, the context of a situation is understood according to the meaning construed by the text. The clauses in the text can construe three kinds of meanings at the same time. They are ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning and textual meaning (Halliday, 1994). The ideational meaning further includes experiential meaning and logical meaning. These three kinds of meanings are realized by the linguistic uses and called three metafunctions. Then, each of three metafunctions realizes each one of three elements of context of situation, respectively. These three elements are called Field, Tenor and Mode. Experiential metafunction enables language to reflect the experience of the world and the organization of these experiences. Interpersonal meaning enables the activities to happen. Textual meaning weaves ideational meaning and interpersonal meaning together. This mutual relationship between text and context is Context-Metafunction Resonance (CMR). The relationship between context and text in CMR is dialectical. That is, the understanding of the context can help predict text and textual features. At the same time, in institutional contexts, knowing the parameters of Field, Tenor, and Mode enable the prediction of linguistic uses. The more institutionalized the contexts are, the more predictable the linguistic uses in such contexts (Bowcher, 1999).

The typical unfolding of text and context can be observed in single units of CES. This is also true of texts in the single units of topically organized units. But in the single units of the topically organized textbooks, analyses of these texts, however, are not made with sufficient awareness of the context of situation. This lack of such awareness is corrected in the CES. In CES, in terms of Field, activities are listed in a separate in each unit. These activities can be browsed quickly in the Contents page of the textbook. In these activities, language is constitutive. That is, language is the dominant resource used in accomplishing these activities. These activities include the application of scientific funding, writing critical reviews, doing literature review, describing approaches to data collection, designing an experiment, describing a process, evaluating the results of an experiment, describing problems with an experiment, describing data, analyzing data, organizing the results and discussion sections, writing an introduction and others. Obviously, language is used heavily in accomplishing these tasks. That is, language is not just used to describe these tasks as it is mostly so in the topically organized textbooks, but as a significant part that is constitutive of these specific tasks (Halliday, 1978). In terms of Tenor, different interpersonal relations are consciously realized in these activities. These interpersonal relations span the continuum with peer and hierarchical relations at each end. These relations are mostly realized in activities that mainly involve written texts. But these relations are also present in spoken texts. The unfolding of spoken texts can dynamically show how interpersonal relationships, for example, between a student and his or her supervisor, are construed in spoken interactions. Interpersonal relations enable an activity, which is shown in the four speech functions of OFFER,

COMMAND, STATEMENT and QUESTION in SFL (Halliday, 1994). Given the importance of interpersonal relations in enabling social activities, CES provides dialogues of different relations such as supervisors and students, and students and their peers. Through listening to these dialogues, ESP students are supposed to construe these unequal or equal relations and understand the role of language uses in construing such relations while these activities are accomplished. In terms of Mode, structural systems of Theme and Rheme, and Given and New, and non-structural systems of Cohesion of Reference, Ellipsis and Substitution, Conjunction and Lexical Cohesion at the clause level can be analyzed to show the coherence of these texts (Halliday, 2007/2001). That is, these structural and non-structural resources of coherence could be extended to the text at the semantic stratum. In the semantic stratum, these written and spoken texts can be divided into functional elements and then connected by logical semantic relations into a configuration. Elements in the configuration could be of the logicosemantic relations that unfold in a similar way to the tactic relations in the clause complexes (Halliday, 2007/2001).

### **Shifting to Ontogenesis in CES**

While logogenesis analyzed above demonstrates the mutual relationship between text and context, ontogenesis attempts to link these logogenetic moments into a more expansive space of meaning. This expansive space of meaning is actually the systemic potential that could be developed register by register (Butt, 2001). In this way, professional development is conceptualized in ESP courses through the accumulating exposures to typical texts and thus corresponding construal and familiarization of contexts through texts. That is, ontogenesis in CES refers to the development of meaning potential of a professional through the exposure to different contexts and texts where professional activities are achieved through language uses. In ontogenesis, students move through different contexts that are linked with certain texts. Thus, students can build up their potential development in certain registers. Also, by building up the understanding of these texts and contexts, students can trace their professional development through going through these texts that construe critical moments in their professional development.

Ontogenesis, through a diverse set of activities and corresponding contexts, is evident in the organization of the CES units. The layout of ten units in CES clearly shows a trajectory of the professional development for scientists. The first unit discusses the activities related to career planning as a future scientist. The second unit takes an overview of the text types that a scientist may be engaged in. Then, from Unit 3 to Unit 9, the focus is on the writing of a scientific paper, which is, of course, the activity of great importance to a scientist. The functional elements of a scientific paper become the organization of Unit 3 to Unit 9. These elements refer to finding a direction for research, designing an experiment, describing an experiment, writing materials and methods, the writing-up of data, writing the results and discussion, and writing an introduction and abstract. These functional elements are integrated and, therefore, could be previewed in earlier units and reviewed and reiterated in later units. These activities unfold in a professional timeline of the broader professional activity where getting the funding, writing a literature review, designing experiments, and writing-up of a paper are connected. Thus, the linkage is established in all ten units because of the texts are constitutive or integral to professional activities.

Ontogenesis of a scientist's register repertoire is a developmental process (Halliday, 2007/1989). Nobel Laureate, Yang Zhenning, highlighted the importance of such a process. He pinpointed the writing of scientists' biographies as essential to the nurturing of future scientists (Yang, 2017). The ontogenesis of a scientist's register repertoire that is related to science can be counted as a valuable part of such a biography. Halliday's analysis of Charles Darwin's work showed the necessity of such an ontogenesis of scientific

discourse (Halliday, 2007/1989). His analysis can also become a model of looking into scientists' development of their register repertoires.

The difference between the ontogenesis construed by registers and professional development lies in the contrast between the seemingly unproblematic nature of register itself as an academic exercise and the winding road of professional development. When register analysis presents the consistent relation between text and the construed context to students, students may not understand the social meaning of such texts. That is, students are not ready for a life in the scientific community, not capable of analyzing context in logogenesis and, in turn, developing registers in their professional life. ESP students, just admitted into the university, are very sensitive to passive testing, but not to the learning and achieving of new registers. Some may even resist the learning of new registers that are not compatible with their prior understandings of learning (Bernstein, 2003). Therefore, the shift from logogenesis to ontogenesis is theoretically sound, but ambitious.

Individual students may take different paths in the process of systematizing the meaning-making potential of a language. Some may take the text path, while others may tend to take the context path. But ultimately, the system of text and context needs to both be developed to realize the potential of language in the scientific institutions. In this sense, logogenesis of scientific texts and ontogenesis of a professional's register repertoire are complementary. In this way, CES could help develop students' meaning potential along the line of ontogenesis as well as logogenesis.

### **Conclusion**

The use of register analysis in the ESP textbook is not new (Mo, 2003). The analysis of text is key to ESP textbooks. But most textbooks in ESP courses still regard register analysis as the analysis of individual texts of a particular scientific topic (Cai, 2013). The introduction of register and ontogenesis of a scientist's register repertoire into discourse analysis enables a more holistic and multidimensional understanding of ESP texts because these texts are expected to show contexts under which these texts happen. Furthermore, the shift from logogenesis to ontogenesis demonstrates the possibility of developing students' professional identities together with their expanding grasp of linguistic potential. Using the SFL framework of context, metafunctions of texts is meta redundantly linked to the Field, Tenor and Mode of the context. This logogenesis of text types makes possible the development of individuals' register repertoire, which validates the complementarity between logogenesis and ontogenesis in the writing-up of ESP textbook.

CES demonstrates the possibility of making logogenesis of texts and ontogenesis of a professional's development more integrated in the ESP textbooks, which proves ontogenesis as a less tapped tool of discourse analysis in the textbook writing-up. This meaning potential of a young scientist is practically developed in a long timeline of professional development. But the complementarity of logogenesis and ontogenesis calls for, at least, the nurturing of the awareness of ontogenesis, which could be facilitated by textbooks such as CES.

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# Scalar Implicatures in Commercials: A Business Ethical Perspective

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*[Abstract] Based on an analysis of scalar implicatures in commercials from a business ethical perspective, this paper finds that using weaker expressions (like *help*, *fight*) appropriately is more morally acceptable than stronger ones, though it may reduce the illocutionary force of the commercial. Meanwhile, it suggests that Chinese businesses, when going abroad, should pay more attention to scalar implicatures of commercials, and circumvent potential ethical problems arising from their choice of scalar terms in them.*

*[Keywords] scalar implicature; commercials; business ethics*

## Introduction

As an inevitable outcome of a commodity economy, advertising tries to deliver certain specific information about a product or service to a target audience through various media in order to influence, or even change, people's ideas and behaviors. During this process, advertising language plays a crucial and indispensable part in achieving the advertising goal. Meanwhile, it is also viewed as having a kind of practical style, owning a great research value. Many researchers, based on Grice's theory of conversational implicatures, have attempted to explain how advertisements observe and flout the maxims and submaxims under the Cooperative Principle. However, few researchers have tried to probe into consumers' perceptions of advertising implicatures based on neo-Gricean theories.

This paper first introduces the studies of business ethics. Second, it reviews neo-Gricean theories, especially the theory of scalar implicatures. Finally, it attempts to analyze the advertiser's intent of such advertising with weaker expressions (like *help*, *fight*) based on the theory of scalar implicatures, to probe into whether these weaker expressions are morally acceptable from a business ethical perspective.

## Advertising and Business Ethics

According to Mitchell (2009, p. 9), business ethics are based on broad principles of integrity and fairness that tend to focus on shareholder and stakeholder issues such as product quality, customer satisfaction, employee wages and benefits, as well as local community and environmental responsibilities – issues that a company can actually influence. The studies of business ethics mainly focus on three issues. The first issue explores whether the free market system truly contributes to a good society and reflects our most important social values. Some scholars have suggested some specific ways in which ethical values should operate in business decision making. For example, Kelman (1981), and Leonard and Zeckhauser (1983) expressed their own opinions on how to make ethical decisions. The second approach looks at the nature of a corporation from the perspective of corporate social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility is thought to be an indispensable aspect of business ethics. Last, but not least, business ethics also studies particular ethical issues which arise in the course of business activities, such as employees' rights and duties,

relationships in working life, hiring practices, advertising and product safety, obligations to the environment, and operating in foreign countries. These ethical issues involve two kinds of relationships between a business and its constituencies. One is the relationship between the business and its internal constituencies, its employees, involving such issues as the meaning of work, business and family, discrimination, harassment, and romance in the workplace. The other is the relationship between the business and its external constituencies, namely between the business and its environment, involving such issues as misleading advertising, the increasing contamination and depletion of our natural resources, and multinational or multicultural business operations.

So, the analysis of scalar implicatures from an advertising-in-business ethical perspective falls in the relationship between a business and its external constituencies. Suppose that the manufacturer and distributor of corn oil states in its ads that its product is “pure vegetable oil.” Because corn is obviously a vegetable, no one is likely to be misled or confused by such a straightforward claim. Imagine, by contrast, a maker of salted potato chips who is concerned that health-conscious consumers will not purchase its product. It, therefore, advertises its product as “sodium free.” This statement is a lie, and as it is deliberate fraud, few of us would feel any sympathy for the manufacturer when it is ordered to cease running such an ad. However, few ads are outright lies. It is found that the vast majority of advertising claims are replete with “puffery” – harmless exaggeration or colorful “hype” – perhaps false, but nonetheless legally nondeceptive statements, such as “helps prevent cavities”, and “fights tooth decay.” Are these expressions morally acceptable in a business ethical perspective? Next, we will probe into scalar implicatures of such advertising to talk about this question.

### **Literature Review of Scalar Implicatures**

The theory of conversational implicatures was proposed by H. P. Grice, renowned philosopher of language, under his Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975), and assumes that communicators are rational beings and further includes four categories of maxims: namely the Quantity maxim, the Quality maxim, the Relation maxim, and the Manner maxim. This Principle has been widely acknowledged as a fundamental tool in pragmatics to analyze the implied meanings in verbal communication. Following Grice, but with the purpose of developing the theory of conversational implicatures, Neo-Gricean pragmatic scholars, such as Harnish (1991), Leech (1983), Levinson (1983, 1987, 1995, 2000), and Horn (1984, 1992), have tried hard to remedy the defects in the theory and deepen our understanding of conversational implicatures. Levinson (1987), for instance, argued for a revision, as well as a reduction, of Grice’s maxims, and then put forward three Neo-Gricean principles: the Principle of Quantity, the Principle of Informativeness, and the Principle of Manner, which are better known as Q-principle, I-principle and M-principle for short. Based on Horn’s (1984, 1992) research, Levinson (2000) used the term “Horn scale” to explain a number of alternative sets. In Q-principle, Levinson (2000, p. 75) stated that if the speaker asserts A(W), where A is a sentence frame and W, an informationally weaker expression than S, and the contrastive expressions <S, W> form a Horn scale. In the prototype case, if A(S) entails A(W), then one can infer that the speaker knows that the stronger statement A (S) (with S substituted for W) would be false (or  $K \sim (A(S))$ ). In Gazdar’s (1979) notation, read as “the speaker knows that it is not the case that (A(S))”, because the speaker would have chosen the stronger alternative if he was in a position to do so. In other words, “the speaker knows that it is not the case that (A(S))” is the scalar implicature of A(W).

Since its publication in 1972, the Horn scale has been applied to the following respects. Firstly, it is used to deduce implicatures of the words in such sense relations as hyponymy. Secondly, it has been applied

to grammar studies. For example, Xu (1994, 1995) made a preliminary research on the negation of English quantifiers and transferred negation. With the rapid development of pragmatics in the mid-1990s, the study of generalized conversational implicatures has become one of the main research areas. Zhang (2008) proposed that the scalar implicature is a kind of typical generalized conversational implicature, with the default logic as its underlying logic. In a word, it can be argued that previous studies of Neo-Gricean theories and the Horn scale have mainly adopted a formalist approach to lexical implicatures, with a focus on logical deduction. However, the present paper, based on the theory of scalar implicatures, will make a tentative analysis of the scalar terms in various commercials within the framework of purely descriptive pragmatics.

### Scalar Terms in Commercials

As is stated above, the reason why *<all, some>* forms a Horn scale is that *all* entails *some* unilaterally. Apart from the quantifiers *<all, some>*, classic scales of this kind come from many grammatical classes, including connectives like *<and, or>*, modals *<necessarily, possibly>*, *<must, should, may>*, adverbs like *<always, often, sometimes>*, degree adjectives like *<hot, warm>*, and even verbs like *<know, believe>*, *<love, like>*. Additionally, we argue that such scalar words like *<succeed, try>*, and even *<support, help support>*, *<prevent, help prevent>* can also form Horn scales. Many weasel words can be found in English, including, but not confined to, *helps* (the champion weasel); *like* (used in a comparative sense); *virtual* or *virtually*; *acts* or *works*; *can be*; *up to*; *as much as*; *refreshes*; *comforts*; *tackles*; *fight*s; *come on*; *the feel of*; *the look of*; *looks like*; *fortified*; *enriched*; and *strengthened*. Generally, weasel words appear substantial upon first look but disintegrate into hollow meaninglessness on analysis, and, for this very reason, are frequently used in commercials to make claims. In this sense, the meanings of *help support* and *help prevent* are semantically much weaker than *support* and *prevent*. For example, an ad describes the function of a shampoo product as “It helps control dandruff symptoms fast with regular use” where the sentence frame A is “It \_\_\_\_ dandruff symptoms fast with regular use”, *helps control* is an informationally weaker expression than *controls*, and the contrastive expressions *<S, W>*, namely *<control, help control>* form a Horn scale. Although *controls* does entail *helps control*, the degree of scale still does not seem very salient. If the word *cure* is used instead of *control*, the illocutionary force will be much stronger for consumers. Given a Horn scale *<cure, control, help control>*, the scalar implicature of this ad can be described as follows:

(i) “It helps control dandruff symptoms fast with regular use.”

+> “It does not cure dandruff symptoms fast with regular use.”

As a kind of generalized implicature, scalar implicatures will be realized by most consumers. When the weaker expression *help control* is used, they will notice that the product cannot cure dandruff symptoms. And thus, it can be inferred that this shampoo just plays a supporting role in curing dandruff symptoms. According to Levinson (2000, p. 75), the speaker would have chosen the stronger alternate if he was in a position to do so. Thus, for the advertiser, he must have known this product’s real function. In other words, he is clear that this product cannot cure dandruff symptoms completely. And this is the reason why he chose to adopt the weaker expression in the above scale. For consumers, such an ad will be more morally acceptable in ethical perspective if scalar implicatures get across to consumers. In contrast, if stronger scalar implicatures had been used, the ad would easily invite consumer complaints if the product did not achieve the wanted effect. In a business ethical perspective, a weaker expression may reduce the illocutionary force

of the commercial, but it helps protect the company from unwanted complaints, and it is more morally acceptable for consumers than stronger ones. In Chinese commercials, adopting weaker expressions also is a very common phenomenon. For example:

(ii) 母乳中的营养及其独特的含量, 能恰如其分地支持宝宝成长。比如它富含的乳铁蛋白有助于宝宝建立自身防御屏障。 (Mead Johnson)

*Mu ying zhong de ying yang ji qi du te de han liang, neng qia ru qi fen de zhi chi bao bao cheng zhang. Bi ru ta fu han de ru tie dan bai you zhu yu bao bao jian li zi shen fang yu ping zhang.*

*The nutrition and unique content of breast milk can support the baby growing appropriately. For example, the rich lactoferrin can strengthen baby's inner defense shield.*

(iii) 科学含量DHA 有助于帮助宝宝脑部发育。 (Nutrilon)

*Ke xue han liang DNA you zhu yu bang zhu bao bao nao bu fa yu.*

*DNA in scientific content fortifies the brain development of baby.*

(iv) 易于消化吸收的小分子片段, 有助于降低牛奶蛋白致敏性。 (Nestle)

*Yi yu xiao hua xi shou de xiao fen zi pian duan, you zhu yu jiang di niu nai dan bai zhi min xing.*

*Smaller molecule fragments help reduce the allergenic nature of milk and protein.*

Selected from Taobao, these above examples whose sales occupy the top three in the milk powder market, also include a number of weasel words like “有助于” and “帮助” (*help* in English). Therefore, when domestic products are exported and sold to overseas markets, in order to establish an excellent international brand image and maintain brand promises around the world in a business ethical perspective, more attention should be paid to the choice of scalar terms in commercials.

(v) *Teeth calcium supplementation may help prevent and treat osteoporosis.* (Swisse)

(vi) *It also features key electrolytes including potassium and chloride, which help to regulate body fluids. Includes 18 mg of iron, a vital nutrient that plays an essential role in forming healthy red blood cells a transporting oxygen.* (GNC)

(vii) *functions:*

(a) *Prevent urinary infection*

(b) *Remove free radicals and prevent oxidation* (Tasly)

The products advertised by (v) and (vi) are from the world-renowned health care brands Swisse and GNC which very carefully introduce and describe the functions of products in their commercials. Swisse, established in 1950, is known as the top brand in Australia, and GNC, a famous American nutrition food company, has more than 5,000 chain stores around the world. The healthcare products, as a kind of food, are intended to adjust and maintain the function of the human body and are not supposed to cure illnesses completely like medicine. Thus, in order to advertise products tactfully, Swisse chooses to select the weaker terms in the Horn scale *<prevent, help prevent>*. Additionally, the company adopts a modal verb *may* to further weaken the effect of their products. In a similar fashion, GNC also applies the weaker expression in the scale *<regulate, help to regulate>* to implicate that the product just plays a supporting role in regulating body fluids. In contrast, the commercial advertised overseas by Chinese brand Tasly for its healthcare product Cranberry Powder directly adopts such stronger expressions as *prevent* and *remove*. However, for health care products, the achieved effect varies from consumer to consumer, and it is difficult to determine

the beneficial effect. If consumers who have used these products do not get the expected effect as the commercial has advertised, they will attribute the problem to product quality for sure. Thus, it is safe to argue that using such stronger expressions in this commercial is pragmatically inappropriate, which will result in more complaints from consumers, although they have more illocutionary force than weaker ones. So, from the business ethical perspective, it is advisable for advertisers to adopt weaker expressions in commercials appropriately, which not only helps maintain the company's trustworthiness, but also serves as a warning for consumers.

All in all, different from free speech, advertising, as a commercial speech, needs to conform to business ethics, and provide truthful, and non-misleading information. Using weaker expressions in commercials can tactfully minimize the number of consumer complaints and, at the same time, enhance the company's image and reputation. Meanwhile, it also safeguards the consumers' right to know and, in the long run, helps stimulate their purchasing desire and cultivate a sense of brand loyalty. Using stronger expressions is more persuasive, but the company should bear it in mind that the information provided by the advertiser must be factual and reliable. In today's intercultural business communication, companies are increasingly being judged on widely accepted moral obligations. It is essential for companies and their brands not to deceive and harm the interests of potential consumers around the world.

### **Conclusion**

Having analyzed the scalar implicatures in commercials and their business effects in a business ethical perspective, this present paper finds that adopting weaker expressions in commercials can bring the company more economic benefits in the long run, for it helps minimize the number of consumer complaints and protect the company's image and reputation. While using stronger expressions is more persuasive, the advertised information should be factual, otherwise, the company will be not trusted by consumers any longer. As far as consumers are concerned, they should remain alert to the conversational implicatures between the words in commercials so as not to be deceived. Therefore, Chinese businesses, when going abroad, should pay more attention to scalar implicatures of commercials, and circumvent potential ethical problems arising from their choice of scalar terms in commercials.

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# Pragmatic Comprehension, Epistemic Vigilance and Scalar Implicature

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**[Abstract]** *Pragmatic comprehension and epistemic vigilance are treated in relevance theory as separate modules, one responsible for understanding what is communicated and the other for assigning credibility to the communicated information. Yet, they play highly interactive roles in the process of communication. Following and elaborating on Mazzarella's (2013, 2015a, 2016) approach, we propose to analyze epistemic vigilance in terms of its constraints on the hearer's expectations of optimal relevance and suggest that the degree of sophistication of the expectations lies at the core of achieving understanding and avoiding misunderstanding. We also give a tentative analysis of scalar implicatures from the perspective of epistemic vigilance.*

**[Keywords]** *pragmatic comprehension; epistemic vigilance; scalar implicature; expectation of optimal relevance; sophistication*

## Introduction

Understanding and believing, as two of the central concerns of modern pragmatic theory, are treated in relevance theory as separate modules that are subject to the constraints of comprehension procedures and epistemic vigilance, respectively. According to an earlier relevance-theoretic view represented by Sperber, et al. (2010), pragmatic comprehension and epistemic vigilance play complementary roles in the process of human communication with epistemic vigilance assigning credibility to the communicated information, but not contributing to its understanding. However, as pointed out by Mazzarella (2013, 2015a, 2016) and Padilla Cruz (2014), this view could be limited in its scope of analysis. The aim of this paper is to follow and elaborate on Mazzarella's (2013, 2015a, 2016) integrative approach by extending the role of epistemic vigilance from the testing of an already-constructed interpretative hypothesis to the construction of interpretative hypotheses.

In what follows, we first briefly review the relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure (heuristic), Sperber, et al.'s (2010) view on epistemic vigilance, and Mazzarella's (2013, 2015a, 2016) integrative approach to it, elaborating on the third by making some clarifications on the notion of relevance expectation and fleshing out the notion of sophistication of relevance expectation. Then, we analyze scalar implicatures by taking the elaborated integrative approach.

## The Relevance-theoretic Comprehension Procedure and Epistemic Vigilance

In the relevance-theoretic framework (Sperber & Wilson, 1995), communication is conceptualized as a relevance-driven ostensive-inferential process which is centered on the communicative principle of relevance formulated as "Every utterance communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance" (Wilson, 2017, p. 85). This means that for the speaker to communicate a piece of information is to guarantee

the utterance's optimal relevance and for the hearer to comprehend the communicated information is to realize its optimal relevance through a proper interpretation.

Central to the communicative principle is the notion of optimal relevance, which is defined in two clauses: a) It is at least relevant enough to be worth the addressee's processing effort; b) It is the most relevant one compatible with the speaker's abilities and preferences (Wilson, 2017, p. 85). Relevance is measured in terms of the relative values of cognitive effects and processing effort. The first clause of this definition represents a threshold level of relevance that is necessary to divert the hearer's attention to the utterance from elsewhere and the second clause means to strike a balance between the cognitive effects and the processing effort involved in the interpretation of a specific utterance. Thus, optimal relevance represents a necessary and sufficient level of relevance for utterance interpretation. But this level is relative to the speaker's abilities and preferences rather than absolute, which makes it possible and, indeed necessary, for the hearer to exercise his epistemic vigilance (see below).

In the light of the communicative principle, communication could be conceived as a process of seeking optimal relevance for both the speaker and the hearer. In the pursuit of optimal relevance, the hearer invokes a relevance-guided comprehension heuristic.

### ***Relevance-Guided Comprehension Heuristic***

1. Follow a path of least effort in constructing an interpretation of the utterance.
2. Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied (Wilson, 2017, p. 86).

The heuristic is supposed to address the issues of understanding and believing, or comprehension and acceptance, which is an ever-present concern in Gricean pragmatics and speech-act pragmatics (Sperber, 1994). Of special interest to the concern of the present paper is clause "b" which, according to Mazzarella (2013), determines the stopping point of the comprehension process. In addition, the notion of expectation of relevance could be interpreted in two ways, the distinction of which could further clarify where the stopping point actually occurs (more on this below).

In order to account for believing or acceptance, Sperber, et al. (2010) introduce the notion of epistemic vigilance. This is defined as an alertness against being accidentally or intentionally misinformed and could be understood as a proper allocation of epistemic trust. The mechanism of epistemic vigilance is conceived as a separate module, parallel to the comprehension module, that assesses the believability of an interpretation before it is accepted as true and allowed to enter the "belief box" of the hearer. The authors distinguish two types of epistemic vigilance: (i) vigilance towards the source of the information, i.e., the trustworthiness of the speaker, deciding who to believe; (ii) vigilance towards the content, i.e., the believability of the information itself, deciding what to believe. The comprehension module and the vigilance mechanism are seen to interact: the latter takes as its input the output of the former and, when the latter detects an inconsistency or incoherence in an interpretation, that interpretation is discarded as unbelievable. In relevance-theoretic terms, the communicative intention can be fulfilled without the corresponding informative intention being fulfilled: in other words, an audience can correctly understand an utterance without accepting what they have understood (Sperber, et al., 2010, p. 368). The gap between understanding and believing must be bridged by epistemic trust, and epistemic vigilance is the allocation of epistemic trust.

In an earlier work, Sperber (1994) proposed three interpretation strategies: naive optimism, cautious optimism and sophisticated understanding. A naively optimistic hearer assumes that the speaker is both benevolent and competent, where benevolence is concerned with whether the speaker intends to lie or

mislead the hearer into acquiring an untrue belief and competence refers to the speaker’s possession of genuine information. A cautiously optimistic hearer assumes that the speaker is benevolent, but not necessarily competent while a sophisticated hearer makes none of these assumptions. The three strategies are different in their levels of sophistication, ranging from naive optimism through cautious optimism to sophisticated understanding in an increasing order. The hearer’s vigilance mechanism, if sufficiently activated, can lead to a shift from a less sophisticated strategy to a more sophisticated one (Padilla Cruz, 2012).

**Table 1. Three Versions of the Relevance-Guided Comprehension Procedure** (Reproduced from Mazzarella 2015a, p. 191. Italics in the original)

	(a)	Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects: Test interpretative hypotheses in order of accessibility
<i>Naive optimism</i>	(b <sub>1</sub> )	Stop when your expectations of <i>actual optimal relevance</i> are satisfied (i.e., stop at the first relevant enough interpretation)
<i>Cautious optimism</i>	(b <sub>2</sub> )	Stop when your expectations of <i>attempted optimal relevance</i> are satisfied (i.e., stop at the first interpretation that the communicator <i>might have thought</i> would be relevant enough to you)
<i>Sophisticated understanding</i>	(b <sub>3</sub> )	Stop when your expectations of <i>purported optimal relevance</i> are satisfied (i.e., stop at the first interpretation that the communicator <i>might have thought would seem</i> relevant enough to you)

Mazzarella (2013) levels some criticism against Sperber and colleagues. She claims that Sperber, et al.’s (2010) analysis of epistemic vigilance is limited in its scope and suggests extending it to the construction of interpretative hypotheses from the testing of an already-constructed interpretative hypothesis. In subsequent works (2015a, 2016), she tries to integrate the three strategies with the relevance-guided comprehension heuristic (or procedure in her term) and proposes three versions of it.

According to the three versions, a naively optimistic hearer looks for actual optimal relevance, a cautiously optimistic hearer looks for attempted optimal relevance, and a sophisticated interpreter looks for purported optimal relevance (Mazzarella 2015a, p. 191). Mazzarella’s argument is that the epistemic vigilance mechanisms modulate the hearer’s expectations of relevance (from actual to attempted or purported optimal relevance) and determine the stopping points of the comprehension process. Thus, according to Mazzarella, a naively optimistic hearer expects actual optimal relevance and stops at the first interpretation that is actually relevant enough to him; a cautiously optimistic hearer expects attempted optimal relevance and stops at the first interpretation that the speaker might have thought would be relevant enough to him, and a sophisticated hearer expects purported optimal relevance and stops at the first interpretation that the speaker might have thought would seem relevant enough to him.

Another point made by Mazzarella (2013) is that despite the lack of a strict correspondence between the *abilities* and *preferences* in the definition of optimal relevance on the one hand, and *competence* and *benevolence* in the definition of epistemic vigilance on the other, their similarities are so apparent as to warrant an assumption of rough correspondence. Thus, abilities roughly correspond to competence and preferences roughly correspond to benevolence. The speaker’s abilities are taken to refer to his epistemic status such as the possession of knowledge and beliefs, whereas the speaker’s preferences refer to his

linguistic preferences and inclination to comply with social conventions. In this paper, we follow Mazzarella (2013) in emphasizing their similarities while keeping in mind their disparities.

Mazzarella's idea is interesting, not only in extending the scope of analysis, but also in bringing into focus the close interaction between the comprehension module and the epistemic vigilance mechanism. In the next section, we apply her model to the analysis of scalar implicature in face-threatening contexts. But before we do this, a few clarifications are in order.

Firstly, the word "expectation" seems to be ambiguous to us. It could mean "be prepared for" and "hope for". In the former case, it has to do with the speaker's abilities and preferences, whereas in the latter case it has to do with the number of interpretations the hearer has to retrieve before he is certain that the one intended by the speaker has been identified. In the first sense of the word, the hearer is prepared that the speaker's utterance, on the first interpretation that comes to mind, can achieve actual optimal relevance, attempted optimal relevance or purported (i.e., pretended) optimal relevance depending on what the hearer takes to be the speaker's abilities and preferences. In the second sense of the word, the hearer hopes for more cognitive effects to be achievable on an interpretation subsequent to the first one to come to mind. In both cases the expectations of optimal relevance contribute to deciding where to stop the comprehension process. With the sophisticated hearer, for example, if the speaker is not competent enough and the hearer is aware of this, the hearer is prepared that the speaker's utterance is able to achieve only attempted (i.e., not fail-proof) optimal relevance on the first interpretation and he has to seek genuine optimal relevance elsewhere. But if the speaker is competent but not benevolent and the hearer is aware of this, the hearer hopes to achieve more cognitive effects with extra processing effort on an interpretation subsequent to the first sufficiently relevant interpretation that comes to mind.

Secondly, this distinction is pertinent to the sophistication of the expectation of optimal relevance. As noted above, the three interpretation strategies of naive optimism, cautious optimism and sophisticated understanding are ordered with an increasing level of sophistication. One way to understand this is that the more sophisticated the hearer's expectations of optimal relevance, the more he is aware that genuine optimal relevance cannot generally be achieved on the first interpretation of the utterance and that it is necessary to proceed with the comprehension process. Another way to understand sophistication is to say that it is the extent to which the hearer takes the speaker's abilities and preferences into account when constructing an interpretation of the utterance.

Bearing these distinctions in mind, we'll apply the mechanism of epistemic vigilance to an analysis of the understanding and acceptance of scalar implicatures and attempt thereby to test part of its explanatory power.

### **Scalar Implicature**

In this paper, *scalar implicature* is taken as a cover term for all the implicatures related to the use of a scalar expression such as *some* in a certain context. The most typical scalar implicature discussed in the literature is the *not all* implicature (e.g., *Not all of the guests have arrived* arising from the sentence *Some of the guests have arrived*). Others include the *don't know* implicature and the *don't want to say* implicature (see Mazzarella 2015b, p. 101, for a discussion). Interestingly, two more have been added to the list recently.

One of these is what we term, for the sake of convenience, the *all* implicature attributed to Bonnefon and colleagues (2009). While interpreting the results of a series of experiments run in their studies, these authors suggest that a face-threatening context is similar to a lower-bound context in blocking the derivation

of the *not all* implicature, but different from a lower-bound context in encouraging the derivation of the *all* implicature. They give the following example to illustrate the point.

*A: What impression did I make during dinner?*

*B: Some thought you drank too much* (Bonnefon, et al., 2009, p. 250).

In a face-threatening context, according to Bonnefon and colleagues, the hearer may interpret the speaker as meaning *all* although the speaker only says *some* out of considerations of politeness and kindness.

Mazzarella (2015b) tries to give a reinterpretation of those results by suggesting an alternative line of analysis. Drawing on the distinction between comprehension and acceptance (Sperber, et al., 2010), she suggests that the *not all* implicature may, in fact, be derived and entertained by the hearer as part of the speaker's intended meaning when the speaker says *some*, but that the hearer may not accept it as true. This is what we name, for the lack of a better term, the *unbelievable not all* implicature. To sum up, the implicatures related to the scalar expression *some* used in a face-threatening context can be enumerated as follows: *not all*, *don't know*, *don't want to say*, *all* and *unbelievable not all*.

Although the issue of scalar implicature has received much attention in the pragmatics literature, to the best of our knowledge only scant attention has been given to the derivation of scalar implicatures with reference to the hearer's epistemic vigilance. In what follows, we outline a tentative analysis from the perspective of the hearer's expectations of optimal relevance. Our argument is that different implicatures may actually arise depending on varying levels of sophistication in the hearer's expectations of optimal relevance. We will take naive optimism, cautious optimism and sophisticated understanding in that order.

For the naively optimistic hearer, the *not all* implicature arises as a default inference whether or not the speaker is in an epistemic position to say *all*, but the other implicatures simply don't arise. This is because the hearer does not take into account the speaker's abilities and preferences. When this happens, the hearer may miss the main point of the utterance and misunderstandings of various sorts (e.g., accidental relevance and accidental irrelevance or pragmatic failures) may occur (Wilson, 2012; Padilla Cruz, 2014). In this case, the hearer expects actual optimal relevance and stops at the first interpretation that is relevant enough to him. Having retrieved such an interpretation, the hearer attributes it (sometimes wrongly) to the speaker as his intended meaning and accesses no further interpretations. In other words, the hearer assumes that the speaker is both competent and benevolent, thinks that genuine optimal relevance has been achieved on the first interpretation and therefore hopes for no further cognitive effects.

For the cautiously optimistic hearer, we suggest that the *not all* implicature does not arise whether or not the speaker is in an epistemic position to say *all*, but that the *all* implicature arises when the speaker is in an epistemic position to say *all* and the *don't know* implicature arises when the speaker is not in such a position. This is because the hearer takes into consideration the speaker's epistemic status (knowledge and beliefs). The *don't want to say* and the *unbelievable not all* implicatures may not arise as these are related to the speaker's preferences which the hearer fails to take account of. In such cases, the hearer expects attempted optimal relevance and stops not at the first interpretation that is relevant enough to him but at the first interpretation that the speaker might have thought would be relevant enough to him. In order to do this, the hearer must discard the previous interpretation and access a second one. The cautiously optimistic hearer can handle cases of misunderstanding originating from epistemic factors such as status of knowledge or belief (e.g., accidental relevance and accidental irrelevance) but cannot avoid those stemming from social factors such as considerations of politeness.

For the sophisticated hearer, the *not all* implicature does not arise whether or not the speaker is in an epistemic position to say *all*, but the *all* implicature arises when the speaker is in an epistemic position to say *all* and the *don't know* implicature arises when the speaker is not in such a position, as is the case with the cautiously optimistic hearer. However, the *don't want to say* implicature may arise with the sophisticated hearer if he takes account of the speaker's preference to be polite or to withhold information. When the speaker is in an epistemic position to say *all*, things get more complicated. The *all* implicature arises not only because the hearer takes account of the speaker's epistemic status, but also because he takes account of the speaker's preference to be indirect. The *unbelievable not all* implicature may arise as a result of the hearer taking consideration of the speaker's preference to meet the hearer's emotional needs (e.g., to comfort the hearer). In this case, the hearer expects purported optimal relevance and stops not at the first interpretation that is relevant enough to him, nor at the first interpretation that the speaker might have thought would be relevant enough to him, but at the first interpretation that the speaker might have thought would seem relevant enough to him. This is done by discarding the previous two interpretations and accessing a third or even further interpretation. The sophisticated hearer can (ideally) cope with misunderstandings and pragmatic failures of various sorts including that of missed implicature (Padilla Cruz, 2014).

A point worth mentioning at this stage is that the situation with regard to scalar implicature in a face-threatening context is a complicated matter and the type of implicature to arise in such a context may not be as determinate as suggested by Bennefon et al. (2009) and Mazzarella (2015b). A more realistic picture would result from a combination of their lines of analysis, but this is beyond the scope of the present paper.

The analysis given so far seems to suggest that implicature recovery crucially depends on the hearer's degree of vigilance: the more vigilant the hearer is, the more constraints the vigilance mechanism exercises on the comprehension process and the more sophisticated the hearer's expectations of optimal relevance turn out to be and – accordingly, the more implicatures (potential and actual) recovered and the fewer implicatures missed, leading to a decreased rate of misunderstanding.

### **Concluding Remarks**

In this paper, we have briefly explored the possible implicatures pertinent to the scalar expression *some* in the light of the hearer's epistemic vigilance. A tentative conclusion to draw is that the type of implicature to arise in a face-threatening context may not be as determinate as suggested by Bennefon, et al. (2009) and Mazzarella (2015b). Rather, different implicatures may arise as a result of the hearer's varying levels of sophistication in his expectations of optimal relevance. Our proposal, if it is right, has implications for the study of scalar implicatures and other pragmatic phenomena such as mitigation. We are well aware, though, that it is speculative in nature and stands in need of empirical verification, and in need of more logical proofs and detailed evidences as the anonymous reviewer(s) rightly pointed out. This could be the concern of future studies.

### **Acknowledgements**

We wish to thank the anonymous reviewer(s) for their valuable comments and suggestions for making improvements on earlier versions of this paper. The research was supported by a grant from the Department of Education of Guangdong Province (“基于思辨能力培养的商务英语教学模式改革与实践”) and a grant from Guangdong Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Sciences (“移情视角下话语缓和的语用研究”, Grant No. GD14XWW09).

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# A Comparative Study on the Use of Hedges in Chinese and American Business News Leads

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*[Abstract] Studies on hedges in different fields have been conducted by many scholars. But few efforts have been made on the application of hedges in business news leads from a cross cultural perspective. This paper analyzes the use of 120 news leads in Chinese and American business reports, aiming to expatiate on the pragmatic functions of hedges used in business news leads and to find out their similarities and differences between the two cultures and explore the reasons behind them, in the hope to enrich the studies on hedges and provide practical reference for journalists and teachers.*

*[Keywords] Chinese and American websites; business news lead; hedge*

## Introduction

As an increasing number of people have begun to realize that clarity and precision are no longer the ideal principle in communication, studies on hedges have been conducted by many scholars. Lakoff defined hedges as words whose meaning implicitly involve fuzziness – words whose work is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy (1973, p. 458). Previously, the focus of relevant research was on hedges' grammatical semantic, rhetorical and pragmatic functions (Li, 2012, pp. 42-45), which were used for analyzing scientific research articles, public speech, diplomatic discourse, etc. (Yang, 2013, pp. 23-36; Ling, 2004, pp. 137-141). Jensen believed that the application of hedges enables scientists and journalists to achieve high credibility of works (2008, pp. 347-369). As a particular type of text, news is widely believed to be impersonally stated and report the definite truth. But factors such as reporting deadlines could sometimes affect the collection of first-hand news details in time. Thus, journalists would sometimes resort to some linguistic devices such as the hedge to express their tentativeness towards assertion, to avoid subjectivity of the proposition and leave space for competitive views.

In the field of business, a number of works have discussed the use of hedges in different discourses. (Liu, J., 2010, pp. 55-57; Liu, Lv, & Zhao, 2010, pp. 17-20). However, few researched the application of hedges in business news leads, especially on the comparison of the use of hedges from a cross-cultural perspective. A news lead, which contains brief and the most principal facts in a piece of news, plays an important role in enabling readers to have a general understanding of the event. Thus, this paper aims to expatiate on the pragmatic function of hedges used in business news leads by first analyzing hedges in business news leads from mainstream Chinese and American news websites, and then finding out the similarities and differences of hedge use in the two cultures and explore the reasons behind this. Considering that a number of hedge classifications proposed by previous scholars could hardly all be applied in this paper, two widely-accepted classifications of hedges with an emphasis on two perspectives will be adopted in the following study.

## Theoretical Framework

### *Overview of Hedge Classification*

Two models of hedge classification are introduced: Prince, Bosk and Frader’s model, focusing on pragmatic classification of hedges, and Hyland and Milton’s classification model according to different parts of speech of hedges.

**Prince, Bosk and Frader’s model.** Prince, Bosk and Frader (1982) classified hedges into approximator and shield. Approximator affects the propositional content rather than the speakers’ commitment, while shield affects the speaker’s commitment rather than the propositional content. Shield is used for expressing the fuzziness of the relationship between the propositional content and the speaker. Approximator can be further divided into adaptor and rounder, and shield consists of plausibility shield and attribution shield.

**Hyland and Milton’s model.** Hyland and Milton categorized hedges into modal verbs, epistemic lexical verb, epistemic adjective, adverb and noun and phraseological expression (1997, pp. 185-186). Attention should be paid to words having more than one meaning. Take the word “suggest” as an example. It is essential to distinguish it being used as assertion of proposition from being used as an epistemic lexical verb. The former one should be omitted, while the latter should be retained.

The above two models of categorization are widely used in classifying hedges on which the most of other classification methods are based. Prince, Bosk and Frader’s pragmatic classification helps to explain the pragmatic function fulfilled by hedges and Hyland and Milton’s present the use of hedges acting as different parts of speech. Bearing different analyzing perspectives, the two models when used together, can take a full view of hedges used in the text and using either would leave the use of hedges unanalyzed from the other perspective. Thus, in order to find out the similarities and differences of how pragmatic function of hedges is achieved and how hedges of different parts of speech are used in the business news leads in mainstream Chinese and American news websites, this paper combines the two to be the adopted model, as follows.

**Table 1. Classification Model of Hedges**

<b>Classification of hedges</b>	Pragmatic function	approximator	adaptor	a bit, almost, kind of, more or less
			rounder	around, most, many, less/more than
		shield	plausibility	I think, we suppose, argue
			attribution	according to, it’s said that, based on
	Part of speech	modal verb		would, may, could, might, should, will
		lexical verb		indicate, suggest, predict, suppose, show
		epistemic adjective, adverb and noun		about, (un)likely, most, possible(ly), relatively, approximate(ly), somewhat,
		phraseological expression		nothing is known about, it is not known

### *Pragmatic Principles*

Hedges can be used for realizing pragmatic function of text. Two pragmatic principles have relevance with the use of hedges in this paper. One is the “Cooperative Principle” proposed by Grice (1975), which is the assumption that participants in a conversation normally attempt to be informative, truthful, relevant and clear in conversation analysis. This Principle can be divided into four maxims that arise from the pragmatics of natural language, including maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation and maxim of manner. The principle enables effective communication.

The second one is Brown and Levinson's "Face-saving Theory" (1987), which claims that people should evaluate the weight of face-threatening acts (FTAs) and should build up hearer's positive face and avoid posing threats to the hearer's negative face. These two aspects of face are the basic wants in any social interaction. Participants can use positive politeness and negative politeness to realize effective communication.

### Research Questions and Subjects

According to the data, the present study puts forward the following questions to be answered: (1) How are hedges in different categories distributed in Chinese and American business news leads? (2) What are the similarities and differences in the use of hedges in Chinese and American business news leads? (3) What are the causes of these similarities and differences?

To answer the above questions, 60 business news leads were collected from mainstream Chinese news websites including *Renmin Daily*, *Guangming Daily*, *Economic Daily* and *Beijing News*; another 60 business news leads were collected from mainstream American news websites including *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*. All reports were published in October, 2017. In light of the authoritativeness and representativeness of these mainstream business websites, all the chosen news leads, despite not being identical, are typical of their kind in the business field and can well reflect the current business concern across the world.

### Results and Discussion

**Table 2. Overall Number and Frequency of Hedges in Chinese and American Websites**

Website	Number of Words of Leads	Number of Hedges	Hedges per 1,000 Words
Chinese websites	4014	76	18.93
American websites	3015	70	23.22

**Table 3. Distribution of Different Types of Hedges in Chinese and American Websites (with frequency per 1,000 words in parentheses)**

Classification of Hedges		Chinese Websites	American Websites
Pragmatic function	approximator	adaptor	11 (2.74)
		rounder	23(5.73)
		total	34(8.47)
	shield	plausibility	20(4.98)
		attribution	22(5.48)
		total	42(10.46)
Part of speech	modal verb	14(1.99)	18(5.97)
	lexical verb	34(7.97)	16(5.31)
	noun	2(0.50)	9(3.00)
	lexical adjective	8(2.00)	6(1.99)
	lexicaladverb	12(3.00)	11(3.65)
	phraseological expression	16(6.48)	10(3.32)

#### Similarities

According to Table 2, hedges are used both in Chinese and American business news leads with the frequency used in the former being 18.93 per 1,000 words and that used in the latter being 23.22 per 1,000 words. Secondly, Table 3 reveals that among all subcategories of hedges in both Chinese and American

business news leads, shields account for the highest frequency (10.46 and 13.27 per 1,000 words, respectively) and both news leads have a preference for hedges of the lexical verb compared with other parts of speech (Chinese websites being 7.97 per 1,000 words having highest frequency and American websites being 5.31 per 1,000 words holding the second in its category).

The reasons for the similarities can be explained as follows: Firstly, the unique feature of news writing necessitates the use of hedges. Zhang Jian believed news report should be object, fast, accurate and timely (1994, pp. 215-220). However, too much detailed information cannot be provided due to the requirement of a timely report. Moreover, news reports should be accurate without misleading or containing untrue information. Thus, the use of hedges becomes necessary in that they enable the news report to be published in time, as well as defend reports against the accusation of inaccuracy and subjectivity.

Secondly, revealing the source of information by using hedges in a news lead can both enhance credibility and authoritativeness of the news and prevent the medium shouldering responsibility for the content of information. For instance, reporters might use “according to...”, or “...suggests”, etc. to indicate the source of information so as to distance themselves from the content in the news lead when they cannot get first-hand materials.

**Example 1:**

*Chinese lead: 俄罗斯卫星网10月18日报道称, 福布斯公布美国富豪榜, 比尔·盖茨连续24年蝉联美国首富, 位于福布斯富豪榜首(GuangmingDaily,2017).*

*Translated version: According to Sputniknews on October 18, Bill Gates, having been the richest man in the United States for 24 consecutive years, tops the Forbes list of the richest men in the United States (Guangming Daily, 2017).*

*American lead: President Trump intends to nominate Joseph Simons, a longtime expert in competition law, to head the Federal Trade Commission, America's top privacy and consumer protection agency, the White House said Thursday (Fung, 2017).*

In the above example, both “...称 (according to)” in the Chinese lead and “...said” in the American lead inform readers of the source of information, drawing a line with the proposition. Besides, when the source of information comes from an authority, the proposition can be more reliable.

Thirdly, the use of hedges can allow for space for other views or future correction of content. Business people refer to business reports to conduct business activities and make business plans. However, the business environment is volatile and unstable. If the absoluteness of information leads to inaccurate information, the news medium would be to blame for misleading the public.

Fourthly, hedges are used in business news leads due to readers' cognitive needs and comprehending habits. Sometimes, readers are more likely to accept the rough concept rather than specific or even wordy information. This is especially true for time and figure expression.

**Example 2:**

*Chinese lead: 据新加坡媒体报道, 新加坡陆路交通管理局日前将该国地铁环线第六节段爱德华太子站和地铁隧道的建筑施工合同授予中国中铁隧道集团, 合同总值超过3.1亿新加坡元 (约合15亿元人民币) (Renmin Daily, 2017).*

*Translated version: According to Singapore media, Singapore Land Transportation Authority has recently awarded the construction contract for the Edward Prince station and subway tunnel in the sixth section of the country's circle MRT line to China Railway Tunnel Group, with a total contract value of more than 310 million Singapore dollars*

(about 1.5 billion yuan ) (Renmin Daily, 2017).

*American lead: Travelling to America has become somewhat of a complicated process over the years, as unlike many countries around the world, there are a number of visa requirements that must be met, depending on the type of visit the traveler is looking to do (Burden, 2017).*

In the two cases, the numbers of money, country and visa requirements are expressed by using hedges instead of being exact as they should be. Despite not being precise, they are more readable and acceptable for readers. In such situations, hedges have a better informative effect rather than the too specific or wordy expressions.

As for the pragmatic function of hedges in a business news lead, the communicative purpose can be realized. More specifically, journalists obey the quality maxim of the cooperative principle and avoid posing threats to the readers' negative face under face-threatening act theory. For the former maxim, the use of hedges retain truthfulness and objectivity of the content and in the latter principle, it can help to mitigate assertiveness and would not impose readers to accept the writer's opinion. The following examples can well explain the fulfillment of the pragmatic function of hedges.

**Example 3:**

*Chinese lead: 在非洲，大多数人依旧生活在“现金为王”的时代。无论去哪里，总备好现金，因为可以刷卡的地方并不多。近来，中国移动支付公司开始进军非洲，在非洲使用手机支付不再是遥远的梦想 (Renmin Daily, 2017).*

*Translated version: In Africa, most people still live in the cash dominant age. Cash should be prepared in advance wherever they go because card swiping function is scarcely available in most places. Recently, Chinese mobile payment company has begun to enter Africa, where the use of mobile payment is no longer a distant dream (Renmin Daily, 2017).*

*American lead: New research published on Monday finds there is so much wind energy potential over oceans that it could theoretically be used to generate “civilization scale power” (Mooney, 2017).*

The Chinese news lead uses “大多数 (most)” and the American news lead uses “much” . The use of rounders seems to violate the maxim of quantity by not giving an exact number. However, this is to obey the maxim of quality, which requires that one should, by no means, say which one lacks adequate evidence. Since the reporters cannot acquire the information of exact number in the above cases, they both chose to follow the maxim of quality, trying to be cooperative in reporting news.

**Example 4:**

*American lead: President Trump is working on legislation that would create new incentives for companies to keep jobs in the U.S. and punish those that move overseas (Paletta, 2017).*

In this case, the modal verb “would” is used instead of “will” . “Would” can express tentativeness, while “will” does not allow for competitive views and sound assertive. Thus, “would” is used here to mitigate a face-threatening act and leave space for readers to make a decision.

**Differences**

According to the data, hedges in American business news leads are used more frequently than those used in Chinese business news leads, which means American news media more frequently express their uncertainty or distant themselves from the content by using hedges.

Moreover, it can be found that the use of epistemic verb accounts for the biggest share in all hedges used in Chinese business news leads; American business news leads outnumber the Chinese counterparts in the use of noun hedges.

As for the use of hedges with the same part of speech, American business news leads show more variety in the use of hedges than the Chinese business news leads. For example: in Chinese business news leads, only two hedges of plausibility “认为 (think)” and “表示 (said)” are used, while the same meaning is expressed in the form of “suggest”, “indicate”, “show”, “believe”, “said”, and “argue” etc. in American business news leads.

The above differences can be explained with the following reasons: Firstly, the difference is attributed to Chinese and American cultural differences. Being collective and harmony-conscious, Chinese people strive for conformity with authority or precedents' views, which assume a sense of authority and credibility. This gives rise to the lower usage of hedges in business news leads compared with their American counterparts'. However, valuing rational reasoning and critical thinking, western people would raise questions and propose suppositions. Thus, they would use different hedges to express their caution and tentativeness in reporting some propositions so that the information could be more tenable. In the use of hedge of shields, in particular, American business news leads adopt more varieties of shields. According to Feng Yin and Zhou Rong (2007, p. 112), they believe that using more varieties of hedges can enhance native speakers' objectiveness of proposition and lessen the writers' responsibility when information is incorrect so as to better protect the writer.

Secondly, different understanding of news value becomes another factor affecting the use of hedges in Chinese and American business news leads. Events to be reported and published on websites should be judged based on some principles with news value. Brighton and Foy give six elements for news value judgment, including relevance, topicality, composition, expectation, unusualness, worth and external influence (2007, p. 29). However, Chinese and American media differ in following the criteria. They report from different angles when choosing news with an external influence. For the news chosen for this study, it can be found that Chinese media mainly focused on such external influence as business development, CPI, and macroeconomic manipulation, etc. In contrast, western news was more concerned with individual's influence exerted by society. So, the coverage of business news was related to the unemployment rate, changes in the number of jobs offered and other business content affecting people's livelihoods. This difference would then give rise to the different use of hedges in their business news leads to fulfill different purposes.

Thirdly, linguistic differences between Chinese and English brings forth the different use of hedges of different parts of speech. According to Nida (1982), Chinese is a parataxis language, using more verbs to express meaning, while English is a hypotaxis language, which focuses on sentence structure by using more nouns. This could well explain why lexical verb accounts for the biggest portion in hedges used in Chinese business news leads and nouns appear more frequently in American business news leads than Chinese ones.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of hedges used in business news leads from mainstream Chinese and American websites, it is clear that both media use hedges in their reports, but they differ in the frequency and variety of hedges in different situations. In addition, the use of hedges in business news leads is a reflection of realization of pragmatic communication.

This study is of both theoretical and practical significance. On one hand, exploring reasons and the pragmatic function of hedges used in business news leads not only further enriches the theoretical basis of the cooperative principle and face-threatening act, but also, is the application of these theories in the news language field. On the other hand, this study enables people to have deeper understanding of hedges. Particularly in the process of cross-cultural communication, misunderstanding arising from the misuse of hedges could be decreased. This study is also significant in practice for media journalists. News writing books that teach journalists to write with accuracy and precision would guide them to avoid using hedges in news writing. However, this study reveals that both Chinese and American mainstream news websites use hedges to achieve some purposes. Thus, this study provides teaching and instructing advice for teachers and course book compilers in media field.

### Acknowledgement

This work was supported by *Innovative Research Team of E-C Comparative Studies in New Era*, A Program in SCBC (201798) and *English Language and Literature*, A Key Program in Guangdong Province, China.

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# Mapping: Images and Meaning Construction of Business Metaphors

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*[Abstract]* With typical data retrieved from leading COCA-based, mainstream newspapers dated from 2010 to 2017, this research aims to discuss: (1) the key role images play in metaphorical mappings and the synchronic construction of meaning in business context, and (2) how would metaphorical mappings be realized based on the new IB model? Metaphorical mappings of FINANCE-AS-STORM, and HOSTILITY-AS-DEVICE have been qualitatively elaborated upon and corpus-based evidence shows that visual images, highlighting or hiding, play an important role in meaning negotiation of elusive business concepts. Metaphorical mappings are dynamically fulfilled in the multi-dimensional four-space blend and realized in terms of superimposition of one image onto the other.

*[Keywords]* image; metaphorical mapping; integrated blending; meaning construction

## Introduction

Metaphor has received great attention from scholars (Lakoff & Johnson, 1987; Turner, 1991; Fauconnier, & Turner, 1994) since the 1980s. Enormous changes in metaphorical research have occurred from figurative point to cognitive aspects. The motivated and embodied nature of the metaphor has come to be appreciated by cognitive scholars, while criticisms still abound as it is time to approach metaphor as a “social and situated phenomenon, not just a matter of thought” (Zanotto, et al., 2008, pp. 11-43). Carmon (2003, p. 8) argued that the recent emphasis on cognitive aspects has consequently resulted in an “unwarranted lack of interest in the linguistic aspect of metaphor”. Nevertheless, the ubiquity of the metaphor is widely accepted, and metaphor, as a way of thinking one thing in terms of another, is possible precisely in a person’s conceptual system (Lakoff, & Johnson, 1987, pp. 5-6). Metaphor is characterized as a set of metaphorical mapping from the source domain on the target domain. The notion of metaphorical mapping has been developed through substantial linguistic analyses (Sweester, 1988, 1990; Lakoff, 1993) and its mechanisms have been elaborated upon by Lakoff (1993) and Fauconnier (1997, 2010) in conceptual blending theory (CBT).

In the current research, we attempt to build a new integrated blending (IB) model to explore the mapping process and meaning construction of innovative business metaphors. With typical data from Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), our objectives are to discuss: a. How would the new IB cognitive model help realize metaphorical mapping in a business context? b. The key role images and metaphorical mappings play in the synchronic construction of meaning in such context? By locating and scientifically identifying representative metaphors in COCA-based business newspapers, we try to describe in full detail the hiding images that business metaphors are conveying to the target readers, and hope that the Corpus-based evidence would shed light on valuable attention in further study.

## Metaphor, Mapping and Blending

The model that currently dominates metaphor theory was first outlined in *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1987, 2003). As stressed by Lakoff and Johnson (1987, 2003), metaphor is “a matter of understanding and experiencing one thing in terms of another” (2003, pp. 3-7). Metaphors are systematic and pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. They partially structure our

everyday concepts and this structure is reflected in our systematic language. Metaphor is a salient and pervasive cognitive process that links conceptualization and language as argued in CBT, proposed by Fauconnier (1997). Metaphor depends crucially on a cross-space mapping between the source and target inputs, in which blended spaces play a key role (Fauconnier, 2010, pp. 168-169). Blending, as Fauconnier emphasizes, is a cognitive operation on two Input mental spaces to yield a third space, the blend, which inherits partial structure from the input spaces and has emergent structure of its own (2010, pp. 149-151). Fauconnier explored metaphorical mappings in considerable detail and the key role analogical and metaphorical mappings play in the synchronic construction of meaning and its diachronic evolution. He pointed out that mappings between domains are “at the heart of the unique human cognitive faculty of producing, transferring and processing meaning”. Mappings are operated to build and link “mental spaces”. Analogy maps “partial structure” of a source domain onto partial structure of a target domain. As a mapping of “the schematic structure of the source domain onto that of the target domain”, metaphorical mapping is “asymmetric in that it is unidirectional” (Fauconnier, 2010, pp. 1-11). Close relations between metaphor and cognition have been studied insightfully in works such as Hu Zhuanglin (1997) and Shu Dingfang (2000) in China, who argued that the typical form of conceptual metaphor Target-domain is Source-domain, or alternatively, Target-domain as Source-domain is widely accepted.

The cognitive importance of mappings has been acknowledged in cognitive psychology (Norman, 1988), cognitive anthropology (Hutchins, 1995) and cognitive linguistics, as by Fauconnier (2010), in which three mapping categories – projection mappings, pragmatic function mappings and schematic mappings are identified and sufficiently clarified.

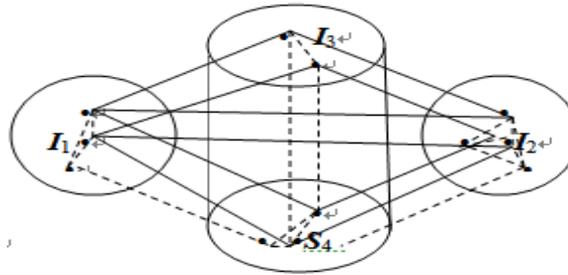
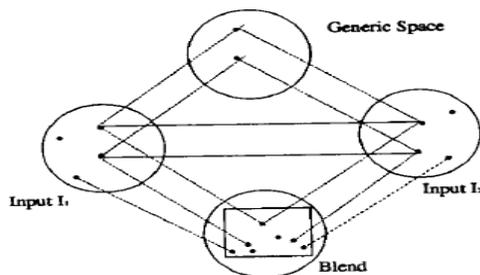
The previous research has laid solid foundation for qualitative study of conceptual metaphors. However, little quantitative evidence has been given, and less for metaphor study in the business context. More emphasis is laid on the study of isolated examples, which may carry evident shortages when it comes to make generalizations in business context. Therefore, we will focus on new corpus-based evidence in this research and attempt to explore how would meanings of business metaphor be mentally constructed and operated in terms of a new integrated blending (IB) model.

### **Mapping: Images and Meaning Construction of Business Metaphors**

The magnitude of mapping is highly stressed by Fauconnier, who argued that mappings are central to any understanding of semantic and pragmatic language interpretation and cognitive construction. Mappings are central to meaning construction, the high-level, complex mental operations that apply within and across domains when we think, act, or communicate (Fauconnier, 2010, pp. 1-13). With regard to business metaphors (metaphors in a general business context), metaphorical mappings play an irreplaceable role in meaning negotiation and construction of the elusive target domain. Grounded in bodily experience and from interactions with the physical environment, metaphorical mappings inspire resonance of dynamic aesthetics and artistic charm in business communications, and greatly contribute to better understanding of the elusive business targets (Yin, & Zheng, 2017). However, how would mappings in these contexts be realized to construct meanings of the abstract target? What image(s) would be triggered and what role would they play in the process of meaning construction? We will address these three key questions based on the new IB model (Figure 2), drawing on theoretical arguments and empirical findings from CBT.

As argued in Fauconnier (2010, pp. 149-151), four conditions are satisfied when two Input spaces  $I_1$  and  $I_2$  are blended, namely, cross-space mapping, generic space, blend and emergent structure. The blend

has emergent structure in three interrelated ways of composition, completion and elaboration. Schematically, then, a full four-space blend has been created, like in Figure 1. As far as metaphorical mappings are concerned, the blending of two spaces is far more complicated than that depicted in Figure 1. We found that the four spaces blend as much multi-dimensionally as dynamically, as suggested in the new integration model (Figure 2): input space  $I_1$  (the source) is partially mapped onto input space  $I_2$  (the target); the two inputs projected onto a fourth space, the blend, provided with the prototypical emergent structure of space  $I_3$ . It is worth noting that elements in the four spaces are dynamically interweaved with each other. The generic space  $I_3$  is derived from the prototypical structure of  $I_1$  and  $I_2$ . The mappings would be realized either by the fused elements or separate projection: on one hand, when counterparts are projected into the blend, they may be fused into a single element by virtue of  $I_3$ ; on the other hand, one of the counterparts is projected but not the other. Cases in point would be analyzed in detail in the following.



**Figure 1. Conceptual Blending** (Fauconnier, 2010, p. 151) **Figure 2. Integrated Blending**

### Sources and Data Collection

Sources in the research were retrieved, in the first stage, selectively from leading COCA-based, mainstream newspapers dated from 2010 to 2017. Four newspapers – the Associated Press (AP), *The New York Times* (NT), *The Washington Post* (WP) and *Newsweek* (NW) were targeted with great reputations in the field. After closely studying both the headlines and full texts, we established a new protocol of creative metaphors. By metaphorical creativity we mean the production and use of conceptual metaphors and/or their linguistic manifestations that are novel or unconventional, which can be source-induced, target-induced or context-induced creativity according to Kövecses (2010, pp. 664-694). Business creative metaphors are reliably identified according to the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) presented by Pragglejaz Group (2017), in which the relationship between the contextual meaning and the basic meaning of each lexical unit has been closely examined. In other words, if the former and the latter are closely related to each other, they are not metaphorically used. The metaphorically-used lexical units would be otherwise identified as they significantly contrast with each other. After source targeting and positioning, we found that conceptual metaphors were actively exploited in such contexts along with 465 representatives listed in Table 1.

**Table 1. COCA-Based Frequency of Business Metaphors (2010-2017)**

Business Metaphors	AP	NT	WP	NW	Total
FINANCE-AS-STORM	65	29	68	12	174
DEBT-AS-BURDEN	23	39	17	11	90
GROWTH-AS-ENGINE	18	33	29	8	88
IMPORTANCE-AS-MAGNITUDE	12	11	11	6	40
CHANGE-AS-LEAP	5	17	16	4	42
HOSTILITY-AS-DEVICE	6	15	6	4	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>465</b>

As Lakoff and Johnson noted, metaphorical expressions were pervasive and inspiring in these contexts and evoked strong imagery for both the source and target domains. More importantly, the concrete sources for the abstract targets were not random, but instead fell into patterns or schema which are defined as cognitive or mental structure by which the individual intellectually adapts to and organizes the environment (Huitt, & Hummel, 2003). A case in point is that the FINANCE-AS-STORM pattern was systematically recurrent in *The Washington Post* with 39.08% shares in the selected 174 metaphors. As identified in Table 1, correlation metaphors, for instance, GROWTH-AS-ENGINE, DEBT-AS-BURDEN, CHANGE-AS-LEAP, IMPORTANCE-AS-MAGNITUDE and HOSTILITY-AS-DEVICE were effectively employed to interpret meanings of more elusive business targets. Considering that the first three patterns have been closely examined in previous research (Yin & Zheng, 2017), the following examples were focused on, in order to give more evidence of metaphorical mapping:

***Mappings in FINANCE-AS-STORM Metaphor***

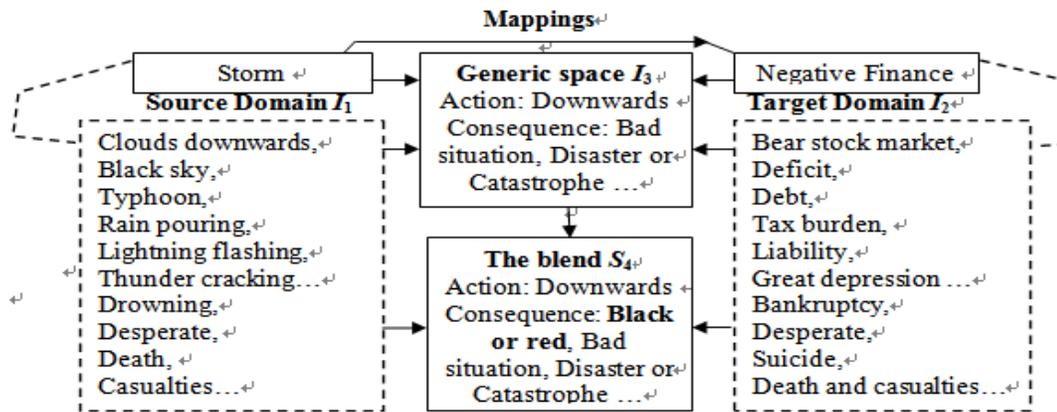
A storm literally refers to very bad weather. The striking imagery of a storm, prototyped by heavy rains, strong winds, dark clouds, thunder and lightning, etc., is metaphorically mapped to unfavorable finance in these cases (Table 2). With dynamic visual images of pouring rains, typhoons and rolling thunderbolt, it is perfectly possible to invite more conscious, vivid and complex visualizations in the mind’s eye.

**Table 2. Lexis for Conceptual Metaphor FINANCE-AS-STORM**

<b>Lexis</b>	<b>Example (Source)</b>
The Euro-zone debt storm, the storm gathers	<i>We are not powerless in the face of the Euro-zone debt storm. The government... will not stand on the sidelines and do nothing as the storm gathers</i> (Cha, & Goldfarb, 2012, p. A18).
storm clouds	<i>The storm clouds eventually lifted, Jefferies stock rebounded... he had seen the last of Mr. Egan</i> (Craig, 2013, p. 1).
storm clouds	<i>If storm clouds were brewing, they would seem to be well off in the horizon</i> (Schonbrun, 2015, p. 1).

As illustrated in Figure 3, prototypical images of natural storms, as well as the catastrophe, are effectively activated and partially mapped on the perception of a debt storm in the Euro-zone as if we were bodily trapped when the storm gathers. Consequently, the source domain and the target domain are projected into the blend,  $S_4$  in two ways: firstly, the two spaces  $I_1$  and  $I_2$  are prototypically fused into a single space  $I_3$  with an emergent structure of the two inputs – unpleasant situation, darkness, disaster and catastrophe in this case. Secondly, the counterparts could be projected separately, that is, either space  $I_1$  or space  $I_2$  is projected.

In the above cases of *storm clouds*, partial structures of the source space are successfully mapped on the target space. The projection makes new relations available that did not exist in the separate inputs.



**Figure 3. Mappings in FINANCE-AS-STORM Metaphor**

This is how it works. While the storm in  $I_1$  is approaching, large clouds are gathering, and the sky is becoming dark. When the storm is leaving, the clouds are moving upwards and the sky comes clear again. Based on our encyclopedia knowledge, the impact of such storm could be devastating. For instance, a violent storm could end up with a casualty toll. In a similar fashion, the stock price in the target domain  $I_2$  tends to go up in the bull market. However, as the bear market drags on, the stock price may head downwards and become less attractive, which may result in bankruptcy and great depression, or even death and casualties. Novel elements of the target domain are applied to a given source domain. As argued in Kövecses (2010), this is a case of target-induced creativity of metaphors. The cross-mapping in the unconventional metaphor is, to a certain degree, straightforward. Directions and actions in space  $I_1$  are metaphorically projected into the target domain with a salient structure that “upwards is good while downwards is bad”. Directions make one of the deciding parameters of the status of the current situation. More importantly, the consequence of the storm is metaphorically mapped on the target domain with an emergent structure. A situation moving downwards would lead to devastating consequence. Prototypical structures from inputs  $I_1$  and  $I_2$  are taken and the generic structure in  $I_3$  has been created, which contains what spaces  $I_1$  and  $I_2$  have in common. By composition and completion, this familiar structure is recruited in the blend  $S_4$ .

It is worth noting that the blend contains emergent structures not provided by the generic space as a result of separate projection either from the source or the target domain. In Craig’s case of *storm clouds*, unfavorable colors, black from the source, and red from the target, are projected separately in the blend. Based on the common sense and cognitive configurations, the four-space mappings are elaborated and realized multi-dimensionally as suggested in the new IB model in Figure 2.

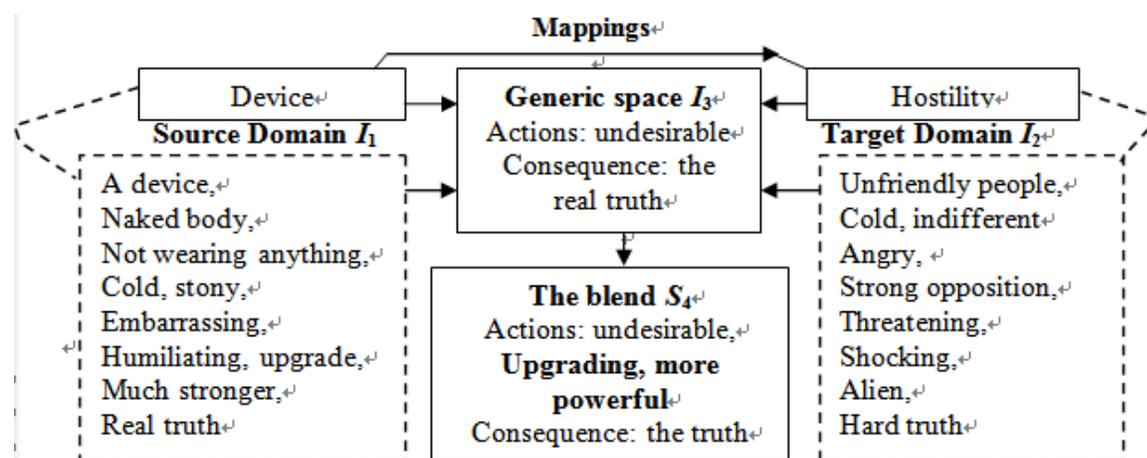
### **Mappings in HOSTILITY-AS-DEVICE Metaphor**

Another way of realizing metaphorical mapping is in terms of “superimposition of one image onto the other” (Kövecses, 2002, p. 38). We may well construct in our mind’s eye a unified hybrid figure or image with conscious effort. First, when a unit of language is encountered, a whole range of semantic connections and perceptual simulations are at least partially activated as suggested in Ritchie (2013, pp. 95-105). More importantly, we have a preference for similarities based on what things do rather than what they are like. Consider the following cases in Table 3.

**Table 3. Lexis for Business Metaphor HOSTILITY-AS-DEVICE**

Lexis	Example (Source)
to fuse hostility	<i>What they have in common is a capacity to fuse hostility toward the West with hatred for modernity...</i> (Malik, 2015, p. 9)
inflame hostility	<i>...a Supreme Court ruling in favor of nationwide gay marriage would inflame hostility, even violence, especially in the Southern states</i> (Keller, 2015, p. 17).
naked hostility	<i>Or it can be told the government way: How veiled threats and naked hostility have made northeastern Nevada one of the toughest spots in America to be a federal employee</i> (Foster & Sonner, 2000).
cold hostility	<i>This country's civil war sometimes seems never to have ended, with a cold hostility that occasionally flares up into open violence</i> (Worth, 2010, p. 5).
undisguised hostility	<i>Such exchanges have fanned an undisguised hostility among Mr. Trump's critics in Britain...</i> (Cowell, 2017).

Hostility in the cases of Malik and Keller is as much like a device as the literal electric one, which can be fused and inflamed. When devices are fused, they join together physically or chemically; once they are combined, there is a good chance for them to become much bigger and stronger. Consequently, hostility, the target domain, is metaphorically mapped with the prototypical images of a physical device, the source domain. However, in cases such as Foster and Sonner, and in Cowell, hostility is naked, cold and undisguised. It correlates with higher imageability and we can perceive directly with our senses or experience through bodily actions (Lakoff, & Johnson, 1999). The target-source correlation is drawn, to a certain degree, on what the target does more than what it is like. As described in Foster and Sonner's, hostility is as naked as people who are not wearing anything. The images of a naked person are metaphorically mapped onto the actions of the government. The visual simulations are strongly activated based on more similarities in experience than in appearance. We are more likely to think that what the government did was as shocking as naked. Instead of looking naked, the government acted like the one who is naked. Schematic images of this case would work like this: without wearing anything – feeling cold, embarrassed or humiliated – violating ethical code – unfriendly opinions or angry public – strong opposition – shocking – the hard truth. Metaphorical mappings are realized in terms of visual hybrid of prototypical images and conscious effort of the two things in spite of enormous variation between individuals' ability to visualize things in vivid detail (Breitmeyer, 2010, p. 139). The mapping process is illustrated in Figure 4.



**Figure 4. Mappings in HOSTILITY-AS-DEVICE Metaphor**

The source domain  $I_1$  and the target domain  $I_2$  are projected into the blend  $S_4$  in two ways, as well: firstly, the two spaces  $I_1$  and  $I_2$  are prototypically fused into a single space  $I_3$  with emergent structures of the two inputs, undesirable actions and the real truth in this case. Secondly, some structures are projected separately from the counterparts. For instance, the upgrading actions in  $S_4$  are hard truth no matter how shocking they are.

### Conclusion

Conceptual metaphor is fairly ubiquitous in business contexts, and they can be highly experienced and operated by virtue of cognitive mappings. Inspired by Fauconnier's findings, we created a new integrated blending model in exploration in meaning construction of conceptual metaphors. With typical data retrieved from leading COCA-based, mainstream newspapers dated from 2010 to 2017, we yielded the following findings:

Firstly, creative business metaphors such as FINANCE-AS-STORM, DEBT-AS-BURDEN, GROWTH-AS-ENGINE, IMPORTANCE-AS-MAGNITUDE, CHANGE-AS-LEAP, HOSTILITY-AS-DEVICE are reliably identified according to the Metaphor Identification Procedure as presented by Pragglejaz Group. Corpus-based evidence shows visual images, highlighting or hiding, play an important role in meaning negotiation of elusive business concepts.

Secondly, metaphorical mappings are central to meaning construction of business metaphors, and they are dynamically realized in two ways: in the multi-dimensional four-space blend and by superimposition of one image onto the other.

### Acknowledgements

This paper was funded by Image: Changes and Building of Guangzhou City in the World – A Narrative and Cognitive Perspective (No. 2018GZGJ162), a co-constructed project with Guangzhou City, China, English Language and Literature, a Key Project in Guangdong Province, and The Innovative Research Team of English-Chinese Comparison in the New Era in South China Business College of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (No. 298).

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# The PAD Class: A New Course Design for the Business English Writing Course under Informatization Teaching Background

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*[Abstract] As a teaching pattern combining psychology and pedagogy, the PAD Class paradigm keeps the essence of the discussion class mode, and with the help of informatization teaching background, it strengthens the communication between the teacher and students, which could help timely adjust the classroom teaching activities. Taking the relatively important chapter “Sales Letter” as the example, this paper tries to demonstrate the core theory of the PAD Class by comparative analysis with the traditional classroom and the discussion classroom. In this paper, a follow-up questionnaire evaluating the effectiveness of the PAD Class paradigm was conducted and analyzed. The results indicate that most of the students accept this teaching pattern, but it still needs more efforts to adapt to the current classroom.*

*[Keywords] PAD Class; Business English Writing; informatization teaching; course design*

## Introduction

In today’s classroom, professional English courses are welcome by the students because they are practical. With the proposition of the “One Belt One Road” initiative, opportunities for international business communication are increasing, which will require students to master some professional and practical English. Thus, English for Special Purpose or Special Academic Purpose has been set into the curriculum. However, although these kind of extended courses represent a new trend in college English, it is not easy for the teachers because of a lack of expertise. The adoption of a certain teaching pattern is widely discussed by English teachers concerning such courses.

With the development of modern pedagogy, more psychological factors have been considered in the teaching paradigm. Since students are the main subjects in learning activities, their learning mental health is valued. Recently, the new PAD Class teaching pattern, is such a paradigm that emphasizes the psychological needs of both the teacher and the students. It somehow is a combination of the existing pedagogies. Differing from the traditional class teaching paradigm, it could be applied to the extended courses, to aid the teaching effects.

Although this class pattern was proposed only in recent years, it has been widely used in different courses, from elementary schools to universities, and from liberal arts to science. Wei, et al. (2018) commented that the use of the PAD Class paradigm in university English teaching consciously adopts various kinds of methods to cultivate comprehensive English ability by combining different teaching modes like the critical thinking teaching method, the flipped classroom concept, mobile education, stratified teaching and so on. With such innovative educational revolution, teaching levels could be enhanced in different aspects, such as from teaching aims, teaching content, class activity curriculum, and teaching evaluations, etc.

In the following parts, a brief comparison between the traditional class teaching pattern and the PAD Class pattern is introduced, as well as the PAD Class under the informatization teaching background. Then, a PAD Class design of a model unit from Business English Writing is demonstrated, followed by a questionnaire evaluating the use of this class pattern.

## Literature Review

### ***Traditional Class Teaching Paradigm***

Lecturing is mainly used in the traditional class teaching paradigm in China. It is good for teachers to organize and to monitor the teaching activities, which helps the students to master the knowledge and skills in a more direct way. Since the characteristic of this teaching mode is to suit the industrial era, it is by no means adaptable to modern education which requires students to be self-motivated. In addition, key competences such as critical and creative thinking, collaboration and communication are needed for the students (Zhang, 2017a). Although the teaching paradigms have been developed for centuries and a variety of teaching methods have been used in class with the lecturing mode, the core pattern still remains the same.

### ***The PAD Class Teaching Paradigm***

The traditional class teaching paradigm has been changing in the recent years, with new teaching forms like Mooc and flipped classroom, for example. It does not exactly reform and change our classroom. The core theory of cultivating a student lies in critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration, which are also the focus of PAD Class Teaching paradigm. The PAD Class Teaching paradigm consists of three major stages: teacher's presentation, students' assimilation, and discussions within groups and with the whole class, including the teacher, involved. For the stage of students' assimilation, the teaching mode leaves two choices for the teacher: one requiring students to assimilate the previous lecturing in class, and one after class, which makes it flexible to the class arrangement. This way of operation is based on the psychological principles of learning: students need time to assimilate what they have learned before they form their viewpoints for discussions, otherwise, the discussion stage lacks depth.

In this paradigm, there are two ways to conduct the PAD Class pattern – in-class PAD and cross-class PAD. Take a 80 minutes class for example, the in-class PAD bisects the class into three parts – the teacher's presentation (probably the first 40 minutes), students' assimilation in class (probably 15 minutes), and the group discussion, as well as the class discussion, and the teacher's summary (the rest of the class). The cross-class PAD leaves the assimilation part for after class so that at the beginning of the next class, discussions on the previous lesson are made, followed by the teacher's presentation of the next lesson. Usually, the latter is preferred because it gives the students more time to assimilate.

### ***The PAD Class Under the Informatization Teaching Background***

In the modern educational background, it is not enough to just have offline classes. Education is regarded as a vital part of the whole education system (Zhang, 2015). It would be good to use a relevant online platform, e.g., duifenE (either the Wechat subscription or the PC website), so as to increase the effect of the PAD Class pattern. For example, if the students are randomly grouped right before they attend the class, they might have more interest and motivation for discussing with different group mates for the change. Moreover, with the help of such a platform, the communication between the teacher and students would be more frequent because it provides an instant messenger function as well as the class judgment section. In addition, for the in-class questions and answers (Q&A) part after the discussion, the students doing the presentation could be chosen randomly, which might push the students to really work on the discussion project.

### **Class Design of the Evaluation of the PAD Class Paradigm**

Currently, students have various Business English Courses to choose from, for example, Cambridge Business English, Business English Reading, Business English Translation, and Business English Listening and Speaking, etc., among which, Business English Writing Course is of importance and is one of the most practical because most students in this career after graduation would have a much larger chance to read and write in English.

The innovation of the use of this paradigm in such a course is that since this kind of course is a practical one with very limited lecturing time, the teacher would find it really difficult to make the class understand while leaving enough time for the students to digest the material. Take one of the most representative chapters “Sales Letter” as an example (Hu, & Che, 2016). This paper designed one class section with the use of the PAD Class paradigm under the informatization teaching background.

Normally, in the traditional writing class of the “Sales Letter”, a class, usually dominated by the teacher, would be divided into sections such as teacher lecture, student practice, perhaps with some brainstorming discussions or Q&A activities as the lead-in or the assimilation part. For example, a true teaching curriculum for this course from an awarded teacher of national teaching competition contains the following parts: the lead-in part (a group discussion of the definition of sales letter, promotion, and effective sales), the body part (introducing the opening, body, and conclusion of sales letter by thoroughly going through the examples listed in the textbook), and the conclusion part (a summary of the chapter contents and homework assigned). The teaching approaches used in this class are the communicative method, the task-based teaching method and the cooperative learning method. Through the study of this chapter, students should grasp the channels of product promotion. However, even for such an experienced teacher, there are difficulties in teaching this course because of the limited class time for finishing the class content, because of the students’ inefficient practice in and after class, and because of a lack of sufficient interaction between the teacher and the students.

To tackle the problems mentioned above, the PAD Class Paradigm can be used here. For the unfinished class content, the teacher should not teach too much because the students need some time to assimilate and should have the ability to learn by themselves, or at least this kind of ability should be cultivated as part of the teaching.

In the class presentation part, the teacher has only half of the original time to teach the same content (Zhang, 2017b), which is approximately 40 minutes for each class. In this case, a concise, guiding and frame presentation should be presented by the teacher, instructing the study objectives as well as the logic structure of this chapter and the relevant example, e.g., the use of the sales letters, value selling points, useful patterns and sentences. This way of guiding can only be macroscopic.

The students may only half-understand, which is good for the after-class assimilation. The function of this part for the students is to read, to review, to think independently and to finish the assignment, of which the assignment is an important stage between the presentation part and the discussion. For this chapter, writing homework is assigned through the platform “DuiFenE”. “Suppose ‘you’ have a new customer, Mr. Johnson, who has recently made his first order. Now ‘you’ are asked to write him a letter to maintain ‘your’ relationship with him and motivate him to make more orders”. In addition, the students are also asked to think of questions to test their partners, as well as to prepare for the difficult areas that they cannot understand in the textbook. Also, sparkle points from their notes are welcome to share with their partners for the next period’s discussion.

At the beginning of the next period, class discussions would be conducted. The teacher might go over their homework through the platform beforehand. Since the students are well prepared, they should definitely have topics to discuss, and have ideas to share. In addition, the platform guarantees that students do not know who is going to speak during the class discussion part, which encourages them to speak or at least to pay attention to their group members.

In the following part, after one semester’s lecturing using this method, an evaluation of this class pattern was made through a questionnaire.

### **Methods of the Evaluation of the PAD Class for Business English Writing Course**

#### ***Aim***

The aim of this evaluation was to examine whether the use of the PAD Class paradigm was accepted by the students and what the students thought about this teaching method.

#### ***Participants***

In total, 47 students were asked to voluntarily participate in this survey. As an outcome, the results of 34 students were evaluated, with 22 females and 12 males.

#### ***Design and Materials***

With the aim of the study, 7 questions were used in the questionnaire, with 5 multiple choices, 4 of which contain only one answer, and 2 open-ended questions. The questions were designed on the basis of Prof. Zhang’s questionnaire.

Question 1: Which class pattern would you prefer? A. Traditional Classroom B. The PAD Classroom C. Flipped Classroom;

Question 2: Do you think the use of the PAD Class paradigm can raise your enthusiasm in English study? A. Yes B. No C. Not sure;

Question 3: Has the use of the PAD Class meet the teaching goal? A. Yes B. No C. Not sure;

Question 4: During the group discussion, what do you think of the questions raised by your group members? A. can answer the question with a thorough thinking B. can answer the question without thinking C. cannot answer the question;

Question 5: What are the advantages of using the PAD Class? (You may choose more than one answer.) A. During the discussion, I can learn some other students’ ideas and view the problem through a different angle. B. The teacher’s active guidance and encouragement leads in the classroom discussions. C. It is easier and more fun to learn than that in traditional classroom. D. The classroom teaching form is new, and the class activity is better than the traditional teaching method.

Question 6: If you think the use of this paradigm cannot meet the teaching goal, what are the reasons?

Question 7: Do you have any suggestions on this teaching paradigm?

#### ***Results***

The results of the multiple choices of the questionnaire are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. The Percentage of Students Selecting Each Choice in the Questionnaire**

	<b>Question 1</b>	<b>Question 2</b>	<b>Question 3</b>	<b>Question 4</b>	<b>Question 5</b>
Choice A	24%	41%	29%	97%	71%
Choice B	59%	6%	15%	0%	68%
Choice C	18%	53%	56%	3%	47%
Choice D	---	---	---	---	53%

The results of the two open-ended questions are given in Tables 2 and 3. Answers were summarized in brief, along with the percentage of students who chose each of the answers.

**Table 2. The Percentage of Students Selecting Different Answers for Question 6**

Reasons Why the PAD Class cannot Meet the Teaching Goal	Percentage of Students
Low study motivation	32%
Low capacity of self-learning ability	21%
Group members do not cooperate	21%
Bad time coordination within group members after class	6%
The teacher does not present enough	6%
Cannot absorb the knowledge in class	3%
Boring content	3%
No network access in class	3%
Time limits after class	3%
Low English proficiency	3%

**Table 3. The Percentage of Students for the Different Suggestions of the PAD Class Paradigm**

Suggestions on the PAD Class Paradigm	Percentage of Students
Should find some more interesting things to do in class	15%
Teachers should present more in detail	9%
Too much homework	9%
Should lower the discussion level	6%
Do not want any innovation in class	6%
Should have more online discussion	6%
Need more innovations in class	3%
Want to be grouped with friends	3%
No group discussions	3%
Need more time to self-study in class	3%

### **Discussions**

As can be seen from the results, more than half of the students would like to use the PAD Class paradigm but they did not know that whether this teaching pattern could meet the teaching goal. Although quite a few students felt that by using this paradigm, they would have more enthusiasm in English study, there were still half that were not sure about it. During the group discussion part, almost all the students thought that they could answer the question raised by their group members with thorough thinking. Considering the advantages of using this teaching pattern, the majority of students believed that they could learn from other students' ideas and view the problem through a different angle, and that the teacher guided the discussions actively and encouraged the students to discuss. Approximately half of the students thought that it was easier to study under this teaching mode, that it was more fun compared to the traditional classroom, and that it was a new method with a better classroom activity.

As for the open-ended questions, 1/3 of the students admitted that they had a low motivation in study; 1/5 of the students had a low capacity of self-learning ability and they thought that their group members did not cooperate in the discussion session. Most of the students did not have any suggestions for this teaching paradigm, but of the suggestions made by the students, they felt that interesting things should be included in class.

From the above interpretation of the results, we can see that, to some extent, the PAD Class paradigm is welcome by the students because it provides a more concise presentation made by the teacher

so as to leave more time for them to do discussions or group presentations. However, we should admit that if this teaching method is to be carried out successfully, the teacher is required to present well, summarizing the main points of the textbook in a way that students can accept. Another fact is that students' self-study abilities count a lot in and after class. If they have a low motivation in study, they have less enthusiasm in learning the subject well. This teaching paradigm actually requires the students to assimilate the knowledge on their own, which requires good autonomous study. However, another characteristic of the PAD Class pattern is that humanism works in it. We should accept that different students have different study goals and the teacher cannot satisfy all of the students by catering to their interests. All in all, this teaching paradigm is accepted by most of the students, but there is still a lot that can be improved.

### **Conclusion**

The teaching paradigm is core to school education (Marincovich, 2007). Different from the traditional class paradigm, the PAD Class values the mode of students' assimilation and discussions. However, this paradigm weakens students' performance in discussion by not evaluating too much on it so as to encourage them to develop their internalization of study motivation. In this case, self monitoring and self-controlled abilities count. In addition, the teacher's leaving blanks in class also teaches the students not to persist on the very difficult problems, especially in English study. On the contrary, it would be good to skip it and get help from others. At the same time, it impels the students to work together and communicate more, which is good and important in English study.

As for the effectiveness of this teaching pattern, to some extent, it is a combination of traditional class and discussion class (Zhang, 2014), melting with some other teaching methods and skills. It still needs more time to adapt to nowadays classroom.

### **Acknowledgements**

This research was financially supported by the Key Program of the English Language and Literature of Guangdong Province, 2016. It was also part of the research of Guangdong Provincial Quality Project – Teaching Research and Reform Project of Higher Education in Guangdong, 2017, “A Practical Research of the PAD Class Pattern in the College English Extended Courses”, and the project of “A PAD Class Paradigm Study for English Extended Courses under Educational Informatization Background” for Guangdong University of Foreign Studies South China Business College (Grant No. 2017JG02).

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# **Scaffolding Business Learning: Business English Teachers' Interaction with Students in ESP Classrooms from a Chinese University**

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**[Abstract]** *The present study aims to explore how three business English teachers provide scaffolding for learners during teacher-student interaction in ESP classrooms from a Chinese university. Classroom observation was employed to collect the data. The analysis of the transcription showed that five ways of providing scaffolding were used by the business English teachers in this study, including offering explanation, recruitment, direction maintenance, frustration control and making critical features. The results reveal the significance of the business English teachers' role in facilitating the students' learning in ESP classrooms.*

**[Keywords]** *teacher-student interaction; business English teachers; scaffolding*

## **Introduction**

Business English has been conceived as a branch or variety of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Ellis, & Johnson, 2002; Zhang, 2007) as it shares common and distinct features with other ESP courses, including needs analysis, syllabus design, course design, teaching materials and so on. On the other hand, the teaching of Business English has salient characteristics that are different from other ESP courses due to its blend of specific content and general content (Ellis, & Johnson, 2002). Just as McCarthy and Carter (2004, p. 3) pointed out, the teaching of Business English should follow the principle of “knowing how language works and how people use it is a first and indispensable step towards deciding what shall be taught, and is one of the components, along with knowledge of the psychology of learning and the social and cultural contexts of learning, which feed in to how we teach languages”, illustrating that both language and the context of the business world should be seriously taken into account for teaching Business English. In China, it is a common practice for non-English majors in universities to learn College English (an integrated English course) for two years, then follow with ESP courses (Zheng, 2012). Accordingly, Business English teaching in China has gone through great changes and an increasing number of schools at tertiary levels have offered Business English programs to meet the needs of the learners (Zhang, 2007). Undoubtedly, it is truly challenging for business English teachers to teach learners with limited business general knowledge in English and without work experience in business. How to improve business English teaching and learning effectively is one of the chief concerns for the Business English teachers in China. To achieve this goal, Business English teachers employ different approaches for their teaching designs, such as Case Study, Content-Based Instruction approach, Problem-based Learning and so on. Meanwhile, the classroom is conceived as an institutional context since it has unique discourse conventions and terminology (Seedhouse, 2004). Moreover, teachers, being an importance variance in students' achievement, account for 30% of the total (Hattie, 2003).

*On the other hand, Vygotsky (1978) pointed out that potential for learning and cognitive development was determined by transition across the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the distance or the cognitive gap between the learner's current level and potential level in problem solving with a more competent individual, including teachers, more capable peers and adults. In addition, this kind of assistance*

*in the ZPD has been defined as “scaffolding” and regarded as a major component for teaching (Bruner, 1984, as cited in Roehler, & Cantlon, 1996, p. 3). In term of scaffolding offered by the teachers, it can effectively assist the students to internalize information in a classroom setting if they are given opportunities to construct their current knowledge and ideas (Roehler, & Cantlon, 1996).*

*Realizing the important role of scaffolding provided by the teachers in classroom interaction, this study attempts to explore how business English teachers provide scaffolding to students during teacher-student interaction in ESP classrooms from a Chinese university. Classroom observation is employed in this study to get live data from the business English classrooms. The present study first presents studies related to teacher scaffolding in the language classrooms. Then, the design of the research for exploring how business teachers providing scaffolding to the students during classroom interaction is explained. Based on analysis of the classroom discourse, ways of providing scaffolding used by the business teachers are displayed. Finally, conclusions and implications for Business English teaching are discussed.*

## **Literature Review**

### ***Studies on Teacher Scaffolding in Classrooms***

A number of empirical studies have been conducted to explore how teachers scaffold students to learn through different kinds of teacher-student interactions. An early study by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) found that scaffolding could serve the following functions: recruiting the learner’s interest in the task; simplifying the task; maintaining pursuit of a particular objective; making critical features; frustration control; demonstrating or modelling solutions to a task. Roehler and Cantlon (1996) outlined 5 different types of scaffolding provided by the teachers to promote students’ language learning, including offering explanations, inviting student participation, verifying and clarifying student understandings, modeling and inviting students to contribute clues. Another illustrative study (Gibbons, 2003) described four ways employed by the teachers to scaffold students’ language learning, including recasting students’ contribution, reformulating during interaction, indicating the need for reformulation and helping the students recontextualize their personal knowledge.

*A case study by Haneda (2009) showed that the teacher attempted to engage the students in co-constructing the curriculum knowledge by effectively reformulating and expanding their responses. A recent study by Crichton (2013) illustrated that the learners could be animators, authors and principals under teacher’s effective guidance. As a result, the learners gradually took over responsibility for participating in interaction by using their current knowledge to expand the language learning, enabling them to take the initiative of learning and enhance their ability of self-regulating behaviors.*

### ***Aim of the Present Study***

Although the above studies illustrate the ways and effects of scaffolding provided by teachers, most of them were directed at younger language learners and foreign language learning. Hence, the current study aims to explore how business English teachers scaffold the learners during student-teacher interaction in ESP classrooms from a Chinese university. The analysis of the study is based on the guidelines proposed by other researchers (Roehler, & Cantlon, 1996; Wood, et al., 1976). Accordingly, the current study makes an attempt to answer the following researcher question:

*How business English teachers scaffold learners during teacher-student interactions in ESP classrooms from a Chinese university?*

## **Methodology**

### ***Participants***

The current study was conducted in an average university in Guangzhou, China. Three business English teachers who were teaching “BEC vantage” agreed to participate in the research. Their business English teaching experience ranged from 2 to 5 years. They are referred to by pseudonyms in this study. Moreover, 135 students aged between 20 and 21 from three ESP classrooms, who selected “BEC vantage” as an ESP course were also involved in the current study. Most of them majored in Economics, Finance, International Trade or Marketing and a small number of them majored in Accounting or Management.

### ***Instrument***

Classroom observation can serve as a useful way for the researcher to get live data from the social situation that was naturally occurring in the classroom (Ellis, & Barkhuizen, 2005). Furthermore, actual observation may enable the researcher to come to conclusions from a more objective and justified perspective, avoiding only using data given by the learners (Cohen, 2011). Thus, I observed three teachers’ classes and audio-recorded the classroom discourse for further analysis.

### ***Data Collection***

Consent was obtained from three business English teachers and students to observe and audio-record their lessons. Each teacher’s classes have been observed by the researcher of the study for 2 periods, which lasted for 80 minutes. In addition, I took some field notes of the teachers’ interaction with their students in ESP classrooms, aiming to keep record of the noticeable details that could not be audio-recorded.

### ***Data Analysis***

Since the purpose of the present study is to explore the scaffolding provided by business English teachers during student-teacher interaction, I focused on the instances of scaffolding provided by the business English teachers when I transcribed the audio-recording. Such scaffolding episodes refer to the situations that the teachers create supporting structures that can initiate or sustain the learners’ interest and be able to guide them to higher level of learning (Roehler & Cantlon, 1996).

To identify and understand the ways of providing scaffolding, six possible types of scaffolding strategies are catalogued as coding categories, which are based on the guidelines put forward by other researchers (Roehler, & Cantlon, 1996; Wood, et al., 1976):

1. Offering explanations, which means offering explicit statements to help the learners better understand about what is being learnt and how and when it will be used (Roehler, & Cantlon, 1996).
2. Recruitment, which entails getting the learners interested in the task (Wood, et al., 1976).
3. Direction maintenance, which means motivating the learners to pursue the task (Wood, et al., 1976).
4. Frustration control, which involves controlling frustration and reducing stress that learners experience during the task (Wood, et al., 1976).
5. Making critical features, which involves marking or emphasizing relevant features of the problem or task and providing clues about the discrepancy between what has the learner produced and what he can identify as a suitable production (Wood, et al., 1976).

- Demonstration, which means demonstrating or modelling an idealized version of the act to be performed (Wood, et al., 1976; Roehler, & Cantlon, 1996).

## Results

The transcription of the classroom discourse between the business English teachers and students, coupled with observation was carefully analyzed. Five ways of providing assistance used by the business English teachers to scaffold the students to learn Business English from a Chinese university can be found with examples as follows.

### ***Offering Explanations***

Excerpt 1 displayed how the teacher helped the students to better understand a new term by offering appropriate explicit explanations. In Excerpt 1, the term “Franchising” was emphasized by the teacher (Kathy). To make the students understand this term, she offered a simple example relevant to the real life step by step to reveal the definition of the new term. From the responses of the students, it could be noted that her explanation for *Franchise* was conveyed to them clearly.

#### ***Excerpt 1***

*Topic: Starting a business*

*Teacher: Do you know “what Franchise is”?*

*(Many students shook their heads.)*

*Teacher: Franchising is “the granting of a license by one person (the franchisor) to another (the franchisee) which entitles the franchisee to trade under the trademark or trade name of the franchisor and to make use of an entire package”. Er, does it make sense to you?*

*(No response from the students)*

*Teacher : Well, if I want to run a shop named 美宜佳 (Meiyijia), what do I need to do first? (美宜佳 is a type of common convenience stores in Guangdong, a local franchise.)*

*Students: You need to get a license from.... Meiyijia 总部 (headquarters).*

*Teacher: Great! That’s it. In this case, will I be the franchisor or the franchisee?*

*Students: Franchisee!*

*Teacher: Yeah! ...*

### ***Recruitment***

Excerpt 2 demonstrated how the teacher could get the students interested in the tasks. In Excerpt 2, the teacher (Amy) was introducing the topic of a new lesson by comparing the similarities between the ways of study and the new business topic. She raised some questions about general ways of study, creating a very relaxed and warm atmosphere in the classroom. As a result, she successfully captured the students’ attention to the new topic when she concluded that “So, today we are going to talk about another business topic: ways of ... Can you guess?”. Hence, the students loudly responded: “working”. The students were actively engaging in that classroom task because they were interested in it. Undoubtedly, it was the interesting leading-in designed by the teacher that activated the students, bringing about the students’ eagerness to understand more this topic.

#### ***Excerpt 2***

*Topic: Different ways of working*

*Teacher: How do you study will be more effective? By working at the same time every day or at different times of the day?*

*Students: At the same time.*

*Teacher: Early in the morning or late at night?*

*Students: Late at night.*

*Teacher: Wow, you are night owls! Do you like studying on your own or with others?*

*At home or on campus?*

*Student 1: I like studying on my own on campus because I can ...can focus my mind on it!*

*Student 2: I like studying with other people, especial...especially my roommates because I can discuss some questions with them.*

*Teacher: Thank you for sharing your ideas! Yeah! We have different ways of studying, which can make our study more effective! How about those people who work? So, we are going to talk about ways of...Can you guess?*

*(The teacher writes "Ways of \_\_\_\_\_" on the blackboard.)*

*Students: Working!*

### ***Direction Maintenance***

Excerpt 3 truly showed how the teacher motivated the students to pursue a task with enthusiasm. In this Excerpt, the teacher (Kathy) attempted to guide the students to express their current understanding about advertisements with specific details. The teacher put forward some simple questions including "But how did they make advertisements?" "Can anyone give one specific example?" and "any other?" to remind the students of the direction they should follow. Thanks to her assistance, the students were motivated to describe the specific ways of advertisements.

#### ***Excerpt 3***

*Topic: Discuss about the ways of advertisements*

*(The teacher writes down "白云汇" on the blackboard. "白云汇" is a new commercial complex located in Baiyun district, Guangzhou.)*

*Teacher: A new commercial complex named "Baiyun Hui", opened for business last month. Do you know that?*

*Students: Yes.*

*Teacher: How did you know that?*

*Student 1: I see some ad...advertisement about it.*

*Teacher: Yeah, advertisements! But how did they make advertisements? Can you give one example?*

*Student 1: Er, by media!*

*Teacher: Yes. Can anyone give one specific example?*

*(The teacher looked around.)*

*Student 2: Um, for example, by newspaper.*

*Teacher: A good example, any other?*

*Student 3: By the Internet and radio.*

*Student 4: They put posters on the buses!*

*Teacher: Well done! Very specific examples!...*

### ***Frustration Control***

In Excerpt 4, The teacher (Kathy) noticed that the student had some difficulties in expressing his idea at the beginning. She helped him by providing the words “interested”, offering opportunities for him to regulate it by himself. With her assistance, the student was able to express his ideas with longer responses. Then, the teacher gave him some positive feedback to reduce his stress by saying “a good point” and she continued to ask the student “any more” to show she was interested in his ideas. Accordingly, the student offered some other ideas. Obviously, the necessary help and effective feedback gave a sense of support and encouragement to the students, making a difference to the learning. This is in that the students tend to be reluctant to undertake a task if they experience too much frustration or stress from the teacher during teacher-student interaction. The support and appropriate feedback from the teachers can serve as the driving force for the learners to move ahead.

#### ***Excerpt 4***

*Topic: Discuss about purposes of advertising*

*Teacher: What might be the purposes of advertising?*

*Student 1: To make customers know their productions or company, and then, then they may become interesting, interest, interest...*

*Teacher: interested?*

*Student 1: Yeah! People may become interested in their productions.*

*Teacher: People may become interested in their products! A good point! Any other?*

*Student 1: And to create their own “品牌”, ...Um, name*

*(The teacher writes down “brand” on the blackboard.)*

*Teacher: “品牌” – brand. Pretty good! Thank you...*

### ***Making Critical Features***

An episode of making critical features could be found in Excerpt 5. In Excerpt 5, The teacher (John) was drawing the students’ attention to understand how to behave properly during a job interview. He highlighted the impolite behaviors for a job interview by asking students to describe. Subsequently, he interpreted the discrepancy between the role-plays and solutions by raising “How should we behave during a job interview”. The students were aware of the impolite and good behaviors during job interviews through teacher-student conversations in the classroom. Since the teacher could interpret the discrepancy in a proper way, pushing the students’ ZPD, they could have great possibility of coming up with appropriate solutions for the task.

#### ***Excerpt 5***

*Topic: Discuss about two role-plays for job interviews.*

*Teacher: Very good performance. Which one would be the better candidate? The most qualified?*

*Students: The first one.*

*Teacher: Why?*

*Students: The second one was impolite.*

*Teacher: How impolite?*

*Student 1: She didn't show any respect.*

*Teacher: How? Could you tell some examples?*

*Student 2: She hasn't had the handshake with the employers. She looks like she is the best.*

*Teacher: Yeah. Any more?*

*Student 3: She didn't dress 正式 (“Zhengshi” refers to “formally”).*

*Teacher: Yeah. Not too officially. She should dress appropriately. Have you noticed she crossed her leg? She crossed her leg!*

*Students: Rude!*

*Teacher: So, we should show our respect to the employers, be polite and dress properly when we apply for a job!*

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

This study focuses on scaffolding provided by business English teachers during teacher-student interaction in the classroom where Business English is learnt as an ESP course in a university from China. It can be noted that three business teachers spared no efforts to build effective bridges between the learners and the relevant tasks, which were helpful and effective for the learners to construct new ideas and knowledge on the basis of their current cognitive level. The above analysis of classroom discourse is consistent with ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) and some findings of previous studies (Wood, et al., 1976; Roehler & Cantlon, 1996). The learners were competent for completing those tasks or solving problems with the assistance from the business English teachers. Based on the above analysis, three business teachers provided scaffolding to the students in five ways:

1. Offering explanations.
2. Recruitment.
3. Direction Maintenance.
4. Frustration Control.
5. Making critical features.

With the teacher's assistance, the learners were able to contribute and extend their current knowledge or language during teacher-student interaction, gaining many opportunities to communicate their thoughts in the ESP classrooms.

Van Lier (1996, p. 171) points out “in order to learn, a person must be partly familiar and partly new, so that attention can be focused on useful changes and knowledge can be increased”. Therefore, the effective interaction between the students and the business English teachers and a variety of classroom activities can activate the students' ZPD, leading to the construction of new knowledge. In addition, the business English teachers realized that they should gradually reduce their scaffolding when the students gained more control for learning valuable and useful knowledge, skill and so on.

The business teachers in present study have been found to use scaffolding to create different contextualized opportunities for the students to construct their existing knowledge to generate personal comments or new ideas, improving their intercultural competence. Furthermore, the assistance from the business teachers could create supportive and good conditions for communication as well as students' participation in the activities for learning Business English. In a nutshell, the present study addresses the

significance of the business English teachers' role in facilitating the students' learning during teacher-student interaction in ESP classrooms from a Chinese university.

This study has some implications for business English teaching and business English teacher development because how the business English teachers effectively provide scaffolding to the business English learners should be a crucial aspect for teacher development. If the business English teachers are aware of applying appropriate level of support by using flexible scaffolding strategies, effective and active interaction between the teachers and the learners will take place in the Business English classroom.

### Acknowledgements

This research is sponsored by the Key Program of the English Language and Literature of Guangdong Province, 2016; by Guangdong provincial project *A Study of Intercultural College English Teaching Based on Constructivism under the Background of the Belt and Road (B&R)* (Grant No: 2017GXJK245); and by the university project *An Action Research of the College English Teaching Model Based on Intercultural Perspective under the Background of B&R* in (SCBC) (Grant No: 2017JG03); by Guangdong provincial project *The Research and Practice of the ESP Course Teaching Model Based on Cognitive Needs in the Application-oriented Higher Institute*, (No. 173 in the official letter [2018. No. 1] from the Department of Education of Guangdong Province).

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# **Intelligent and Blended Teaching Based on Rain Classroom Applied in Business English**

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**[Abstract]** *In line with the trend of intelligent classroom, this paper constructs a structure supported by Rain Classroom technology and the blended teaching mode based on a MOOC. It has a three-part structure: pre-class MOOC study, Rain Classroom teaching, and after-class MOOC improvement. This research uses a Business English course to elaborate on the teaching process. In addition, it empirically investigates the effect of such teaching and discusses its advantages and problems. This study aims to serve as a scientific and practical reference for first-line teachers and to promote teaching reform against the background of mobile Internet and big data.*

**[Keywords]** *intelligent classroom; blended teaching; MOOC; Rain classroom*

## **Introduction**

In the big data era, many foreign educational institutions have begun to attach substantial importance to educational data mining and learning analysis technology. In 2012, the US Department of Education issued a report entitled “Enhancing Teaching and Learning through Educational Data Mining and Learning Analysis.” Research on the intelligent classroom is relatively mature outside China. Research focuses include promoting intelligent classroom learning that relies on technology (Ratto, Shapiro, Truong, & Griswold, 2015), constructing the intelligent classroom while paying attention to learning activities (Rania, 2013), and personalized, autonomous, and diversified intelligent classroom teaching (Rachida, & Amine, 2015). Chinese research on the intelligent classroom commenced later than in Europe, the US, and other developed countries. However, the research has developed rapidly. Many schools and educational software companies have conducted large-scale investigations on educational big data and learning analysis techniques. However, most domestic studies focus on introducing the theory of the intelligent classroom and constructing learning models (Xiaoshan, Xudong, & Xianmin, 2014; Yewei, Jingwen, Shaochun, & Wei, 2014; Jun, Ruihua, & Caiping, 2015). Studies on how to use big data analysis technology software to apply intelligent teaching are rare. In line with the trend of intelligent classroom, this paper describes a practical attempt to use Rain Classroom intelligent teaching tools in a Business English course. The course employed blended instruction that involved intelligent teaching. The paper elaborates on the intelligent and blended teaching implementation steps and teaching strategies based on the Rain Classroom. Additionally, an empirical approach is used to test the effectiveness and practicability of this novel teaching method.

## **Intelligent and Blended Teaching Based on Rain classroom**

The intelligent classroom is a new, popular topic in current research on education informatization. The concept results from a thorough integration of information technology and teaching. It also reflects a recent trend in the reform and development of “flipped” classroom teaching. Research by Jun Liu (2013) supports that the intelligent classroom is guided by the Constructivist learning theory and uses big data in the “Internet +” era, mobile Internet, cloud computing, and other new information technology to construct an

informatized, intelligent, highly efficient and interactive learning environment. It transforms the classroom teaching evaluation from an intuitive judgment based on the teacher's experience into an objective judgment based on the analysis of learning data and feedback. The Rain Classroom is a free intelligent teaching tool jointly released by Tsinghua University and XuetangX. It uses a plug-in in PowerPoint (PPT) software and adopts the "cloud + end" service mode to digitalize teaching decision-making data and provide instant evaluation feedback. The tool offers three-dimensional interactive and intelligent resources that support personalized intelligent resource use, dynamic learning data acquisition, and instant analysis.

This paper then describes a practical attempt to use Rain Classroom intelligent teaching tools in a Business English course. It constructs a structure supported by Rain Classroom technology and blended teaching mode based on a MOOC. The blended teaching based on Rain Classroom applied in Business English consists of three parts: Pre-class guidance by MOOC, In class Rain Classroom, and after class application and improvement by MOOC as seen in Figure 1.

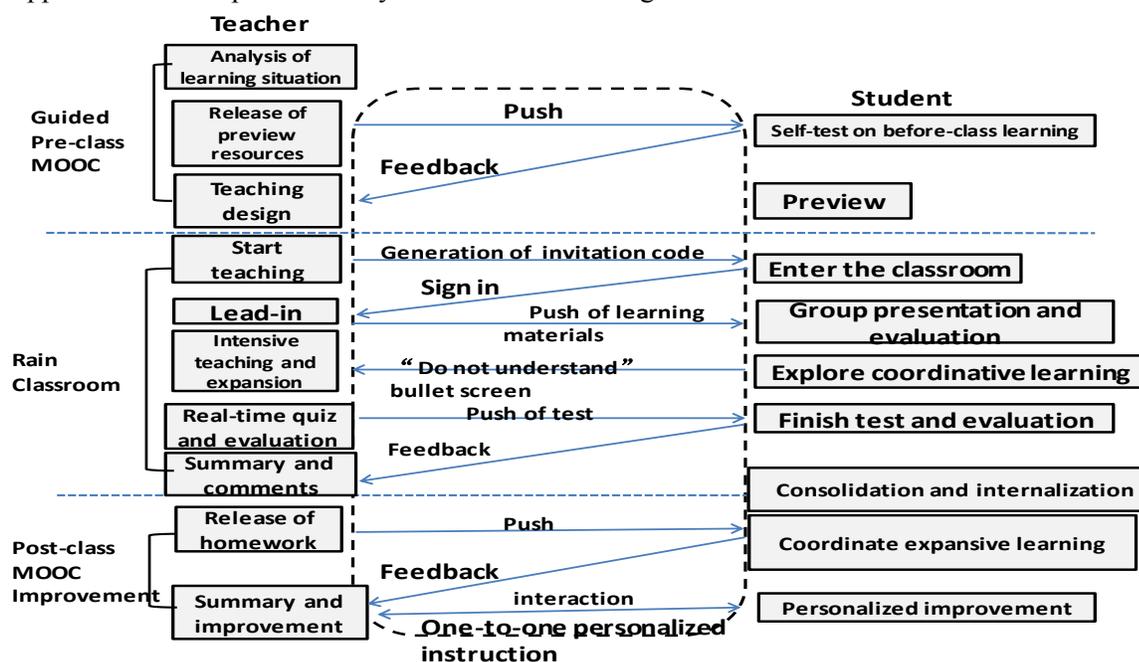


Figure 1. Intelligent and Blended Teaching Based on Rain Classroom

### Pre-Class Experiential Learning by MOOC

In the teaching of business English, teachers tend to be troubled by the problem that business activities fail to be integrated with English teaching thoroughly due to the lack of real business activities, while pre-class guidance by MOOC can help solve the problem. Before class, teachers start from demands and interests of learners to introduce real outlook of international business practice. Thus, students can balance the study of vocabulary and grammar, as well as the training of language skills. By pre-class guidance, MOOC exposes students to the real business world by supplying the teaching of business English with large amount of true, vivid materials, empowering students to master language skills and meanwhile understand the status quo of modern international business so that they manage to learn language in experiencing business and thus improve abilities of business communication.

### ***In-Class Task-Based Practical Communication Training***

Via role-playing, and case study, etc., students can further their experiential learning step by step and thus lay a basis for practical communication training. Besides, teachers use real business communication scenarios as reference to design communication tasks with clear goals and encourage students to review and apply the language knowledge they have acquired in the process of fulfilling tasks so as to improve communication competence and integrate their own experiences and opinions into communication activities. For instance, in course of business English reading and writing, teachers can launch related discussions to lead in teaching, and then transfer focus to relevant vocabulary, listening, grammar, and business skills. Throughout this process, a variety of tasks are interlarded. Last but not least, on the basis of fully learning and mastering related knowledge and skills, teaching activities involving the application and expansion of skills such as case study and business writing will be conducted.

### ***Post-Class Intercultural Business Communication Expansion by MOOC***

The essence of Post-class MOOC is to help students cultivate intercultural business communication awareness and enhance intercultural business communication ability. Teachers can select a large number of timely articles featuring concise and vivid language from famous financial and economic magazines like *Financial Times* to supply students with extracurricular reading materials. In the meantime, teachers can pick the vivid audio and video materials, including short films and interviews of famous entrepreneurs, for students to study. This way of teaching is lively in form and inspirational in content, making students' experiential learning of business English more vivid and direct. What's more, it assists students in contacting, understanding, familiarizing and expanding related business knowledge in an all-around way.

## **Method**

Quantitative and qualitative data surveys were administered to 120 students that were taught. The surveys combined questionnaires with interviews. Anonymous questionnaires addressed the teaching design and the student learning situation. Structured written interviews were conducted according to the learning behavior of the learners as recorded by the Rain Classroom. The goal was to obtain a comprehensive assessment by the students of the intelligent, blended teaching mode based on Rain Classroom, to empirically investigate the effect of such teaching, to establish its advantages and problems, and to propose solutions for problems that emerged.

### **Data Collection and Analysis Procedure**

Quantitative data were collected using a five-point Likert scale (1 for very dissatisfied, 2 for dissatisfied, 3 for moderate, 4 for satisfied, 5 for very satisfied). One hundred and thirteen valid responses were collected. The data reveal that the student satisfaction level regarding the pre-class and after-class MOOC teaching design based on the Rain Classroom reached 83.2%, whereas the level of student satisfaction with their own pre-class and after-class MOOC study was relatively low, with only 32.1% being satisfied (Figure 2). In addition, more than 60% of the students were satisfied with their study in the intelligent classroom (Figure 3). Further analysis revealed that the level of student satisfaction with the teaching design was clearly higher than with their self-study.

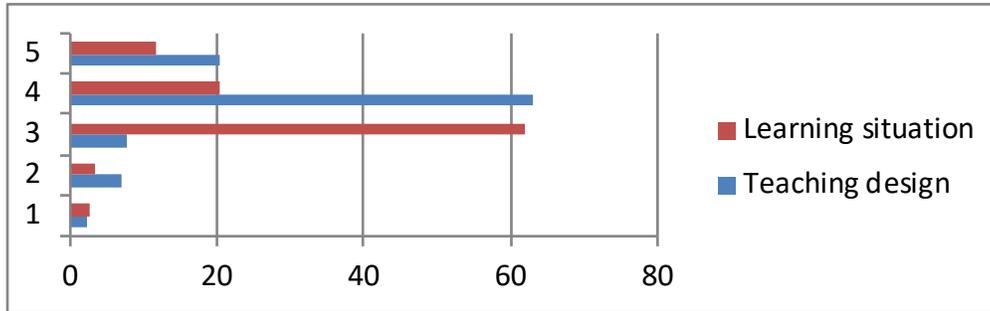


Figure 2. Satisfaction with the Blended Teaching Design and Learning Situation

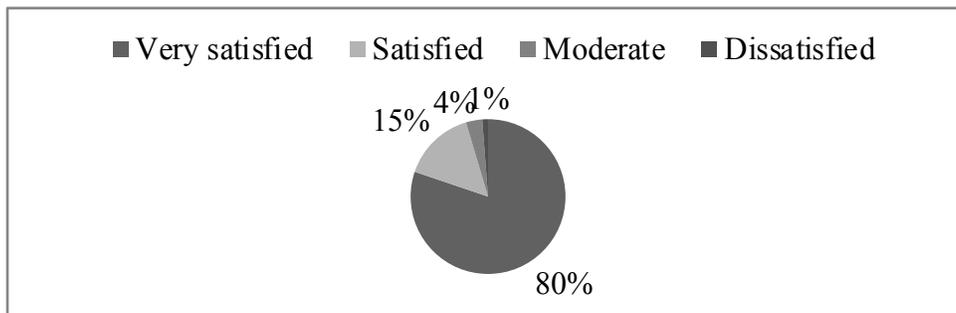


Figure 3. Satisfaction with Study in the Intelligent Classroom

### Results

The outcome indicates that although the students thought they should improve their self-study, the intelligent and blended teaching mode based on the Rain Classroom was highly regarded by them. After coding and classifying the feedback text of the students, it was found that 71% of the students suggested that the novel teaching mode promoted learning primarily in two ways:

- Stimulating interests in learning to meet their individual needs;
- The various functionalities of the program were found to be rich and innovative.

What follows are samples of participants' responses:

(a) "Rain Classroom pre-class and after-class courseware push function helped me master the knowledge of the Business English course and improve my learning autonomy during the targeted pre-class study and after-class review. Thus, my learning time and space became more flexible."

(b) "The pre-class MOOC video learning not only helped me to solve the problem of lacking business background knowledge but also enabled me to see the use of business vocabulary in a specific real business context more intuitively, and the vocabulary learning process became relatively easy and efficient."

### Discussion and Pedagogical Implications

As confirmed by the results of the quantitative analysis, several aspects of the novel teaching method that requires additional attention were uncovered in the interviews as follow:

1. The pre-class MOOC learning resources should be more individualized. Teachers should provide additional links on learning Business English and enhance the allocation of these and other teaching resources; Optimize and carefully select focused, wide-ranging, practical teaching resources from among the massive resources available.
2. The proportion of MOOC and class teaching should be closely monitored, and the amount of pre-class MOOC learning homework should be coordinated and controlled.
3. The real-time collection, statistics and data analysis functions of the Rain Classroom should be fully utilized to redesign a diversified evaluation system that combines MOOC and traditional classroom methods. In this way, learning quality and student results can be supervised more effectively.
4. A problem of poor interaction was identified. Teachers should improve the participation mechanism; Guide students to actively participate through effective questions; Assign clear tasks to prevent inactive observation, inactive mutual evaluation, and low interaction efficiency.

### **Conclusion**

This paper describes the process of applying intelligent and blended teaching based on the Rain Classroom teaching tool in a Business English class. Empirical research was conducted to test the effectiveness and practicability of the approach and to examine its advantages and disadvantages. The results can be concluded that:

- It is conducive to maximizing the enthusiasm of students for self-learning;
- It creates a new teacher-student relationship (one that departs from traditional “teaching before learning” to “teaching after learning” and “teaching determined by learning”);
- It improves the abilities of teachers in designing the Business English course (making use of the Rain Classroom to establish a pre-class and after-class MOOC platform and for in-class intelligent teaching);
- It optimized the teaching content of the Business English course (by using a MOOC to enrich student knowledge regarding business practices and to nurture practical business skills) and teaching/learning evaluation (using a diversified evaluation system of the entire learning process based on real-time data analysis feedback).

This new teaching mode offers a new direction for achieving increased educational reform and creating more free and open space for the teaching and learning of Business English. However, this new teaching mode remains in the theoretical stage. More additional practical research is required to ensure the full utilization of MOOCs and the Rain Classroom in the intelligent and blended teaching.

### **Acknowledgement**

This research was supported by The 2017 Higher Education Reform Project Fund from Department of Education of Guangdong Province

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# **An Explorative Study on PAD Class Teaching in Extended Business English Viewing, Listening & Speaking Course**

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***[Abstract]** The PAD (Presentation-Assimilation-Discussion) class is a new teaching model that has become popular in China in recent years. This paper puts forward the idea to introduce the PDA class into Business English Viewing, Listening & Speaking teaching based on the features of the course and the problems occurring in the current Business English teaching of College English extended courses. It includes the application of PAD class in the course, the positive effects on the class and the areas that need attention when applying the PDA class.*

***[Keywords]** PAD Class; Business English; group discussion*

## **Introduction**

With the fast development of global economy and the Chinese “Belt and Road Initiative” Construction, there are close business exchanges between China and other countries. The talent who is good at professional business knowledge and foreign language is quite popular in the job market. To satisfy the need of enterprises for talents and advance students into business offices, many comprehensive colleges play a vital importance on improving non-English major students’ English abilities. Under this background, the Business English courses have opened to the non-English major students in many colleges as follow-up college English extended courses. The Business English Viewing, Listening & Speaking course is one of the common college English extended courses, and is a type of comprehensive course that combines business knowledge with English business communication skills. All of the listening and speaking activities in the course are based on professional business knowledge and the Business English vocabulary. In other words, it is actually a type of English for Special English course. Through years’ teaching practice, teachers and students are facing challenges both in teaching and learning. The teaching effect is far from satisfactory. But how to realize an invert in class teaching and how to guide students’ active learning is a common concern for teachers. Teachers who are engaged in the course are constantly wondering what kind of teaching mode can be adopted in order to achieve a good teaching effect. The PAD class, therefore, is introduced into the course teaching. This paper first describes the condition of the Business English Viewing, Listening & Speaking course and then analyzes the reasons causing the problems. Second, it introduces the PAD class and its features that are suitable for the application in the course. Finally, it demonstrates the application of PAD by a unit presentation as an example and concludes with the positive effects and problems in using the PAD class.

## **The Condition of the Business English Viewing, Listening & Speaking Course**

To enhance students’ business English communication skills, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies South China Business College opened their Business English extended courses for students who finished

College English learning and passed the CET 4 in their second year of the college. It is a compulsory selective course, one 80-minute lesson each week.

Based on the skills of listening, speaking and business knowledge, this course aims to help the students to obtain required language skills and business knowledge through international business activities of a practical application. The essence of the course is to practice the students' speaking and listening through business scenario simulations in class to stimulate their class interest and interaction. Therefore, the interaction between the teacher and students and the cooperation among students are critical to build an effective class. However, in most traditional Business English Speaking and Listening classes, which are teacher-centered, it's hard to have good interactions between teachers and students. Having no effective interactions among group members make the group discussions a mere formality. Many students are not active speakers but passive listeners for some reason. Most of the time, the teacher's lecture takes up most of the class time.

There are several reasons for this situation. Firstly, the teaching model is simple so it is hard to motivate the students' interest in the course. In most traditional Business English Viewing, Listening & Speaking classes, the teacher makes a general introduction on the lesson objectives and content before moving forward to the topic. Later, the teacher plays the video and the listening material for the students, and then makes an introduction on the background knowledge, and explains the difficult language points. After that, students are required to do some oral tasks for 10-15 minutes and present their tasks in class. Actually, the time allowed for students' preparations for their oral presentations is quite limited in every class period. Without enough time to prepare the tasks and present their oral presentation, fewer students have the chance to practice their speaking in class. The students' learning initiatives are poor under this kind of teaching model. In class, the majority of students wait for the teacher to lecture and accept it passively, which often cannot meet the study effect. Secondly, the students' Business English listening and speaking skills are poor. Speaking and listening are the weak areas for most Chinese students. The Business English Listening and Speaking course with professional business knowledge is more difficult for the students to understand the listening material, let alone speak and discuss fluently in class. Thirdly, there are problems of teachers and the course selective system. Teaching the extended courses is a new experience for teachers. The ESP courses have higher requirements for the teachers' knowledge structure. Teachers, without company work experience and real business communication experience, are unable to illustrate the business terms with real and vivid business cases from personal experience when giving the lecture. Also, the students in the extended courses are from different majors with distinguished knowledge structures. It is more difficult for students without an economic and business background to learn this course. In addition, the number of students in each class is about 45. For speaking lessons, it is hard for the teacher to organize a class activity with so many students. There are fewer chances for students to speak in class and interact with the teacher. Facing these problems and difficulties, there is a necessity in reforming the teaching for the course to find a teaching model suitable for the course features in order to achieve a better teaching result.

### **PAD Class Teaching**

To address the major problems in current university classroom teaching, Professor Zhang Xuexin from Fudan University proposed the PAD Class (Presentation-Assimilation-Discussion) as a new teaching method which combines the advantages of traditional classroom lecturing and discussion-based classroom. The key idea of this teaching method is to allocate half of the class time to the teacher's

presentation and the other half for student discussion (Zhang, 2014). The teacher's presentation and the student's class discussion are separated so that students can have one week in between for self-paced and individualized assimilation, preparing them for the discussion in the next period (Zhang, 2017). In the assimilation period, the students have enough time to finish the assigned specific tasks independently after the teacher's class presentation period. For most Chinese students, it is a great challenge to discuss and present in English within the limited amount of preparation time in class, especially for those students whose English is not so good. Business English is even much more difficult for most students. Students lack the business knowledge and business vocabulary, which is a hindrance in class discussion without the preparation beforehand. In fact, most students remain silent in the group discussion, seeming that they have no interest in it. But actually, many students have no idea what to say or they need much more time to organize their idea in English. Students need time to understand the business knowledge first, and then they may have ideas to discuss. Without a further understanding on the topic and the necessary business vocabulary, the class discussion is difficult and also lacks depth. It's invalid in improving the students' language abilities through such discussions. The students who lack confidence in their language abilities may feel anxious if they are required to present in class immediately following the teacher's lecture. Furthermore, the negative emotion would affect students' class performance for the long term (Williams, & Burden, 2000). But in the PAD class, there is one week for students to study the content and prepare their assignments with clear instruction. Students can follow their personal styles because individual learning ability differs from each other. Some of the students need much more time to understand the business knowledge. The assimilation part enables students to follow at their own pace to assimilate teacher's lecture. When it's time for the next period class discussion, they will be more confident and active in the group because of their preparation, making the class discussion more effective and efficient. More researchers have focused on the PAD class study in recent years. Researchers have put the PAD class teaching method in different teaching fields. For English teaching, the main focuses are College English Teaching, College English Reading, Business English, and Business English Translation. According to their research, the PAD class encourages students to be more active in class participation and thinking, greatly motivating their initiatives. It stimulates the students' creative spirits and independent thinking abilities (Zhao, & Nan, 2016). Students will be able to conduct independent thinking and their abilities are greatly enhanced in Business English Translation (Luan, 2017). But few studies have mentioned the specific problems confronting the research. According to recent research and considering the features of the Business English Viewing, Listening & Speaking course, we try to introduce the PAD class into the course.

### **Application of the PAD Class in a Business English Viewing, Listening & Speaking Course**

The Business English Viewing, Listening & Speaking class is once a week, two periods (40 minutes for each period). There are 16 weeks classes in a term. According to the syllabus, each unit has to be finished within 2 weeks, for a total of 4 periods. This kind of class hour arrangement makes the next-class discussion possible. It is a necessary condition. In the first class of the term, the teacher has to make a systematic introduction about the PAD class to students: what is the PAD class, how to conduct the teaching model in the class, the tasks and requirements for students, the group division, and how to evaluate the students' performance, etc. The textbook used here is *Business English Viewing, Listening & Speaking* (the textbook for college English extended courses) by Ma Longhai (2009). This paper takes

Unit 6 “Company Presentation” as an example. The following illustrates how to apply the PAD class in the course:

The first period consists of the teacher’s presentation in the first week. The objectives of this unit are to identify the structure of a presentation and how to make an effective (business) presentation, especially the introduction. Meanwhile, students need to know how to talk about a company profile and answer general questions about a company. Also, it is necessary for students to know the English expressions about various types of companies and topic-related Business English vocabulary. Therefore, in class, the teacher will first give an introduction on what a presentation is and the elements of an effective presentation. Then, the students will be given some viewing or listening materials about presentations for practice and some oral interaction so that they can have a better understanding on the topic. During the lecture, the teacher explains some necessary vocabulary about the company, key language points and listening skills. After the first lecture, tasks are assigned to the students, which are very important for the next period’s discussion. The students are required to make a summary on what a good presentation is, watch the video in the textbook and analyze the structure of a presentation by themselves. The most important objective for students in this unit is to know how to make presentation. For these two periods, there are about 30 minutes for students to do the oral tasks of the last unit. After that, the teacher will give the lecture on a new unit.

The second period is about the students’ individualized assimilation after the first period class. Students have a week to prepare for their assignments. All of the students have to write in their reflection journal based on the contents of the first class: drawing a mind map on how to make good presentation to see whether they understand the topic well or not, noting the key expressions learned under the topic, and writing down any questions they still can’t understand. Besides the reflection journal, students are required to view and listen to two video materials which will be used in the next class discussion and presentation. Students have to write down how to make a company presentation and what an effective company presentation is from the provided materials. They also can get access to the internet for further information. Then, they have to practice their speaking on what they have written in their journal, preparing for the next class discussion and group presentation. In this period, students can completely arrange their own study. If they have the difficulty in assimilation, they can also discuss with the classmates. Some students with poor language abilities could have more time to get familiar with the content. The individualized assimilation cultivates students’ autonomous learning abilities and is critical for the next class discussion.

The third period is the students’ class discussion and occurs in the second week. All of the students have to bring their reflection journals to class. The student group discussion is most important for this period. The whole class is divided into 7 groups, with 6 students in each group. There is a group leader in each group. The group discussion is about 20 minutes long on the topic of “The Structure of a Company Presentation and How to Make a Good Company Presentation” and students help each other to figure out the puzzled points. In the discussion, group members can exchange opinions with the help of the prepared materials they made in the assimilation period. Sometimes, interaction between different groups is required in the class discussion. Then, the teacher will a member of the group to make a summary presentation to the class. The speaker from each group has to summarize the group’s views, not just present his personal points. If there are problems they couldn’t solve in the group’s journals, then the speaker has to mention them in the presentation. The other group members or the teacher will help. With beforehand preparation and the writing journal, students are more confident in this section. They are

active in asking and answering questions. During the discussion, the teacher could go around in the class and listen to group's discussion, providing help when necessary. The teacher also plays an important role in students' discussion section. Some groups may stop discussion when they have a problem that cannot be solved on their own. The teacher has to deal with the problems that come up in the discussion, which is an obstacle for further discussion so that the discussion can be developed deeper. After hot discussion, the teacher will choose 3 or 4 groups at random for class oral presentations. The teacher will give comments on the presentations and answer the questions that cannot be solved by students. The presentation and comments section last about 35 minutes. In the last section of the discussion class, the teacher will give a lecture on the discussion topic to summarize the teaching contents and assign the task for next period: make a company presentation (choosing any company in the market). The assignment is to encourage students to apply what they have learned in this unit in practice. In order to encourage the group discussion, students need to make peer evaluations on members' performances and also a self-evaluation in discussion. All of the students have to hand in their journals. The teacher collects the students' homework and creates student portfolios. The students' group performances and their journals are important parts of their daily performance in final term evaluation.

To get feedback on the PAD class, we issued a questionnaire survey among the students at the end of semester. The main terms of the questionnaire were as follow: the degree of satisfaction on the PAD class, the degree of difficulty for self-study in the teacher's assignments, the amount of time spent on finishing the reflection journal and preparing for next class discussion, and the degree of participation in group discussion, as well as two open questions about how students felt about the course and the assignments. Data shows that 88.5% of the students felt satisfied with this teaching model compared to the traditional listening and speaking class, and 50.2% of the students felt it was not difficult to finish the teacher's assignments with the help of internet and related materials. About 12% of the students thought it was very difficult to finish the task. The amount of time spent on the journal and discussion preparation, or assimilation, varied. Most students spent about 1.5-2.5 hours each week. A small number of students spent almost 4 hours a week. Most students said they were more confident in the next-class discussions in the PAD class with previous preparation. According to the survey, we found that journal writing, and discussion preparation are helpful in consolidating the knowledge and building their confidence in class. Assimilation enables students to understand the teaching content by their own pace, anytime or anywhere.

The teaching practice shows the PAD class is an effective way to improve the teaching effect of Business English speaking and listening. Most students accept this teaching model. However, when applying this teaching model, teachers need to pay attention to the following three points. First, they need to selectively choose suitable content for units for the PAD class. Part of the content may be too difficult for students to assimilate by themselves. This kind of material is not suitable for use as an after-class task. The teacher has to observe the students' performance and provide timely feedback, and then make adjustments in class when necessary according to the information. The teacher needs to make adjustments according to the class situation and the difficulty of the teaching content (Chen, 2016). Second, is the compression of class time and arrangements for discussion. Teachers should focus on giving lectures on building up the knowledge structure, as well as the key and difficult points, leaving enough space for students to think and communicate. The third area of focus is the assignments for students. Teachers should avoid giving too much homework to students. Also, the difficulty of the tasks needs to be considered. It is a challenge for teachers to devise various class assignments that let students enjoy the class as well as acquire knowledge.

## Conclusion

The PAD class regards students as the center of the class and respects the differences among students, which follow cognitive rules. This teaching model mobilizes students' enthusiasm for class interaction. One week for assimilation cultivates the forming of good habits in autonomous learning, developing the students' abilities in autonomous learning and dealing with problems. The discussion in the PAD class is a good way to check the students' class learning effects and enhance effective interaction among students, and greatly change their class performance from passive listeners to positive participants. It is also a good way to develop students' comprehensive language ability. The PAD classroom allows students with poor English ability to assimilate knowledge in the following one week after class, helping students improve their class performance and self-confidence. It relieves students' negative emotions, such as anxiety, helplessness, and even indifference in English study to some degree. The application of the PAD class is a good attempt in the Business English speaking and listening course. In addition, the teacher is required to put more energy in teaching when applying this teaching model. This type of teaching method makes the teacher less tired in class but requires more preparation after class compared to the traditional teaching method. There are some challenges for the teacher: how to design the reasonable group tasks; how to arrange the class time; and how to evaluate students' class performance with more scientific approaches. All of these need to be taken into consideration during teaching. In the process of applying the teaching model, new problems may appear. The teacher needs to make adjustments according to the feedback from the students. So, the new teaching practice is needed to be applied further so that more students and teachers can gain its benefits.

## Acknowledgement

This research was sponsored and supported by the Key Program of the English Language and Literature of Guangdong Province, 2016; by the Guangdong Provincial Quality Project – Teaching Research and Reform Project of Higher Education in Guangdong, 2017, “*A Practical Research of the PAD Class Pattern in the College English Extended Courses*” and “*A PAD Class Paradigm Study for English Extended Courses under Educational Informatization Background*” for Guangdong University of Foreign Studies South China Business College (Grant No. 2017JG02); by *The Research and Practice of the ESP Course Teaching Model Based on Cognitive Needs in the Application-oriented Higher Institutes*, the Teaching Reform Project of Higher Education in Guangdong Province in 2017 (No. 173 in the official letter [2018. No. 1] from the Department of Education of Guangdong Province); and by the Guangdong provincial project *A Study of Intercultural College English Teaching Based on Constructivism under the Background of the Belt and Road (B&R)*, 2018.

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# The Effectiveness of a Flipped Business English Classroom

## Assisted by SPOC and CCR App

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*[Abstract] Based on Robert Talbert's flipped classroom model, this paper compares two Blackboard-assisted flipped classroom designs applied in an undergraduate business English course with one design being a conventional flipped classroom, and the other, a SPOC-based classroom assisted by a cloud-classroom app. This paper concludes that students who studied in the environment of the SPOC plus cloud-classroom outperformed those that studied in the conventional flipped classroom.*

*[Keywords] SPOC; flipped classroom; CCR app; Blackboard*

### Introduction

Conventional lecture-led classes on Business English Programs (BEP) tend to be content-crammed. In such courses, students are required to learn English while acquiring business foundation knowledge, which is intertwined and interdependent. Take the course of Business English Certificate (BEC) offered to first year BEP students at Jinan University for example, business subjects or topics such as selling and pitching, advertising, branding, event management, and human resource management, etc. are taught each semester to students who do not have the prerequisite business knowledge or real-life business experience, but yet are expected to improve their over-all English language skills via the learning of such topics. Therefore, the dilemma for teachers when making course design has been whether to sacrifice valuable in-class time for lectures on business concepts and basic theories, or to ensure that students tackle as many language-training tasks in class as possible and study the business foundation knowledge as outside-of-class assignments. When opting for the former, there is a risk of not being able to address all of the course content for the semester, and when choosing the latter, the concern is that the less-motivated students are unwilling or unable to finish all assignments. With the belief that the introduction of a SPOC-based flipped classroom model offers a solution to this issue, we conducted an experiment in two classes during the first semester of the 2016-2017 academic year.

### Flipped Classroom, SPOC and CCR

Also called an inverted classroom, or flipped teaching, the flipped classroom is a format for transferring some of the lecture-based lessons from the classroom into learning materials posted in online platforms and giving students the ability to study that content in their own time and pace, allowing them to engage and respond to the content (De Haan, 2011). Perhaps the most significant advantage of the flipped methodology is that without large portions of in-class time spent on lecturing, teachers can use that amount of time to direct and assist students working through tasks and assignments that would have otherwise been done in isolation outside of the classroom. In recent years, researchers and education practitioners have devised some models of the flipped classroom which are now trialed and tested. Among them, the flipped design of Grand Valley State University Professor Robert Talbert is what we

considered the most suitable for our Business English teaching because of the characteristics of the course of BEC. Table 1 shows the flow of a flipped classroom designed by Talbert.

**Table 1. Talbert's 2011 Flipped Classroom Design (Talbert, 2011)**

Before Class (Knowledge imparting)		During Class (Knowledge internalizing)		
Watch video lecture	Guided Practice	Fast, light assessment	Assimilation-oriented problems	Debrief/Feedback
Procedure ①	Procedure ②	Procedure ③	Procedure ④	Procedure ⑤

Apart from using this model, methodologies such as Task-based Learning, Just-in-Time-Teaching (JiTT) and Bring-Your-Own-Device (BYOD) will be implemented in both online and offline teaching.

The SPOC, or Small Private On-line Course is a term coined by UC Berkeley professor Armando Fox who defines it as using MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) locally as a supplement to classroom teaching. Simply put, SPOC = classroom + MOOC (Hoffmann, 2013). SPOCs, as pointed out by Fox, can increase instructor leverage, student throughput, student mastery, and student engagement. Not only can students get finer-grained feedback than they would get from human teaching assistants who can spend, at most, a few minutes per assignment, but they can now also have the opportunity to resubmit homework to improve on their previous score and increase mastery (Hoffman, 2013). Harvard professor Robert Lue believes “the significance of SPOCs is that online learning is now moving beyond trying to replicate classroom courses and is trying to produce something that is more flexible and more effective: (Coughlan, 2013). In China, SPOCs, as a post-MOOCs creation, have also been the subject of study in the realm of education. Some Chinese scholars also claim that compared to MOOCs, SPOCs combine lecture, video and other elements in teaching, allowing learners to have holistic and in-depth learning experiences (Kang, 2014). As a result, it not only helps to increase course completion rates, but also strengthens students’ independent, self-regulated learning (Lin, Hu, & Deng, 2015).

The CCR, or cloud-classroom enables learners and instructors to interact with each other by using a computer or smartphone device at the time and place of their choosing. It has several features that are more advanced than conventional instant response systems, including text response, multimedia presentations, instant group formation and teacher-student role swapping (Chien & Chang, 2015). CCR has seen wide-application across China in recent years, especially in the field of higher education. Take Xuetang X Cloud, a learning management system launched at Tsinghua University campus by a leading Chinese MOOC company, as an example. It has gathered 1.5 million users since being launched in 2014 (Xuetangx, 2017). Furthermore, CCR apps are being widely and actively incorporated into actual classrooms by education practitioners, bringing better blended-learning experience to learners in China.

Research done by Ginns and Ellis has shown that in order to create successful blended-learning environments, face-to-face teaching plus learning and the online portions of the learning experience need to be strategically constructed so that they coherently support one another to help students achieve learning goals (2007). To implement the flipped model, we used the university’s Blackboard. The Blackboard learning platform allows teachers to build courses and create a virtual learning environment for students, that is, the offline classrooms can be transformed into online learning communities. By arranging the courses on this platform into four independent blocks – teaching, discussion, test, and back-end management, the Blackboard system facilitates student management as well as instructor-learner communication.

## **Applying the Flipped Classroom Model to BEC**

### ***The Course of BEC***

The BEC course consists of two 45-minute lecture periods per week. It covers many aspects of international business and trade with topics such as marketing, sales techniques, human resources management, enterprise management, finance and insurance, electronic commerce, information technology, catering and hospitality, global brand, and business law, etc. By learning such topics, students are expected to improve their overall English language skills, familiarize themselves with the wide range of cross-cultural business etiquettes, and acquire the fundamental ability to engage in simple real-life business activities. In the seven modules which are addressed in the 14-week term, language training exercises including listening, speaking, reading and writing are evenly dispersed, with foundational business knowledge imbedded in them. It is, therefore, not surprising to learn that the biggest student-reported challenge of this course was the use of business materials in English which often have terminologies and theories students did not know of.

### ***Flipping the Classroom***

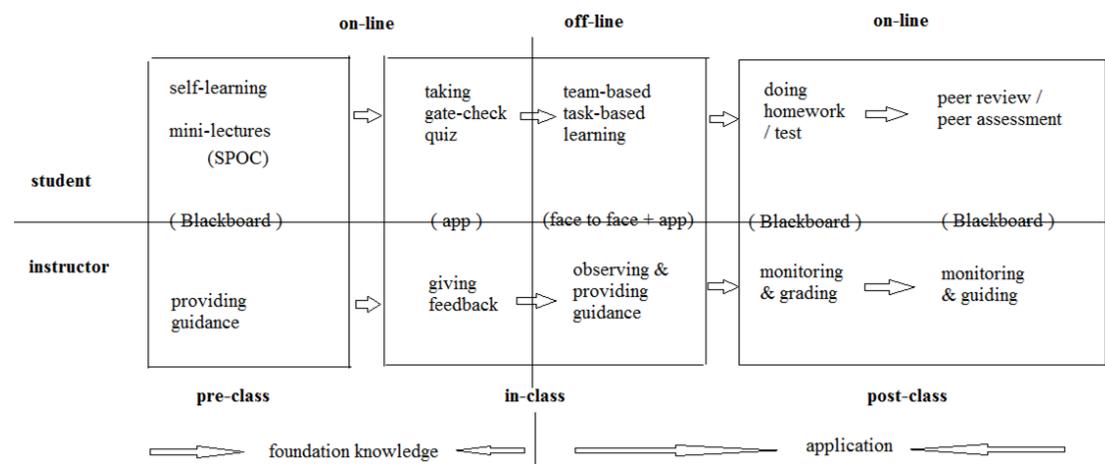
Our experiment, involving two classes of 27 and 29 students, respectively, was designed with the purpose to prove that a SPOC-based, CCR-app-assisted flipped model would have more positive impact on student learning than the traditional flipped classroom. Prior to the experiment, results of the students' entrance exams had shown that there was no significant difference between the English levels of the two groups. Both classes had 4 male students. The average age of the experimental group (29 students) was 19.8, and the control group (27 students) was 19.5. Both groups were taught by the same teacher with the same course content. A pre-test was conducted in the first week and a post test was administered after the completion of the course to assess the students' performance. Both tests consisted of 3 objective test items, business vocabulary, listening comprehension and reading comprehension. Speaking and writing, being subjective items, were not included in the tests. We expected that students in the experimental group would outperform their counterparts in the control group in the post test.

For the control group, instead of video lectures, topic-oriented reading materials paired with quizzes were posted on Blackboard pre-class to help students master the business foundation knowledge which was then refreshed, discussed and used in exercises in-class. Table 2 shows the flow of the teaching design for the control group which was based on Talbert's 2011 flipped classroom model. Because business foundation knowledge was learned prior to class, there was more time left for related language exercises in-class.

**Table 2. Flipped Classroom Design for the Control Group**

Before Class, on Blackboard (Business foundation knowledge imparting)		During Class (Business foundation knowledge internalizing + language training)
Topic-oriented text-based business materials	Tests and quizzes as 'gate-check'	
Procedure ①	Procedure ②	Procedure ③

Apart from using video lectures for pre-class learning, the flipped design for the experimental group also saw the introduction of the mobile app Lanmo Yun Banke (Lanmo Cloud-classroom) as an additional tool to assist in-class teaching and learning. In fact, the Blackboard app itself would have been the most ideal choice had it not been unavailable. As for the cloud-classroom app, the aim of using it in the actual classroom was to strengthen student involvement and teacher-student interaction. As shown in the second model in Chart 1 below, gate-check quizzes were done in class with a mobile phone rather than prior to class on a PC. And other in-class activities were also assisted by the different functions of the app, such as brainstorming, voting/survey, discussion, team-based task, and test.



**Chart 1. Flipped Classroom Design (SPOC-based + CCR-app) for the Experimental Group**

The differences between the two flipped designs and their goals can be seen in Table 3 below.

**Table 3. Difference Between the Two Flipped Designs**

<b>Flipped Design Difference</b>	<b>Control Group</b>	<b>Experimental Group</b>	<b>Goals</b>
Pre-class	Topic-oriented text-based business materials + Gate-check quizzes	Instructor-made mini-lectures (SPOC)	Emphasise pre-class learning experience, especially responsibility for self-led learning and ultimately increases student engagement in class
In-class	Debrief / Feedback + Assimilation-oriented problem + Fast, light language exercises	Mobile-app-assisted assimilation-oriented problem + Fast, light language exercises	Application of JiTT to improve student learning
Post-class	Homework on Blackboard as revision	Homework on Blackboard as revision	Replace most of the manual grading with computer grading; instant feedback given to students; conducive to knowledge consolidation/internalization
Assessment	Summative + Formative assessment (including peer assessment/review for homework and in-class presentations)	Summative + Formative assessment (including mobile-app assisted peer assessment/review for homework, on-line discussion and in-class presentations)	Put more emphasis on formative assessment; peer evaluation that affects course grade brings higher student engagement inside and outside of class

Apart from the end-of-term exam, students were also formatively assessed via their on-line pre-class learning record and off-line in-class learning record which were made available by the Blackboard platform. As in Table 4 below, a student’s formative assessment result was the sum of the scores gained from nine different items.

**Table 4. Details of Blackboard-Assisted Formative Assessment**

On-line pre-class learning record	Visits & downloads	Number of visits to texts or video/week	5%
		Total number of visits to the course	
		Number of visits to feedbacks given by teachers	
		Number of visits to non-compulsory assignments: case studies, other videos, etc.	
		Number of downloads for reference files, e-books etc.	
Peer interactions	Homework	Number of posts and replies to post on the Discussion Board	10%
		Results for homework / week	20%
		Results from peer review of homework	5%
		System warning for missing deadlines	5%
Time spent	The amount of student self-reported time spent on pre-class learning/week		
Off-line in-class learning record	Quiz	Results for quizzes/week	20%
	Volunteering	Number of times volunteering to answer questions or give demonstrations	15%
	Task solving	Numbers of correct answers given to language – training tasks	
	Presentation	Peer assessment results for presentation	15%
	Attendance	Class attendance/week	5%

## Results of the Experiment

### *Findings from the Pre-Test, Post Test and formative Assessment*

Results of the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using SPSS 20.0. As shown in Tables 5 and 6, results from an Independent Samples T Test indicated no significant difference between the two groups on the pre-test scores but a significant difference between the two groups on the post test scores across three different test items ( $p < .05$ ). It can, therefore, be concluded that compared to the conventional flipped model, the SPOC + CCR app flipped model helped students to achieve significantly greater improvement in business vocabulary, listening comprehension and reading comprehension.

**Table 5. Mean and Standard Deviation for Vocabulary, Listening and Reading**

	Control Group (N=27)				Experimental Group (N=29)			
	Pre-test		Post-test		Pre-test		Post-test	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
<b>Vocabulary</b>	82.56	5.91	83.89	5.15	82.76	5.12	88.97	4.35
<b>Listening</b>	73.97	6.35	78.48	6.15	74.76	5.96	83.04	5.46
<b>Reading</b>	72.15	6.29	76.11	4.86	72.10	7.30	79.55	4.40

**Table 6. Results of the Variance Analysis of the Test Scores of Both Groups**

	Pre-test		Post-test	
	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	-0.138	0.891	-3.99	0.00
<b>Listening</b>	-0.484	0.63	-2.93	0.005
<b>Reading</b>	0.03	0.976	-2.118	0.04

As for the formative assessment, the Independent Samples T Test results shown in Table 7 indicated significant difference between the control group and the experimental group in their total scores ( $p < .05$ ), which indicated that the latter had demonstrated higher level of involvement and performance in both pre-class and in-class learning. It was also found that among all the 9 scoring items, students in the experimental group achieved significant higher scores in the following 4 ones compared to their peers in the control group, namely, “results of homework per week” (20%), “results of quizzes per week” (20%), “in-class volunteering + task solving” (15%), and “self-report time spent + system warning for missing deadlines” (5%). As seen in Table 8, the mean scores of the experimental group for these 4 items were significantly higher than those of the control group ( $p < .05$ ), which suggests that members of the experimental group were generally more actively involved in pre-class and in-class learning than those of the control group. And to conclude, all the above results have shown that the SPOC + CCR-app flipped model enabled students to perform better in and outside of the classroom.

**Table 7. Independent Samples T Test Results for Formative Assessment Scores**

	Control Group (N=27)		Experimental Group (N=29)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Formative Evaluation Score	80.22	6.29	82.52	5.42	-1.47	0.148

**Table 8. Independent Samples T Test Results for All Nine Items of the Formative Assessment**

	Control Group (N=27)		Experimental Group (N=29)		<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Result for homework	13.37	2.32	14.72	2.2	-2.24	0.029
Result for quiz	14.07	2.57	15.48	2.03	-2.28	0.026
Volunteering + task solving	10.07	2.56	12.1	1.4	-3.65	0.001
Self-report time spent + system warning for missing deadlines	4.74	0.45	4.97	0.19	-2.43	0.021
Visits & downloads	4.81	0.4	4.9	0.31	-0.86	0.392
Peer interactions	8.19	0.79	7.72	0.84	2.12	0.039
Peer review	4.926	0.27	4.931	0.26	-0.073	0.942
Presentation	11.89	1.22	11.69	1.17	0.624	0.535
Attendance	5	0	5	0	n/a	n/a

***Findings from the Course Survey***

Assessment data was collected at the end of the semester via a course survey which consisted of 4 open-ended questions and 15 rating scale items. The questions included what benefits students perceived from the flipped designs, how they used the pre-class learning material, how they liked using Blackboard /or the mobile cloud app to assist learning, and what suggestions they had for their teachers. The rating scale items with which students were asked to rate their level of agreement across 5 scales mainly measured students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the pre-class learning material, quizzes and different ways of doing the quizzes, their in-class learning experience, and their responsibility and involvement in self-led learning.

In total, 56 questionnaires were collected, and the results showed that almost all students (53 out of 56) considered the flipped classroom to be more helpful to their learning than the traditional classroom. And more students in the experimental group (94%) who used video lectures expressed their liking of the pre-class learning content than those in the control group (74%) who used text-based material. For the experimental group, over half of them (55%) perceived 10 to 15 minutes to be the ideal length of a video lecture, and about three quarters of them (76%) watched the mini-lectures in one sitting with pauses and reviews for the unclear parts. In terms of their self-control in pre-class learning, most of the students in both groups (50 out of 56) felt that flipped classroom enabled them to be more diligent and responsible because the Blackboard system had detailed record of their viewing history. Participants in the experimental group also believed that the mobile app not only made quiz-taking fun, but it also eliminated the possibility of cheating.

Overall, students in the experimental group were more willing to participate in learning because the utilization of video, Blackboard and the CCR app made self-learning and in-class learning more engaging. And not surprisingly, the fact that the quizzes affect the final scores led to higher student involvement in pre-class learning. Apart from that, students also suggested higher teacher-involvement in the pre-class learning period, and brief reviews given after quizzes were done. A few students also expressed a preference for several shorter videos over a single longer video, and diversified video-lecture design (animated or teaching-on-screen) over the current unified design (screen-recording plus voice-over).

## Conclusion

Through this study, we have found that in comparison with the conventional flipped model, the SPOC-based CCR-app-assisted flipped model enabled students to have significantly greater improvement in business vocabulary, listening comprehension and reading comprehension. And overall, students felt the flipped model was better than the traditional classroom in terms of helping them understand concepts and business know-how and motivating them in class. The results of the formative assessment also demonstrated better learning results and higher level of self-discipline in pre-class learning from students in the SPOC+CCR classroom. Apart from that, more active in-class participation of students can also be found in the group which used this model. In all, we have seen the effectiveness of this SPOC-based CCR-app-assisted flipped classroom design, and we hope this study will shed some light on BEP teaching in the blended learning environments.

## Acknowledgement

This research was supported in part by the 2016 Higher Education Reform Project Fund from Department of Education of Guangdong Province, and the “19<sup>th</sup> Batch of Education Reform Projects” of Jinan University (JNU).

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# On Scaffolding Theory (ST) in Teaching *Business English* (BE) as an ESP Course with Intercultural Perspective and its Implications

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**[Abstract]** *With the strategy of “the Belt and Road” (B&R) initiated by Chinese Chairman Xi Jinping, it is of paramount importance to cultivate business talents with intercultural communication competence (ICC). Scaffolding, a structure formed by teachers to build a student-centered class, can be an effective method in language teaching. In light of this, Business English teaching is studied and reflected in this paper with intercultural perspective in accordance with the main procedures of scaffolding as activating prior knowledge, entering the situation, autonomous exploration, collaboration with group members and assessment.*

**[Keywords]** *Scaffolding Theory (ST); intercultural perspective; Business English (BE) teaching*

## Introduction

With China’s growing integration into the world’s economy, we are witnessing increasing international business interaction taking place in intercultural contexts. Particularly, with the strategy of “the Belt and Road” (B&R) initiated by Chinese Chairman Xi Jinping, among those countries and areas along the B&R, the economic and cultural exchanges will be definitely deepened (Chen, 2016). Therefore, it is of paramount importance to cultivate talents with intercultural business communication competence (IBCC), which can give both businesspersons and their organizations tangible benefits, such as: quick problem-solving, stronger decision-making, increased productivity, steadier work flow, and strong business relationships, etc. (Dou, 2011). Additionally, researchers in China’s foreign language teaching (FLT) circles recently have shown an increased interest in intercultural communication competence (ICC), which has been regarded as “the ultimate goal of FL teaching” (Hu, 2015). At the college where this writer is working, top priority is given to cultivate international-oriented talents with ICC. However, in teaching *Business English* (BE), as one of the major courses of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) in college English, while mainly focusing on imparting students some professional vocabularies and skills, teachers neglect to arouse students’ cultural awareness and sensitivity so as to improve their IBCC. To address this problem, in this paper, Scaffolding Theory (ST) was applied to BE teaching from an intercultural perspective as a possible way to build a student-centered class with accessible support and help for students to advance their learning in improving their IBCC. Furthermore, the related reflection and implications were examined and analyzed as well.

## Literature Review

### ***Scaffolding Theory (ST)***

Scaffolding is a method of supporting from constructivism that is based on Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of learning and his concept of “the Zone of Proximal Development” (ZPD) identified as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving and under adult guidance or in

collaboration with more capable peers” (Bick-har, 2011). In other words, some tasks, which students find too difficult for them to master alone, can be learned with guidance and assistance from teachers and more knowledgeable peers. In the process of learning these tasks, the guidance and assistance will be changed and adjusted according to students’ needs in order to develop the stage of study. This process of adjusting the support is called *scaffolding*, which refers to the assistance given to students in completing tasks they cannot complete by themselves (Bick-har, 2011). Effective scaffolding is responsive to the capabilities and levels of the students. Pritchard and Woolard (2010) set out five activities which a scaffolder might choose to implement in the course of supporting individuals or groups of learners: explaining, giving cues, sorting information into an appropriate sequence, modifying tasks, and modeling. Bick-har (2011) lists some possible ways of providing scaffolding: questioning, role-playing and demonstration, hints and examples, instruction, graded assignments/materials adaptation, self-assessment and peer assessment.

Numerous studies have applied ST in different fields. Wood and Ross (1976) demonstrated ST from mother’s influence on kids’ language development. Graves and Graves (2002) investigated reading based on ST from the three procedures of pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading. Meyer and Turner (2002) and Anghileri (2006) analyzed math teaching based on ST. And Soloway (2010) conducted a series of trials in applying scaffolding into software design teaching both in a class of senior middle school and college class (as cited in Chen, 2017).

In China, the related ST studies are mainly on two aspects: theoretical research and applied research. As for theoretical research, some key figures should be pointed out. He (1997) systematically introduced constructivism including scaffolding with its five steps: building knowledge platform, entering the situation, autonomous exploration, collaboration with group members and assessment, which provided a solid theoretical foundation for the development of scaffolding theory in China. Gao, et al. (2008) collected Chinese scholars’ fruits of constructivism in theoretical tracking and construction, exploration of application, and creativity. Several studies have revealed that ST can be effective in various subjects of teaching, like chemistry, physics, math, and language teaching including reading, grammar, listening, vocabulary, etc (as cited in Yang, 2012).

### ***Teaching BE as an ESP Course with an Intercultural Perspective***

*Business English*, as a subject of study as well as a research area, is emerging along with a huge market demand and developing with unprecedented speed. Nevertheless, in traditional BE teaching, teachers tend to focus on linguistic ability such as grammar and vocabulary. However, many failed cases in international trade have shown that in addition to language and professional business knowledge obstacles, there are more cultural hurdles in doing business with foreigners. In order to understand the related research situation in China, this writer collected the statistics from China National Knowledge Internet (CNKI) with the key words “intercultural” and “business English teaching” over the past ten years from 2008 to 2017 (as shown in Table 1).

**Table 1. Statistics from CNKI.net on BE Teaching with Intercultural Perspective**

Category/Year	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Total
Journal	15	12	18	17	26	29	25	23	36	25	226
Thesis	1	4	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	9

As shown in the table, articles about how to handle cultural differences in business communication have appeared in journals and magazines and are increasing in number, which indicates that wide

attention has been paid to the study of BE teaching with intercultural perspective. The total number of articles published, however, is still very small. To further understand the situation, the only paper published in one of the core magazines by Si & Xu (2012) and nine MA theses were carefully read, and we found that the main points currently studied are about the present situation of BE teaching, strategies to cultivate students' IBCC and related assessment. However, almost all the studies were for business English majors. Far too little attention has been paid to cultivating IBCC of non-English majors, who nowadays have taken BE as a key ESP course. In addition, when the key word "scaffolding" is added together with "intercultural" and "business English teaching" to search the statistics from CNKI, nothing could be found. In other words, there has been no study in which ST has been applied into BE teaching as an ESP course in order to cultivate non-English majors' IBCC. ST optimizes students' learning by providing a supportive environment and promoting students' independence. To this end, the purpose of the present research is to demonstrate a supportive learning environment by ST in the classroom with the help of the teacher as a facilitator and to draw non-English majors' involvement in improving their IBCC in BE teaching with intercultural perspective.

### **ST in BE Teaching with Intercultural Perspective and its Implications**

In teaching *Business English*, a key ESP course with intercultural perspective to promote students' IBCC, the five steps of scaffolding teaching introduced by He Kekang (1997) were employed, namely setting up a scaffold, creating and entering the scene, autonomous exploration, collaborative learning and assessment, while a case study approach was chosen due to its vividness, inspiration and applicability to improve students' problem-solving ability (Dou, 2011). The experimental teaching was conducted for an entire term of BE teaching on one sophomore class with 45 students who all passed CET4. One related case of intercultural business dealing was added in each module of business knowledge learning while supplementing ST to promote students' cultural awareness and sensitivity. The current research aimed to complement the qualitative perspective, and the detailed teaching would be described, and its reflection and implications would be discussed.

#### ***Teaching Design***

The Case of "Receiving Visitors" (see Table 2) was used when discussing the module of receiving visitors in BE teaching. It was taken as an example in this paper to demonstrate how ST was applied in intercultural BE teaching with the main teaching design (see Table 3), and the details would be illustrated in the following paragraphs:

##### *The Case of "Receiving Visitors"*

*Wang Hongyun works for a Chinese company, and she has been given the responsibility of making arrangements to host Mr. Smith, a Westerner who will visit her company for a week. As Wang Hongyun makes plans to host Mr. Smith, she assumes that she should treat him the same way she would want to be hosted. She knows that if she were abroad, she would feel more welcome if her host treated her to good meals. So, she decides to arrange all the meals for Mr. Smith – and to make sure that there is plenty of food at every meal.*

*When Mr. Smith arrives, he enjoys the banquets, but after two days of banquets he starts getting annoyed. He likes to make his own decisions about what to eat, at least some of the time, and doesn't like being served more food than he can eat at every meal.*

However, he assumes that Wang Hongyun should be able to understand how he feels, so instead of asking her to change the meal arrangements, he just quietly becomes more annoyed with her. Meanwhile, Wang Hongyun can tell that Mr. Smith is becoming more and more unhappy, but she doesn't understand why. She also feels that Mr. Smith should be appreciative of all the effort she has made for him, so she is unhappy because she thinks he is being ungrateful (Snow, 2014, p. 75).

**Table 2. Teaching Design of the Topic “Receiving Visitors” Based on ST**

Teaching steps	Activities	Scaffolding Techniques
1. Setting up a scaffold by activating prior knowledge	Identify “KWL grid”: a. What I know b. What I want to find out c. What I have learned	Instruction; Questioning
2. Creating and entering the scene	a. Audio and visual input b. Act out the story c. Q&A	Role-playing; demonstration; questioning
3. Autonomous exploration	DIE principle: a. Description b. Interpretation c. Evaluation	Hints; examples
4. Collaborative learning	a. Problems b. Reasons c. Solutions d. Topics for further discussion and research	Modifying task; graded assignments questioning
5. Assessment	a. teacher’s assessment b. self-assessment (learning portfolio & self-reflective paper ) c. peer-assessment	Assessment

**Setting up a scaffold by activating prior knowledge.** In Step 1, a conceptual framework was set up in accordance with the requirements of ZPD based on the current learning topic “receiving visitors”. The nature of teaching by using a scaffold is to build a bridge between the unknown and the known, and between the not understood and the understood (Pritchard & Woolard, 2010). Therefore, to begin with, the scaffold was set up by activating prior knowledge to connect the unknown with the known by using the following KWL grid (Pritchard & Woolard, 2010) to identify “what I know; what I want to find out; what I have learned.” Students in groups quickly brainstormed to devise the following KWL grid (seeing Table 3) to help them focus on specific questions they would like to answer by following the scaffolding techniques of instruction to provide guidance and practice, and questioning provided by the teacher.

**Table 3. KWL Grid (Pritchard & Woolard, 2010)**

What I know	What I want to know	What I have learned
1. Some similarities and differences about food culture between Chinese and Westerners. 2. Brief concepts of individualism and collectivism.	1. Why is Mr. Smith unhappy in this case? 2. Is the conclusion Wang Hongyun jump to reasonable? Why? 3. What should Mr. Smith and Wang Hongyun do to make this intercultural business communication effective and satisfactory?	After learning the procedures involved when receiving business visitors, I can effectively use communication skills to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. receive business visitors who have/don't have an appointment;</li> <li>2. meet visitors at the airport;</li> <li>3. participate in small talk about travel, weather or accommodation, paying attention to the concept of "privacy".</li> </ol>

**Creating and entering the scene.** In this step, students should be guided to some scene. A video was displayed about some problems an American girl Nancy met in having dinner with some Chinese people while visiting China. Students were divided into two groups to finish these two tasks respectively: 1. act out the story; and 2. discuss the following questions and demonstrate them. The questions were: what were the problems Nancy met? What were the reasons? How could you help Nancy to solve the problems? Audio and visual input could lead the students into learning with curiosity and vividness and it also could do well for the activeness of participation and inspiration of interest as well. The scaffolding techniques of role-playing and demonstration with some questions were used to assist students' learning.

**Autonomous exploration.** After the audio and visual input, students were supposed to explore independently with teacher's appropriate hints to climb upward. The DIE principle (Zheng & Li, 2016) was introduced for students to analyze this case by themselves independently. The DIE principle refers to description, interpretation and evaluation. In this case, at first, students had to describe the situation in their own words about the following information: who the business communication participants were, when and where the communication took place and what happened in this case. Then students were expected to interpret the possible explanations for why Mr. Smith was annoyed with Wang Hongyun's hospitality. Last, but not least, students were supposed to evaluate both Mr. Smith and Wang Hongyun's behavior and figure out the question of how to behave well in this situation. In this step, the teacher supported students by sorting information into an appropriate sequence, giving cues, hints and guides at critical points to enhance students' self-inquiry, so that students could explore them separately to climb the ladder of knowledge.

**Collaborative learning.** By following the scaffolding steps, group members should discuss together, and inspire each other to have deep learning. Firstly, students in groups went through the case quickly to point out the problem: Wang Hongyun and Mr. Smith made the assumption that they understood each other instead of asking each other what they thought. Then, they also figured out why Wang Hongyun and Mr. Smith each expected the other person to react more or less the same way they would. To solve this problem, students mentioned both Mr. Smith and Wang Hongyun should be aware of what expectations they had when they had business interaction from different cultures and did not react too negatively when their expectations were violated. That is to say, they should not be angry or hurt and try not to judge each other until they had a better understanding of the situation. Finally, they should make a conscious effort to check their expectations and assumptions (Snow, 2014).

At last, some topics were taken out for students' further discussion and research, and then they were supposed to make a presentation next class according to their own interests. The topics were as follows: 1.

What are the differences in food culture between Chinese and Westerners to make Mr. Smith annoyed and Wang Hongyun unhappy? Generally, what are the similarities and differences about food culture between Chinese and Westerners? 2. From the sentence “She (Wang Hongyun) assumes that she should treat him the same way she would want to be hosted”, we could generate the “Golden Rule” – do unto others what you would have them do unto you. This rule is widely accepted as a basic guideline for how we should treat other people. However, does the “Golden Rule” always work in intercultural business communication? Give examples to demonstrate it. 3. What is “projected cultural similarity”? Given the obvious differences between people of different cultures, why do you think people might still project cultural similarity in intercultural business communication?

It would generate a friendly learning environment from which an individual could benefit and learn from others. It also builds up students’ sense of teamwork when each member makes contribution of the highest quality to the successful completion of the task. The teacher modified the task by limiting the amount of information and prepared the exercises that fit the individual interests and needs of students.

**Assessment.** The evaluation of the learning effect would be made up of three parts: teacher’s assessment, self-assessment and peer assessment. The teacher would evaluate whether students have completed the construction of the intercultural business knowledge by their class participation and using questions, assignments, and quizzes. Peer assessment was carried out by group members’ grading on students’ contribution to group cooperative learning. The self-assessment was mainly done by finishing learning portfolio with learning journal, learning reflection and learning contribution file to test their autonomous learning ability. In learning journal, students need to write down the summary of what they have learnt in each module with both business knowledge and intercultural business points. The learning reflection may include their thoughts on the subsequent topics: something has impressed them the most in each module or the most valuable thing they have learned and something else they want to know about each module. And in learning contribution file, students need to collect more materials including audios, videos, articles, and pictures from the books, magazines or internet and make a short summary for future study and other’s reference. At the end of the semester, students were required to hand in a final individual report to reflect about their learning for a whole term.

### ***Teaching Reflection and Implications***

As mentioned previously, ST has been applied in intercultural *BE* teaching for a whole term. The reflection is given from two aspects: the improvement of students’ cultural awareness and sensitivity in *BE* teaching; the points we should pay attention to in applying ST in *BE* teaching with intercultural perspective.

**Students’ improvement in cultural awareness and sensitivity in *BE* learning.** Students’ improvement in cultural awareness and sensitivity in *BE* learning was mainly assessed from student’s learning portfolios and the final individual report. From the learning portfolios, in general, students became more interested in learning *BE*, as one student wrote: “In the past, we only focus on business knowledge and skills, and it is a little bit boring. But now, intercultural business points are added into the class with ST, the class is getting more and more interesting and we pay more attention to the cultural aspects now.” Besides, students got more confidence, as was written in one of students’ learning portfolio: “with autonomous exploration and group study, I am not that shy as before and brave enough to speak out loud.” What’s more, they were more culturally sensitive and emphasize that culture teaching could not be separated from *BE*, as was reflected by one student: “now for every business interaction, I may reflect the

questions like: what is the Chinese way? What is the Western way? Are there any similarities and differences? What is the appropriate and effective way in dealing business between Chinese and Westerners in this aspect?”

From the final individual report, when asked about how they improved in this course, comparing the first week with the last week, most students were satisfied with the teaching and their own learning. Some students mentioned that they improved their English and became more expressive now. Some other students said they understood intercultural business communication more deeply now, particularly someone stated, “with intercultural perspective in BE learning, I sense I understand foreigners more, feel more comfortable and less anxious with foreigners, and I have improved my flexibility in dealing business with foreigners.”

Points to be aware of while applying ST in intercultural BE teaching. Generally speaking, the BE teaching with intercultural perspective based on scaffolding was satisfactory, but there were also some points we should notice as follows: 1. BE teaching with intercultural perspective should be more culturally diverse. We should not only focus on Sino-American business interaction, for students may do business with people from other different cultures. 2. In collaborative learning, teacher should give more encouragement and provide more support to those relatively silent group members to express their ideas, because some of them were still reluctant to open their mouth. 3. The teachers’ guiding role should be put into full play by using different scaffolding techniques to provide support for students to become independent life-long learners. We should always remember to teach students fishing rather than give them fish. 4. BE teaching with intercultural perspective based on ST should take students’ individual ZPD into consideration. For different levels of students, it is better to give different support according to their cognition of intercultural business knowledge.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has given an account of the teaching and its reflections and implications about intercultural BE based on ST. It has found out that ICC is inseparable to BE teaching and ST has great practical significance for BE teaching with intercultural perspective in order to improve students’ IBCC, which is a breakthrough to traditional teaching method. The current findings add substantially to our understanding of ST and BE teaching with intercultural perspective. However, with relatively short experiment time, and a small sample size, the teaching effect still needs more evidence. Future work needs to be done about dealing with more diverse cultures and estimating students’ different cognitive levels.

### **Acknowledgement**

This research was sponsored by the key college project *A Study on the Application of the Ethnography in Developing Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) as a sub-project of the Key Program of the English Language and Literature of Guangdong Province, 2016*; by Guangdong provincial project *A Study of Intercultural College English Teaching Based on Constructivism under the Background of the Belt and Road (B&R)* (Grant No. 2017GXJK245); and by the university project *An Action Research of the College English Teaching Model Based on Intercultural Perspective under the Background of B&R* in (SCBC) (Grant No. 2017JG03); by Guangdong provincial project *The Research and Practice of the ESP Course Teaching Model Based on Cognitive Needs in the Application-oriented Higher Institutes* (No. 173 in the official letter [2018 No. 1] from the Department of Education of Guangdong Province).

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# Teaching Business English to Business Students in the Post-Method Era: A Case Study in a Chinese Independent College

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**[Abstract]** *With ESP courses increasingly penetrating into college English curriculum in Chinese universities, how to teach such courses has emerged as an area of current academic interest. B. Kumaravadivelu argued that language teaching was involved in a pattern that connects the various elements of learning, teaching and teacher education, and that language teaching was so sensitive to the context that there was no best method for teaching it. Therefore, a three-part framework of post-method language pedagogy – particularity, practicality, and possibility – should be developed in language teaching. Based on this theory, this paper examined the teaching of business English to business students in a Chinese independent college. Having discussed the particular context and the teaching practice, the paper found that content-based teaching was not adequate to meet the needs of students who have been frequently frustrated by language barriers. In this case, business English was not only for acquisition of business knowledge through English, but also for linguistic competence.*

**[Keywords]** *post-method pedagogy, ESP courses, English teaching*

## Introduction

The newly formulated *Guidelines on College English Teaching (2017)* was drawn up by the National Foreign Languages Teaching Advisory Board for the purpose of deepening the reform of college English teaching and improving teaching quality (National Foreign Languages Teaching Advisory Board, 2017). Under this guidance, college English teaching is oriented toward the practical use of English, accordingly, laying its emphasis on the cultivation of students' English proficiency. While emphasizing the development of students' ability to use general English, college English teaching, meanwhile, by targeting at preparing students for effective communication in English in different areas or contexts such as daily life, professional studies, and professional positions, should further enhance their academic English or professional English communication skills and cross-cultural communication. Therefore, more and more colleges and universities have carried out college English curriculum reforms and set English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses as one of the follow-up courses for college English.

As the new guidelines require, ESP courses should “combine specific content of the subject with language teaching. Accordingly, the teaching focus of ESP courses is the acquisition of specialty-related linguistic competence, with its corresponding teaching activities, focusing on eliminating language barriers in the course of learning subjects.” Undoubtedly, it is so different from the teaching of ESP courses and that of traditional college English courses that it poses new problems and challenges for teachers to teach these courses. Therefore, how to effectively teach ESP courses has emerged as an area of current academic interest.

In this paper, this author asks the question, “How to effectively teach business English in post-method era, especially to business students?” This serves the purpose of researching the teaching of ESP courses in the particular context of college English reform in China and bringing ESP teachers significant insights concerning their future development.

## Literature Review

In recent years, many authors have stated their views on the teaching of ESP courses. Chen Yali (2011) advocated the combination of ESP theory and the Content-based Instruction (CBI) teaching approach, regarding teaching materials as the combination of language and content, language as the main carrier, and content as the main target. Through exploring two fundamental issues that concern what to teach and how to teach, Sun Youzhong and Li Liwen (2011) pointed out that the CBI teaching approach should be combined with ESP teaching philosophy. However, teachers still have to pay high attention to language acquisition in the application of CBI teaching, and at the same time, enable students to construct their knowledge and practice their critical thinking. Cai Jigang (2012) believed that CBI is a theoretical basis for ESP teaching. Guided by CBI teaching approach, ESP courses combine language teaching and subject teaching. When language is employed as a medium or tool for learning subject knowledge, students' ability to use English will have rapid development. Through empirical research, Wang Jianmei (2015) summed up some problems for college English teachers in teaching ESP courses: the lack of professional knowledge, as well as teaching resources, and so on. It was proposed that college English teachers should adopt appropriate teaching content and teaching methods that are in line with the actual condition of students, but there has been no discussion about what teaching methods are suitable for ESP teaching. Guo Yanling (2016) compared the "ALA, A Learning-center Approach" (learning is a negotiation between individuals and society – which, here, refers to the target context) (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) and the core thoughts of "post-method" pedagogy, on the basis of which it is believed that the "ALA" is the teaching method of the post-method era of ESP.

Although the methods discussed above are supposed to "have a specified set of theoretical principles and a specified set of classroom practices. One might think they provide different pathways to language learning and teaching" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 163). However, it has been revealed in many practical research that the existing methods each have their merits and demerits. The "post-method" pedagogy proposed by researchers, mainly represented by B. Kumaravadivelu, holds that "having ignored several factors that govern classroom processes and practices-factors such as teacher cognition, learner perception, societal needs, cultural contexts, political exigencies, economic imperatives, and institutional constraints, method is too inadequate and too limited to satisfactorily explain the complexity of language learning and teaching" (2006, p. 165). Therefore, language teaching – with the various elements of learning, teaching and teacher education involved in a pattern – was so sensitive to the context that no single method of language would bring final success in foreign language teaching (FLT) (Brown, 2002).

The three-dimensional system of Kumaravadivelu's post-method pedagogy emerged to be three operating principles to organize and practice foreign language teaching. This three-part framework consists of three pedagogic parameters: particularity, practicality, and possibility.

### *The Parameter of Particularity*

As the most important aspect of post-method pedagogy, particularity means "any language pedagogy must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 538). Therefore, requiring a holistic interpretation of particular situations, the practice of particularity can foster the emergence of a context-sensitive language education which involves a critical awareness of local conditions of learning and teaching, as well as practicing teachers.

### ***The Parameter of Practicality***

The parameter of practicality relates to the relationship between theory and practice and teachers' monitoring of his or her own teaching. It emphasizes the teaching practice of teachers, as well as the teachers' reflection and action in this teaching practice, in which teachers no longer passively and blindly follow and apply professional theories. Instead, teachers' personal theories will be developed by interpreting and applying professional theories in practical situations while they are on the job. That means, "teachers ought to be enabled to theories from their practice and practice what they theorize" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 173). Therefore, theory and practice are not separated and teachers' sense-making (van Manen, 1977) – "an unexplained and sometimes unexplainable awareness of what constitutes good teaching" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 173) – matures.

### ***The Parameter of Possibility***

The origin of the parameter of possibility is mainly from the educational philosophy of the Brazilian intellectual, Paulo Freire. According to him and his followers, pedagogy is closely linked to power and dominance, aiming to create and sustain social inequalities. They call for the recognition of learners' and teachers' individual identities, i.e. their class, race, gender and ethnicity, and for sensitivity toward their impact on education. The awareness that learners, as well as teachers, bring to pedagogical settings are not only influenced by what they experience from the classroom, but also by a broader social, economic, and political environment in which they grow up. Such awareness may alter pedagogic practices in ways unintended and unexpected by policy planners, curriculum designers, or textbook compilers (Chen, M., 2014).

## **Problem and Research Method**

In the context of college English reform in current China, as required in the Guidelines (2017), students, by experiencing the college English curriculum, should be cultivated with high English proficiency, intercultural communicative awareness and communicative competence, autonomous learning abilities, and comprehensive cultural qualities so that they can effectively use English in their studies, lives, social interactions and future work, and meet the needs of the country, society, school and personal development. Therefore, the teaching of ESP courses should fully take into account the actual situation and suit the special requirements of the context.

By taking a Chinese independent college – South China Business College (SCBC) of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (GDUFS) as an example, this paper will examine the teaching of business English to business students by discussing the particular context and the teaching practice.

### ***Research Method***

Qualitative research was used to get in depth understanding of the participants', including ESP teachers' and their students' experiences in teaching practice. Data was collected through in-depth interviews because in-depth information about participants' views on the teaching practice of ESP needs to be gathered for further analysis.

### ***Participants***

The participants of the study were composed of students experiencing ESP and 4 in-service teachers teaching ESP courses in the College English Department of South China Business College (SCBC) of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (GDUFS).

### ***Data Collection and Instruments***

Data collection in this qualitative research was collected in its natural setting to ensure rich information with deep insight into the phenomenon. Information was gathered through the use of in-depth interviews of ESP teachers and their students. All participants were given open-ended questions and had volunteered to participate in the interview to explore the real teaching practice of ESP courses and their views on the experience.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### ***The Particular Context – Particularity***

**Analysis of local conditions of learning & teaching.** SCBC, sitting in Guangzhou, a noted historic and cultural city, as well as a giant modern metropolis and commercial center in South China, with its traditional advantage as a business college, adopts an educational pattern of “comprehensive knowledge, excellent specialty, foreign language proficiency and practical skills”. Therefore, the purpose of its undergraduate education is to cultivate versatile, down-to-earth, and international-oriented talents who are well-equipped with ideological quality, professional skills, cross-cultural communication competence, and the ability to employ information technology. In pursuance of its educational philosophy of “paying much attention to students achievements in study, their ideas in their minds and their careers in future, and even more to their ways of gaining, thinking and conducting oneself”, SCBC is striving to turn itself into a high-level teaching-oriented college distinguished in foreign languages and business disciplines, which is mainly manifested in its courses briefing generally highlighting the mastery of high level English skills, communication competence as well as business subject-related knowledge. Priority given to foreign language is a notable feature of the college. In fact, since its establishment, SCBC has been facilitating the integration of foreign language teaching with other majors.

**Analysis of learners.** As foreign language teaching has been integrated with other majors in SCBC, there are now English-only classes and bilingual classes in of all the non-foreign language majors, which means students are required to study their majors in English, especially in their second year of college education or above. A good English level of students largely contributes to the success of English-only and bilingual classes in non-foreign language majors.

According to an unofficial investigation conducted by Wen Qiufang (2012), recent years have witnessed improvements in the overall English level of college students, at least in their first year in school. However, students who’ve experienced traditional college English are still not well prepared for using English to study professional courses with depth and difficulty. This particular situation necessitates ESP curriculum as the core of reform in English teaching and undergraduates are required to study ESP courses as the follow-up courses of College English so as to well adapt themselves to the study of professional courses. Additionally, students in SCBC are supposed to bear the knowledge of business basics and will pick up a job in business as their career objective after graduation multinational institutions, and foreign-owned enterprise, etc. The student’s employment orientation is also a relatively good premise for the teaching of ESP courses in SCBC.

**Analysis of teachers.** Traditionally, college English teachers have been trained with a Master’s degree in linguistics or literature to fulfill their roles as guide, organizer, problem solver, even the ultimate authority of knowledge. For them, language teaching typically focuses on developing knowledge about the language and improving learners’ four skills: listening, speaking, writing, and reading.

However, in the context of college English reform, “college English teachers must take the initiative to adapt themselves to the development of higher education, to the new requirements of college English curriculum, and to the needs of the development of college English teaching under the information environment. To constantly improve their professional level and teaching ability, in addition to mastering the subject theory and knowledge, they should have the consciousness of curriculum construction, the ability to choose the teaching content, the ability to adjust the teaching methods and means, and the consciousness of teaching reform...” (The Guidelines, 2017). Therefore, college English teachers, for the purpose of further improving comprehensive competence in teaching and scientific research, are inevitably facing the career transformation from teaching English for general purposes (EGP) to teaching English for specific purposes (ESP).

### ***The Teaching Practice – Practicality & Possibility***

According to the interview, the in-service teachers teaching ESP in SCBC have a Master’s degree in linguistics, literature or translation. Before the advent of the reform of college English curriculum, they were mainly engaged in general English teaching, and rarely pursued teaching English courses in other professional fields such as business, accounting, and business administration, etc. Although with good language proficiency, and academic knowledge of their specialty in linguistics, literature or translation, they still found it’s inadequate to satisfy the needs of ESP teaching with their original knowledge scope.

From the perspective of knowledge structure, however, ESP teachers must master not only the theories and methods of English linguistics and language teaching, but the theory of ESP and its application. Additionally, teachers with relevant subject-knowledge are another contributor to the success of teaching ESP. Therefore, ESP teachers are language teachers with language teaching competence in the first place, and secondly, they are teachers with discipline-related knowledge. The basic requirements for being ESP teachers can be concluded as follows: English proficiency, aptitude for teaching and necessary discipline-related knowledge.

*“I specialized in English literature when I received my post-graduate education. In the past several years of teaching general English, I thought I’m capable of teaching it well, though sometimes I unconsciously focus my teaching only on practice of English skills. Although business English teaching has undoubtedly expanded my knowledge structure and broadened my horizons, being an ESP teacher is a challenge for me to enrich discipline-related knowledge and study how to teach” (Teacher 1).*

Even though they are being faced with both challenges and opportunities in the teaching practice of business English, ESP teachers have been frustrated by the reality that without much interdisciplinary knowledge, their knowledge scope is relatively narrow. However, ESP teachers are in a struggle to master language and subject matter, which are beyond the bounds of their previous experience, but still, it is difficult to say what level of discipline-related knowledge is necessary for ESP teachers (Jing Luo, 2017). As for students, it was revealed in the investigation that English level of college students have been improved in recent years, but it’s also not easy for them to study ESP.

*“The content of the ESP course I selected has a certain relevance to my specialty. Although content is very significant, but I found language turns out to be the barrier for me to understand the content. I found what I need most by studying ESP is to enlarge my specialized vocabulary and to practice my English skills, through which I can get improvement in my professional study. ”*

In general, the interviewed students majoring in business-related subjects will respond positively and study well in ESP courses than those students from other specialties, partly because the former group have obtained the knowledge of business basics. However, most of those students see language as a barrier in their process of learning. Naturally, they will take language learning, instead of the study of subject content, as their priority.

Based on the elaborated analysis above, it indicates that business English should not be only for the acquisition of business knowledge through English, but also for linguistic competence. Moreover, ESP courses should give priority to the improvement of students' linguistic competence, instead of the acquisition of business knowledge through English. Therefore, in Chinese universities, an ESP course should be a language course first. With four key features of taking subject knowledge as the core, using authentic materials, learning new information, and arranging the curriculum to meet the demand of different student groups, the widely-preferred CBI (Content-Based Instruction) Teaching Approach is not adequate to meet the needs of students who have been frequently frustrated by language barriers.

Meanwhile, traditionally, Chinese students are used to focusing their English learning on the practice of English skills with teachers presiding over classroom teaching. Content-Based Instruction, however, with its emphasis on critical thinking and equality between students and teachers, has difficulty in adapting and integrating into the long-term traditional Chinese education. Therefore, the combination between the idea of teachers-led and that of teacher-student equality, as well as the integration between traditional language teaching with CBI should be continuously practiced in business English teaching.

In addition, although the interviewed teachers have been given such a new role as business English teachers, they have not conducted any scientific research based on business English teaching. They believe that it is difficult to balance the identity of being the “aspiring” academic researchers they ought to be with that of being the teachers they have already been. The reason for this is they are still beginners in business English teaching, devoting much of their time and energy to teaching design and classroom practice. For them, more teaching experience and research on the curriculum need to be accumulated for further scientific research.

*“I spend most of my time working on how to make my class more meaningful and attractive. After all, the ESP course is very practical for students who hope to help their future career development with the course. I know we are obliged to combine scientific research with teaching, but I don't have the energy to do so right now”* (Teacher 2).

In ESP teachers' eyes, their teaching and scientific research are two parallel lines rather than a combined one. However, when interviewed, most of them have their own understanding of what is good teaching – being clear and persuasive. Obviously, the sense-making – “an unexplained and sometimes unexplainable awareness of what constitutes good teaching” – is on the way.

*“It's a fresh experience for me to teach business English, which makes me ‘jump out of that boring little box’ to examine and reflect on my own teaching practice from a new perspective. In the previous college English teaching, I was inclined to adopt task-based teaching method. I also applied this teaching method, together with the other effective teaching approach, to the teaching of business English. I feel that I have made progress in teaching with appropriate teaching method”* (Teacher 3).

Theory and practice are not separated. With continuous reflection and action in their teaching practice, teachers need to integrate the application of professional theories on the basis of complete

understanding in practical situations with systematization of their teaching philosophy while they are on the job.

### **Conclusion**

Regarding the particular context and the teaching practice, the ESP course in Chinese universities should be a language course first. Therefore, Content-based teaching was not adequate to meet the needs of students who have been frequently frustrated by language barriers. The combination between the idea of teachers-led and that of teacher-student equality, as well as the integration between traditional language teaching with CBI should be continuously practiced in business English teaching.

In the light of the nature of ESP courses, in-service teachers need to be trained for a career transformation into a ESP teacher by not only gaining crucial theoretical knowledge from academic disciplines such as general education, linguistic sciences, second language acquisition, cognitive psychology, and information sciences, which provide the theoretical basis necessary for the study of language, language learning, language teaching, and language teacher education, but also by conducting team-building within teams of ESP teachers in terms of design of ESP courses, and research related to ESP teaching. Meanwhile, seminars, or other cooperation with specialty teachers should be established for information exchange about the students' subject course and subject learning.

### **Acknowledgement**

This research was financially supported by the Key Program of the English Language and Literature of Guangdong Province, 2016.

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# A Study on the Teaching of Business English-ESP Course Based on Surveys of Students' Needs

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**[Abstract]** Due to the lack of studies in setting the Business English-ESP course, this paper searches the underlying teaching perception of the Business English-ESP course with the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) framework that has been studied in the discipline of business English. This study was conducted through two surveys of a group of students when they were taking the Business English-ESP course and then after they graduated and started to work. Findings of the surveys reveal that Business English-ESP should be taught with English language forms as the focus and be realized with college English teachers' business qualities.

**[Keywords]** PCK; teaching purposes; the Business English-ESP course; knowledge; practice

## Introduction

In the 21st century, English is an international language widely applied in conducting business. Following the trend of globalization, the interest in teaching English for Business Purposes, or called English for Specific Purposes-Business (Business English-ESP course), which is one of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses, has been well noticed and documented since the late 20th century. The real objective of ESP courses is to use English to accomplish a definite goal (Robinson, 1980). *The College English Course Teaching Requirement*, issued in 2013, stipulates that the ESP courses shoulder the instrumental function. According to Chen (2010), as an important ESP course, Business English-ESP is an application-oriented course for non-English majors combining linguistics and business, becoming a social functioning variant of the English discipline. The introduction of the business English course into the College English system embraces the challenges that are brought by factors such as the learners' practical needs and the familiarity of teachers with the content and the teaching methodology of the course. ESP educators in China have been laying their eyes on the design of the course content, however, few researches into the course design based on the survey of learners' needs have been documented. This paper studies the teaching perception based on the findings from two surveys conducted among a group of learners when they were at school and after they started working, aiming to explore the underlying notion in the course design.

This paper will first present the framework for the study and the recent studies on ESP courses, followed by the introduction of the conducted surveys. Findings from the surveys will be displayed and illustrated before further discussion on the teaching perception of the Business English-ESP course.

## Theoretical Framework

It cannot be denied that the courses are designed to ensure students can adapt to social life and work. As the reference in the study conducted by Guo and Li (2015), the annual report (2012) from *MyCOS* on social needs and cultivation qualities required for business English majors, the competences that those talents should possess include the ability of comprehension and communication, logical thinking ability, management ability, application and analysis ability, and a practical ability.

To equip students with such abilities, the establishment of the discipline, including the theory of the discipline, the setting of the course system, and the cultivation mode of talents, has been widely studied by researchers and educators in the field. It is in such development that the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) has become the focus. PCK involves the knowledge of the course and the knowledge of teaching methodology (Shulman, 1986), and thus, it is the bridge between teachers' conception of the course teaching and their teaching practice, making a direct impact on teachers' teaching beliefs and classroom teaching behaviors (Wu, & Qin, 2014).

Against the discipline of business English, the PCK framework is constructed with four components including: (1) business English teaching purposes, (2) students' understanding and needs of learning business English, (3) teachers' knowledge of business English teaching strategies, and (4) knowledge of business English curriculum. As Wang & Li (2011) analyzed, teaching purposes will vary if the discipline lays its focus on the language skills or on the business English knowledge and business English communication skills. From the students' perspective, their previous knowledge and expectation form the basis of their perceptions of business English learning. It is to meet students' needs that teachers select and design business English knowledge that is supposed to help reach the teaching purposes. Teachers' language used in the classroom teaching, together with teachers' knowledge of Business English, comes from the teachers' language knowledge, which is regarded as the comprehensive knowledge of both teachers' knowledge of the target language and the knowledge of teaching with the target language (Andrews, 2003). In addition, teachers' knowledge of the course design and the teaching methodology have roots in the teacher's perception of teaching strategies. Among all the components of business English PCK, teaching purposes are just like a compass, directing teachers to focus on either the language knowledge or business knowledge. Studies on the practice of teaching business English have drawn lots of attention. However, there is a lack of studies on the practice of teaching the Business English-ESP course to non-English majors. With the consideration of the special teacher-student situation, this paper finds out the underlying perception of teaching the Business English-ESP course by discussing the findings from a survey implemented among students who have ever taken the course with the relevant theories about PCK.

As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) indicated in their book, ESP features the language application in typical special contexts and the language forms that are supposed to be used in learners' target contexts. Put against the business scenarios, teaching the Business English-ESP course will be influenced by factors such as the students' profiles, the characteristics of each teaching-learning situation and the familiarity of the teachers with business knowledge and with the teaching methodology (Esteban, & Canado, 2004). The Business English-ESP course, as its name implies, is the course combining language knowledge and business knowledge with learning contexts intended to simulate authentic business contexts. Setting up and designing the course teaching should not be conducted without the analysis of students' needs and the cross-disciplinary nature.

### **Methodology**

With the aim of finding out the students' expectations of the course teaching and learning, the survey was conducted after a series of literature reviews. Objects chosen to participate in the survey were those who once attended the Business English-ESP class in the university where this writer is working. Those objects have graduated and are now working in different work places.

In total, 182 objects were chosen to complete the survey. They entered the university in 2013, took the Business English-ESP course in 2015 and graduated from the university in 2017. They were asked to fill

out a questionnaire respectively at the time when they took the course and after they started working. The two questionnaires were designed to look into learners' expectations of the course and the requirements of their workplace, shedding light on the setting of the teaching purposes.

Questions were in the form of multiple choices and open questions. Their content was designed with the result of the report about business English talents' competences from the *Mycos* company in 2012 and ESP teachers' knowledge structure proposed by Yan (2011). In the questionnaire given when the course was going on, questions included the students' motivations to choose the course, their abilities that should be improved upon, the knowledge that should be obtained through learning the course, the qualities teachers should have, and their satisfaction towards the course. In the other questionnaire, the focus was on the requirement of objects' work places. Objects were asked to provide information about how English is used in their workplace and about their teachers' knowledge by making a reflection on their university study.

The two questionnaires were trialed on a couple of respondents and modified before they were sent out to all the objects. For the survey conducted in 2015, questionnaires were completed in class; but for the survey at the end of 2017, questionnaires were designed on the online questionnaire platform "*Wen Juan Xing*" and sent out through different channels such as the online chatting room, *WeChat* or *QQ*.

## Findings

There were 182 Business English-ESP learners that took part in the survey in 2015, with all questionnaires being effective. For the survey in 2017, the number of respondents with effective questionnaires was 180, with 2 students out of reach after graduation.

### *Findings from the Questionnaires in 2015*

Respondents in 2015 were enrolled at the time in the Business English-ESP course, which was an optional course in their university. They were in different classes but were taught with the same teaching plan and similar teaching strategies. According to their responses in the survey, most of the objects (82.97%) chose the course because they regarded it as useful for their future jobs, and 49.45% chose it for their major study. When asked to choose the reasons for learning this course, most learners were likely to have more than one reasons; however, obviously, their motivations were inclined to be practical and functional.

**Table 1. Responses to the Question about Reasons for Choosing the Course**

Reasons for taking the English Business-ESP course	
<i>Choices</i>	<i>Percentage of Respondents</i>
For interest	39.01%
Because I like the teacher.	23.63%
Being useful for my major study.	49.45%
Being useful for future my future job.	82.97%
No other courses to choose	8.24%

As data shows from the question regarding their satisfaction of the course, only 7.14% students gave negative answers for reasons such as assigning too much homework, lacking enough business knowledge, and being short of interests in classroom teaching. As for the knowledge that should be accessed and improved upon, 68.13% and 61.54% of the respondents chose knowledge about basic business theories and business practical skills, respectively, followed by 59.34% of the respondents that regard basic English language knowledge as necessary. When asked about the abilities that were supposed to be improved upon through the learning of the course, 93.41% of the objects chose comprehension and communication

competence and 70.33% thought thinking ability was important. Consistently, 80.77% of the respondents considered that teachers should possess the knowledge of ESP language and culture, together with 79.67% and 73.08% of the learners putting basic English language knowledge and the knowledge of basic business theories in second and the third place. With detailed analysis, it can be noticed that it was the language skills with basic business knowledge that became respondents' learning focus.

**Table 2. Response to the Question about Satisfaction Towards the Course**

Satisfaction towards the teaching of the Business English-ESP course	
<i>Choices</i>	<i>Percentage of Respondents</i>
Satisfactory	92.86%
Unsatisfactory	7.14%

**Table 3. Response to the Question about Knowledge and Skills Obtained in the Course**

Knowledge to be obtained in the Business English-ESP course		Abilities to be improved in the Business English-ESP course	
<i>Choices</i>	<i>Percentage of Respondents</i>	<i>Choices</i>	<i>Percentage of Respondents</i>
Basic English language knowledge	59.34%	Comprehension and communication ability	93.41%
Knowledge of English language and culture	52.2%	Thinking ability	70.33%
English cross-cultural knowledge	56.04%	Management ability	41.21%
Knowledge of basic business theories	68.13%	Application and analysis ability	58.79%
Knowledge of business practical skills	61.54%	Practical ability	21.98%
Others	2.2%		

**Table 4. Response to the Question about Qualities Business English-ESP Teachers Have**

Qualities Business English-ESP Teachers should Possess	
<i>Choices</i>	<i>Percentage of Respondents</i>
Basic English language knowledge	79.67%
Knowledge of English language and culture	72.53%
English cross-cultural knowledge	70.33%
Knowledge of ESP language and culture	80.77%
Basic knowledge of business theories	73.08%
Knowledge of business practice	58.24%
Knowledge of teaching business	59.89%
Business practical ability and experience	64.29%
Research ability	24.73%

From the answers to the open question about the necessity of learning Business English-ESP, all of them, except one respondent, showed a positive attitude. As far as they were concerned, the Business English-ESP was the course not only providing general understanding of business in English, but also providing chances to improve English communication proficiency in a business context.

### *Findings from the Questionnaires in 2017*

When the respondents answered this questionnaire, they had graduated and started in the work places. Among those 180 respondents, 79.32% were working in companies, 10.53% were freelance, 7.89% were civil servants in the government and 5.26% were free entrepreneurs. In the various types of jobs, English was needed to different degrees. According to the data from the survey, 65.63% of the respondents used English in their present work. This corresponds with the percentage (65.63%) of the objects whose workplace demands employees' English proficiency, requiring employees to have obtained CET 4, CET 6, or 5.5 in IELTS.

**Table 5. Respondents' Occupations**

<b>Your Present Job</b>	
<i>Choices</i>	<i>Percentage of Respondents</i>
Freelance	10.53%
Free entrepreneur	5.26%
Civil servant in the government	7.89%
Staff member in a company	76.32%

**Table 6. Use of English at Work**

<b>Do you need to use English at work?</b>		<b>Does your work place have any requirement on English proficiency?</b>	
<i>Choices</i>	<i>Percentage of Respondents</i>	<i>Choices</i>	<i>Percentage of Respondents</i>
Necessary.	65.63%	Yes.	65.63%
Not necessary.	34.38%	No.	34.38%

To be specific, from their reflections on their studies in the university, most of the respondents (92.11%) believed that the comprehension and communication abilities cultivated in the Business English-ESP course was helpful in their daily work, and 60.53% regarded thinking abilities as useful. Interestingly, their choices were consistent with their previous responses. In another words, students have gained a general blueprint for their future careers since the time they chose to learn the course on campus.

Unfortunately, not all the respondents were satisfied with the teaching of the course. Compared with the result from the questionnaires in 2015, the proportion of respondents showing a positive attitude towards the teaching effects of the course in their present work dropped to 73.68%. Their discontent was mainly caused by realizing the insufficiency of applicable business language forms and special terms in business context and the lack of practical activities in classroom teaching. Put in more specifically, answers to the open question about what kinds of knowledge and abilities mostly call for teachers' language skills and knowledge, thinking abilities, and the proficiency in teaching. Respondents' answers to the open question about when they will use English at everyday work present more useful information for course setting. In the light of their replies, there is a great demand for communication through emails and conversations with foreigners in negotiation as examples. The practical nature of the Business English-ESP course, thus, turns especially prominent.

**Table 7. Respondents' Satisfaction Towards the Course after Graduation**

<b>Does the Business English-ESP course meet your needs at work?</b>	
<i>Choices</i>	<i>Percentage of respondents</i>
Yes.	73.68%
No.	26.32%

**Table 8. Respondents' Opinions on the Useful Abilities Cultivated in the Course**

<b>What Abilities did you Cultivate in the Business English-ESP course that are Useful in your Present Work?</b>	
<b>Choices</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
Comprehension and communication ability	92.11%
Thinking ability	60.53%
Management ability	26.32%
Application and analysis ability	47.37%
Practical ability	28.95%
Others	2.63%

### **Discussion**

The two surveys in this study together have revealed the students' needs that should be taken into consideration when setting the Business English-ESP course in terms of the purpose, content, teaching strategies, and constructing the PCK framework for the Business English-ESP course. With all of this knowledge, teachers' training and development will then be adjusted towards a correct direction.

#### ***Purposes of the Business English-ESP Course***

Generally speaking, the teaching of ESP courses is to enable learners to accomplish professional tasks using English as a language tool. As indicated in the response from the surveys, bringing usefulness into play when learners study their major courses and when they are at work are the main functions of learning the course. With the specific information, the course should provide such functions with mainly the English language knowledge and the basic business knowledge, such as special business English terms, in the business culture, as determined from the response in the surveys. Based on the discussion above, the purpose of teaching Business English-ESP, which can be drawn safely, is to provide students with proper comprehension and application of a range of basic business English terms and forms so that they are able to continue their major study and then run their business smoothly.

#### ***Teaching Content and Strategies of the Course***

With the purpose of the course as the navigating direction, the classroom teaching content and the teaching strategies are likely to come into focus automatically. According to the teaching purpose reflected by the survey, the Business English-ESP course is to pass on the knowledge of English language in the business context. English terms and forms should be illustrated in detail in classroom teaching, accompanied with practical activities where students can apply their business language in a simulated business context. Therefore, the simulated business contexts in classroom teaching should be set up. For example, the context for business negotiation should be constructed where students try to make business deals by conversing with each other. Emails should be sent out and replied to when they simulate the situation where a Guangzhou fair is about to be held, for example. In such a sense, teaching approaches such as the task-based language teaching methodology, the project-based language teaching methodology, and the case method can be applied according to the content on the spot. In Business English-ESP teaching, English language forms possess special meanings and functions in the business context.

#### ***Teacher Training***

With the PCK framework for Business English-ESP in mind, to bring up positive teaching effects, Business English-ESP teachers should equip themselves with a solid English language knowledge, basic knowledge of business theories and strong English language skills in practice. *The College English Course Teaching*

*Requirement* has stipulated the requirement of transformation of college English teachers in terms of their knowledge and the abilities of teaching ESP. In other words, to meet the requirement of teaching ESP, Business English-ESP teachers should enrich their knowledge of business English and their language skills in business. However, with the limitation of time and space in Business English-ESP teachers' work and life, there may not be chances for all of them to study a degree in business. Based on the real teaching situation, chances of improvement can be provided by ways of classroom observation, and communication with business professional teachers. It is in these ways that college English teachers are able to get a deeper understanding and knowledge of what students will meet in their future study and professional work, making Business English-ESP teaching more effective and practical.

### **Conclusion**

This paper searched the underlying perception of teaching Business English-ESP through surveys conducted among students at school and at work. With the framework of PCK, opinions from the surveys revealed learners' needs from the course, which help to set up the Business English-ESP teaching purpose. With this purpose in mind, the teaching content and strategies have been figured out and discussed in a deeper sense. To have a full picture of Business English-ESP teaching, teachers are supposed to upgrade their knowledge in any possible ways with the aim at improving the Business English-ESP teaching effects.

### **Acknowledgements**

This paper was supported and funded by The Research and Practice of the ESP Course Teaching Model Based on Cognitive Needs in the Application-oriented Higher Institutes, the Teaching Reform Project of Higher Education in Guangdong Province in 2017 (No. 173 in the official letter [2018 No. 1] from the Department of Education of Guangdong Province); The Research of College English Teachers' Development under the Background of the Reform of the National University Entrance Examination, the Scientific Project of South China Business College, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (15-003B); and the Key Program of the English Language and Literature of Guangdong Province, 2016.

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# A Learning Design Integrating Meaning and Engagement for Business English Language Learners

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*[Abstract] There is an enormous gap between learning theories and teaching practice in the classrooms. Learning design primarily focuses on creating a learning activity in a lesson, a unit of learning or a course. Reading has been a crucial way for English Language learners to improve their language competence, acquire information and develop critical thinking skills. The current pedagogies have not motivated students to go further than finishing the comprehension quizzes after reading materials. The paper creates a learning design to help instruction designers and teachers make informed decisions about integrating meaning construction into creation of new reading experience or modification of existing learning activities. The aim is to provide rationale and suggest learning activities to support and guide teachers in learning design through a business English reading text.*

*[Keywords] learning design; reading engagement; English language learners*

## **Introduction**

While an increasing number of Chinese students have launched their careers in international companies after graduation or continued their studies in English speaking countries, many have experienced language barriers and struggled in social and academic settings since they learn English through a grammar-translation method, which focuses more on the grammar and syntax than on communicative competence and the instruction is standardized test-oriented. Reading is still considered and retained as the fundamental language teaching component in English as a Second Language (L2) classrooms. It is an important approach for students to immerse themselves in the target language and acquire the language proficiency and also increase the authentic exemplary input of it. In the traditional pedagogies, reading is considered as a way to gain vocabulary, decode sentences, observe grammatical examples and learn limited writing skills. However, reading for meaning has been revealed to be essential to the effectiveness of teaching reading comprehension (Snow, 2002). Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) have developed Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) to foster an in-depth understanding of the conceptual content of the text through the avenue of active engagement of the student. The core of the theoretical model, which has been verified by extensive research, is that engaging learning processes can mediate the effect of instructional classroom practices on reading comprehension to a large extent. Guthrie, Wigfield and You defined reading engagement as readers “interacting with text in ways that are both strategic and motivated” (2012, p. 602). If reading materials and the concurring practices in the classroom provide students with content integrated with engaging activities that is meaningful to them and relevant to their lives, they are more inclined to read and absorb.

This paper offers a learning design specific to English Language Learners (ELLs) with a business-related content reading material. It “documents and describes a learning activity in such a way that other teachers can understand it and use it in their own context. Typically, a learning design includes descriptions of learning tasks, resources and supports provided by the teacher” (Donald, Blake, Girault, Datt, & Ramsay,

2009). The aim is to develop an instructional example focusing on the teaching-learning process that happens in a lesson, a unit of learning or a course in order to help instruction designers/teachers make informed decisions about creating new or adapting existing learning activities.

## **Literature Review**

### ***L2 Reading from Decoding to Meaning Construction***

There are 3 different perspectives to explain reading processes, which are structural, cognitive, and meta-cognitive. Structural perspectives are also referred to as the “bottom-up” (Chun & Plass, 1997; Nunan, 1991), and focus on the written or printed texts and reading is a single direction. Readers are passive recipients of information. LaBerge and Samuels (1974) claimed that students must first learn the basics of phonics and how to decode words before more complex skills. Developing reading skills as a sequential process is critical in order to make sense of the text. The bottom-up approach has been criticized as being inadequate due to overemphasis on the formal features of language, mainly words and structure, and downplaying the significance of contextual comprehension factors.

The cognitive perspective recognizes the importance of background knowledge and highlights the interactive nature of reading. It is referred to as the “top-down” model and reading is a matter of bringing meaning to the print. Readers can comprehend a selection even they do not know each word. From the cognitive view, reading is regarded as a psycho-linguistic guessing game, a process in which readers sample the text, make hypotheses, confirm or reject them, make new hypotheses, and so forth (Goodman, 1967). Readers should use background knowledge, schema development and contextual cues for inference and guess testing.

Although readers need to know language forms, the impact of background knowledge on reading comprehension cannot be denied. Supporters of the meta-cognitive view think reading, whether in L1 or L2, is a process of active meaning construction and negotiation among the reader, the text, and the context. Meta-cognition involves being aware of what one is doing while reading (Block, 1992). By using meta-cognitive strategies, readers are better at activating background knowledge, identifying and planning reading tasks, and monitoring their own reading (Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill, & Joshi, 2007).

Grabe (2014) proposed that there are two level reading processes; the lower level includes automatic word recognition, lexicon-syntactic processing, and semantic processing of the immediate clause and higher-level processing is to use inference, background knowledge, strategies to identify thematic information, summarize the gist, reflect the ideas and evaluate the text. Kintsch (1998) used a lexical or surface level, a text-base level, and a situation model level to categorize readers’ meaning construction construct meaning of the text they read at many levels of representation. At the lexical level, readers construct meaning while decoding the words and phrases in the text. The text-based level of understanding usually shapes with the parsing of the surface text into propositions and the formation of links between text propositions based on argument. The situation model is when the text information is connected with reader's existing knowledge for the purpose of producing implications and inferences from the written script.

According to the current reading theories, reading has not been regarded as a language-based decoding skill only, but rather than “an active process that requires an intentional and thoughtful interaction between the reader and the text” (Report of the National Reading Panel, 2000, pp. 4-5). L2 students need to become aware of reading as a social interaction and move beyond the text itself as simply a means of improving their language proficiency. Thoughtful and deep reading refers to an active, considered, reflective reading

process to uncover what it means to the reader personally, to recognize what the author meant, to understand tone and persuasive elements, to critically recognize bias. Students would be “engaging the ideas in the text, challenging those ideas, reflecting on them, and so on” (Allington, 2012, p. 151). In order to stimulate and engage students to move forward to a new level of learning, different learning activities are needed to motivate students focusing on the skills of analyzing, synthesizing, generalizing and applying ideas through literate conversation and hopefully to decompartmentalize the four skills instruction mode to integrated language instruction. In these activities the right answer is not as important as recognizing the reading process and understanding how this analytic process can be applied in personal experience.

### ***Reading Engagement***

Engagement in reading has been considered as one of the most influential components to facilitate reading. Engaged readers find enjoyment and fulfillment and they read for pleasure and their curiosity when they are immersed in their reading (Pressley, 2002). Engaged reading is motivated, strategic, knowledge-driven, and socially interactive (Guthrie, et al., 2004; Guthrie, et al., 2012). When readers read not only for external gains, but also for enjoyment and curiosity, they are more motivated. When readers use cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies such as summarizing, or monitoring comprehension, they are strategic. When readers use their background knowledge to better understand a text and modify their current knowing, they are knowledge-driven. When readers debate or share what they read with others, they are socially interactive. These traits can improve reading engagement and stimulate thoughtful and reflective thinking. It also makes reading easier and more enjoyable and creates a ‘virtuous circle’ of constant improvement.

To teach reading in an effective manner, the instructor should allow students opportunities to engage with the text in a meaningful manner. Relatedness is an important psychological concept. When students can make meaning of the reading text and find value in classroom reading tasks and activities, the reading would be more enjoyable and engaging (Guthrie, Hoa, Wigfield, Tonks, Humenick, & Littles, 2007; Bernhardt, 2011). The connections that students can make between their own lives and the text would help them to become more involved and engaged in the text (Guthrie, et al., 2007; Hulleman, et al., 2010).

Therefore, to teach reading as a more engaging and meaning-making activity to university students, instructors need to develop appropriate classroom instruction as well as learning activities. It should be a more progressive pedagogical approach to support students’ meaning making, discourse analysis, evaluation and reflection while enforcing language learning for ELLs.

This article is designed to offer an example about how to integrate language learning and meaning making to better engage and motivate students.

### **Learning Design with a Business English Text**

I have chosen the text (See Appendix) because it is short, and the language is appropriate for high schoolers and first year college students with intermediate English proficiency. Most of them have not yet been exposed to different cultures. The cultural differences in a business setting seems even more novel and interesting for them to think about and explore further. The text also can lend itself to multiple scenarios for interpretation and analyses. The text has listed many examples that allow the teacher to expand on and integrate them with students’ lives.

The first step is to prepare the informative text in the following format (see Appendix). Each line is numbered, which will help the teacher and students to identify the information and evidence to support their ideas and discussion.

**Pre-Reading Activity**

Activity One. (Suggested time: 10 minutes).



The teacher presents the picture above to students and asks them what they see and how feel about each greeting. The teacher chooses two pairs of students and asks them to demonstrate two greetings in front of the class. After this demonstration, the students discuss why they think one greeting is the most comfortable for them and why the rest are not. It gives students a chance to predict and be related to the text from their own social setting and cultures. It encourages students to think about greetings in different cultural settings to make connections with their own lives.

**Deep Reading Activities**

**Activity Two (Suggested time: 20 minutes).** The teacher distributes only the first paragraph of the text to the students. Once all students have finished reading, the page should be turned over. Students will recall words from the text and the teacher writes them on an overhead to review the content and predict what the text would primarily talk about. Since there are three regions and countries that are mentioned in the first paragraph, the teacher can help students to retrieve their previous knowledge to extend their thinking and be ready for further discussion. Students are grouped with 4-5 people and allowed to use their cell phones to search these fun facts and fill out Table 1. The activity can increase students’ competence and trigger their memories to make a connection with their background knowledge. This activity yields the key vocabulary and theme for teachers to expand the connected vocabulary.

**Table 1. Five Fun Facts about Each Places**

Europe	Greece	Denmark

**Activity Three (Suggested time: 25 minutes).** In this section, students read the rest of the text in class. Groups of three are formed to review those unfamiliar words and students are asked to talk aloud (in their group) to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words. The teacher circulates, listens, and assists in the discovery phrase of these words. Once this step is completed, the teacher asks if there are any words they still don’t understand. The teacher then uses questions and cues to help students discover the meaning of

the unknown words, if needed, provides translations. Through this learning activity, students would make their own vocabulary list of the text.

**Activity Four (Suggested time: 40 minutes).** After finishing their reading, there is a graphic organizer to fill in and several open ended questions to answer. Students will finish Table 2 and answer the questions after class. In the class, students are grouped in 4-5 individuals and they compare their answers and talk about what they have thought and answered on these open-ended questions. A reporter is chosen from each group to share their findings and thoughts with the rest of class. The learning design in this section aims to help students categorize and compare the information in the text and also to feel related with their own culture and social settings.

**Table 2. Good Manners in Business Dinners**

How to deal with business dinners appropriately in these three countries?	
France	
Italy	
German	

**Open-ended Questions:**

1. According to the text, handshaking is different in different countries. What differences have been mentioned? Please also identify the specific details in the text.
2. How do people handshake in China? Are there any rules of handshaking in China?
3. How do people address each other in different countries of Europe? Please identify details to support your statement.
4. How do people address each other in a business setting in China?
5. What do you feel if you call your professors' first name or vice versa ? Why?
6. Do Chinese invite business guests to a dinner? If yes, do they talk about business during the dinner? If so, when is an appropriate time?
7. Please find out the proper handshake etiquette in these following countries: Norway, Thailand and United States.

**Activity Five (Suggested time: 10 minutes).** Students are grouped into teams of 4 students. Then, 2-4 students are invited to play the Taboo game in front of the classroom. It is a word game in which a player uses different clues and words without using the actual word on the player's card to help his/her partners guess it. It helps students master the new vocabulary quickly in an engaging way. It gives students a relatedness of being a team and they enjoy demonstrating their understanding of new words. This paper just offers some chosen words from the text. The teacher can adjust the word list to better suit the students' language proficiency and even extend some relevant words to push further. It is suggested to make flash cards to facilitate the activity and achieve a better learning experience.

Word List		
Handshake	Crowded Germany	Chew over
Aperitif	Gymnastic Enthusiasm	Architects

**After Reading Activity**

**Activity Six (Suggested time: 30 minutes).** Students are requested to read the scenario below and combine what they already know and have learned about the German culture and the Chinese culture to visualize the situation. Students are supposed to act like a consultant of the Chinese culture to provide some

suggestions to German businessmen about how to deal with the situation without offending their Chinese hosts and encourage a good relationship. It is a creative part that students can bring their experience and knowledge to solve a real life problem while using all the relevant vocabulary and sentence structures. It allows students to take ownership of their learning and thinking. It enhances autonomy.

### **A Cross-Cultural Scenario in a Business Setting**

It is a typical business dinner with a Chinese company and a German buyer, who actually just wants to talk about “business” during a “business-dinner”. After a while, the Chinese host just thinks: “Phew, why is he so not relaxed and just want to talk about business? We just started our dinner and we want to know this person better!” And the German buyer, after 2 hours of drinking and small talk, thinks: “Phew, when can I get out of here and relax in my room and why we still didn’t have a chance to get any commitment from the Chinese side about our deal?” What suggestions can you give to the German businessman?

### **Conclusion**

It is important for instruction designers and teachers to make informed decisions about creating new lessons or adopting existing learning activities. There is some essential guidance that can help teachers to be creative and effective. First, the text should be appropriate for the students’ levels of understanding and language proficiency. Second, the learning activities would be more engaging to students if the meaning construction involves personal experiences. Third, the learning experience should be related to the students’ background and social setting. Fourth, it should also facilitate students’ language learning. Fifth, the introduction of a target culture can foster cultural awareness and deepen contextual and situational understanding. The learning activities in this paper are designed to create an engaging reading process in order for students to feel related and stimulated and lead them to deep meaning construction and improvement of language proficiency.

### **Acknowledgement**

This research was funded by Guangdong Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Science “Thirteen Five” project (GD16XWW26).

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## Appendix

Nobody actually wants to cause offence, but as business becomes ever more international, it is increasingly easy to get it wrong. There may be a single European market, but it does not mean that managers behave the same in Greece as they do in Denmark.

In many European countries, handshaking is an automatic gesture. In France, good manners require that on arriving at a business meeting a manager shakes hands with everyone present. This can be a demanding task and, in a crowded room, may require gymnastic ability if the farthest hand is to be reached. Handshaking is almost as popular in other countries – including Germany, Belgium and Italy. But Northern Europeans, such as the British and Scandinavians, are not quite so fond of physical demonstrations of friendliness.

In Europe, the most common challenge is not the content of the food, but the way you behave as you eat. Some things are just not done. In France, it is not good manners to raise tricky questions of business over the main course. Business has its place: after the cheese course. Unless you are prepared to eat in silence you have to talk about something – something, that is, other than the business deal which you are continually chewing over in your head.

Italians give similar importance to the whole process of business entertaining. In fact, in Italy, the biggest fear, as course after course appears, is that you entirely forget you are there on business. If you have the energy, you can always do the polite thing when the meal finally ends and offer to pay. Then, after a lively discussion, you must remember the next polite thing to do – let your host pick up the bill.

In Germany, as you walk sadly back to your hotel room, you may wonder why your apparently friendly hosts have not invited you out for the evening. Don't worry, it is probably nothing personal. Germans do not entertain business people with quite the same enthusiasm as some of their European counterparts.

The Germans are also notable for the amount of formality they bring to business. As an outsider, it is often difficult to know whether colleagues have been working together for 30 years or have just met in the lift. If you are used to calling people by their first names this can be a little strange. To the Germans, titles are important. Forgetting that someone should be called Herr Doktor or Frau Direktorin might cause serious offence. It is equally offensive to call them by a title they do not possess.

In Italy the question of title is further confused by the fact that everyone with a university degree can be called Dottore – and engineers, lawyers and architects may also expect to be called by their professional titles.

These cultural challenges exist side by side with the problems of doing business in a foreign language. Language, of course, is full of difficulties – disaster may be only a syllable away. But the more you know of the culture of the country you are dealing with, the less likely you are to get into difficulties. It is worth the effort. It might be rather hard to explain that the reason you lost the contract was not the product or the price, but the fact that you offended your hosts in a light-hearted comment over an aperitif. Good manners are admired: they can also make or break the deal.

# Scaffolding in Oral Business English Teaching in Vocational Colleges

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*[Abstract]* Based on the Scaffolding Process proposed by Wood, et al., this paper makes a preliminary attempt to study how effective scaffolding and learning transfer can be materialized in the oral business English classroom in Chinese vocational colleges. Six functions of the scaffolding process are used as guidelines in the design and practice of a teaching unit and scaffolding approaches are also elaborated upon. The paper intends to shed light to effective acquisition of communicative skills for business English students in vocational colleges.

*[Keywords]* social constructivist; scaffolding; scaffolding process; oral business English

## Introduction

With the in-depth development of China's Opening-up and Reform, and the push of the "One Belt and One Road Initiative", English language learning and teaching have long been considered as of essential importance. In 2007, the Ministry of Education has stipulated that the teaching goal of College English is "cultivating students' ability to utilize English in a comprehensive way, especially their competence in listening and speaking, so as to enable them to use English effectively for communication in their future study, job, and social interaction..." (Ministry of Education, 2007). However, for a long time, Chinese college students' oral English was regarded as their greatest weakness compared with their reading, writing and grammar in English. It is believed that the educational system, teaching methods, cultural environment and students' personal factors contributed to their low proficiency in oral English (Hu, 2011). A recent survey (Kong, 2017) shows Chinese college students achieve comparatively low (90.26 out of 150 marks) in the four aspects of oral English learning: learning confidence, self-assessment, oral English performance and learning attitude.

*Oral Business English* is one of the compulsory courses for Business English majors in Chinese vocational colleges and requires an acquisition of comprehensive English language skills and international business knowledge. It is important because the language competence, communication skills and business knowledge expected upon completion of course is in accordance with the goal of vocational education in China – fostering talents with multiple competences. There is no denying that a higher level of oral English proficiency equals a stronger competitiveness in the job market.

This study intends to explore the way of teaching and organizing activities in the oral English classroom by adopting the most widely recognized educational strategy – scaffolding in the theoretical framework of social constructivism. So far, only a few studies (Wang, 2006; Cai, 2006; Guo, 2010; Li, Li & Shi, 2014; Yuan, 2015) focus on scaffolding in oral business English teaching and the social constructivist approach guiding Business English teaching and learning, but rarely touch the application of specific scaffolding strategies to the establishment of an effective oral business English classroom in practice. Therefore, this paper hopes to shed light to effective acquisition of oral communicative skills through the application of scaffolding into practical strategies and activities for business English students in vocational colleges.

## **Social Constructivism**

Social Constructivism is a philosophical way of thinking and a theory of learning that emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what is experienced in the wider community and in constructing knowledge built on this understanding (Derry, 1999). Mainly found in the works of Vygotsky, Bruner, Bandura and others, this theory considers learning as a social process and regards the role of culture and context as extremely important in learning and understanding. “Effective and lasting learning takes place for the individual when engaged in social activity with a range of others, when in a social context and when new or repeated sensory input (e.g. words, pictures, music, stories, and much more) is related to pre-existing knowledge and understanding” (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010, p. 7). Learning is a social process and we only build knowledge through social interaction.

A large quantity of literature indicates that the “learner-centered” constructivist learning environment is conducive to the promotion of “active student engagement anchored in a range of experiences, including metacognitive activities, collaborative learning, problem-based activities, higher order thinking and authentic learning experiences” (Mensah, 2015, p. 1). Various studies suggest that the application of constructivist theory produces increased learning and independent thought in different classrooms (Bruner, 1983; Pressley, Harris & Marks, 1992; Anton, 1999; Maypole & Davies, 2001; Calik, Ayas & Coll, 2010; Schreiber & Valle, 2013; Mensah, 2015).

## **ZPD and Scaffolding**

In the social constructivist learning theory, the concept of ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) and scaffolding often lend well to practical classroom application. Vygotsky suggests that it is the “level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers...” (Pritchard and Woollard, 2010, p. 14) – Zone of Proximal Development that should be measured. With help, learners are able to move forward into this zone and achieve more than they could alone.

In ZPD, an effective tool “scaffolding” – “measured and appropriate intervention for allowing progress to be made” (Pritchard and Woollard, 2010, p. 15) is used. Usually, in the context of a social classroom, the teacher takes the role of the scaffolder, and according to Vygotsky, the role of education is to provide experience within the children’s ZPD with scaffolding strategies, and the activity should challenge the children’s existing ability, achieved under the sensitive adults’ guidance (Berk & Winsler, 2007).

Regarding scaffolding and its application, there have been various studies on its many aspects and dimensions. In their paper, Wood Bruner & Rosset (1976) proposed the scaffolding process: recruitment, reduction in degrees of freedom, direction maintenance, marking critical features, frustration control and demonstration. Fernández (2001) re-conceptualized “Scaffolding” in the context of symmetrical collaborative learning and find scaffolding can be applied to understand how groups of children use language to support shared thinking and learning. A Chinese scholar Liu Ying (2005) summarized approaches and models involving the concept of instructional scaffolding, discussing scaffolding domains, strategies, forms, types, components and guidelines. More recently, Pritchard and Woollard’s book (2010) elaborated on two different approaches to scaffolding in a classroom context: planned intervention and opportunistic (“ad hoc”) intervention. Several scaffolding techniques adapted from Teach Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (TADHD) are also demonstrated in the book (Pritchard and Woollard, 2010). In *Learning and Teaching in the Chinese Classroom*, Phillipson and Lam (2011) set examples of scaffolding strategies such as questioning, role-playing and demonstration, hints and examples, instruction, graded

assignments/materials adaptation, self-assessment and peer assessment. Reynolds & Goodwin (2016) provided the evidence for motivational scaffolding in enhancing growth on standardized reading comprehension.

All the relevant literature on scaffolding suggests that scaffolding is a powerful tool in facilitating students' learning in diversified classrooms, but evidence for EFL classroom and oral business English in vocational colleges is rarely seen. Based on the scaffolding process proposed by Wood, et al. (1976), and combining it with our teaching practice, this paper makes a preliminary attempt to study how effective scaffolding and learning transfer can be materialized in the oral business English classroom in Chinese vocational colleges.

### **Scaffolding Process in the Oral Business English Classroom**

Proposed by Wood, et al. (1976) after conducting an experiment of teaching children to complete a task presently beyond their ability, the "scaffolding" process is elaborated about the function of the tutor.

**1. Recruitment:** To get the students interested in and adhere to the requirements of the task. In the unit of *Job and Responsibilities*, in the warm-up session, we achieve it by showing funny pictures indicating different (or even weird) occupations or asking them their dream jobs to arouse their interests.

**2. Reduction in degrees of freedom:** To simplify the task by reducing the number of constituent acts required to reach a solution. In this unit, this mainly involves making use of acquired knowledge to finish a small task that is part of a larger, more complex task requirement, e.g., asking the students to brainstorm the advantages and disadvantages of a certain job, for instance, a life guard of a summer camp, which will be used as the material for talking about likes and dislikes of a job, a major task to be accomplished later. Then the teacher, as a scaffolder, guides students to build up the structure of a meaningful conversation and presents students with sentence patterns and useful expressions, which are out of students' grasp at present.

**3. Direction maintenance:** To keep the students in pursuit of a particular objective with motivation. In the oral business English classroom, this often requires the teacher to go around the classroom in the hope of discovering those who are not fully engaged in the activity and draw them back in track, providing any help when necessary, replying related questions, hinting at a possible way of solution and any other techniques in order to assist students to concentrate on the activity.

**4. Marking critical features:** To mark or accentuate certain features of the relevant task. In the oral business English classroom, this often means to emphasize some important knowledge points, add relevant content to the present task, give more examples and indicate major mistakes and discrepancies.

**5. Frustration control:** To make students feel safe even when errors occur. College students are already adults, so "face saving" is important. To facilitate a friendly environment for study, scaffolders don't use harsh words and severe criticism when students find themselves at a loss as how to complete a task or when they give the wrong answer. Rather opportunistic intervention with help in private, a supply of correct answer without mentioning their mistake, or even a joke can mitigate their awkwardness, while leaving them a deep impression of the proper way to problem-solving.

**6. Demonstration:** An "idealization" of the act to be performed, the completion or even explication of a solution in the expectation that "imitation" can be followed by learners. In the oral business English class, presentation of an ideal model is not restricted by demonstration by the teacher but can be performed by fellow students who have mastered a little more quickly and better. The process of demonstration should be accompanied by the teachers' explanation on critical steps, repetition of good points, calling students' attention to subtle details of importance, asking about reasons and giving assessments.

The scaffolding process aligns with the usual steps in classroom teaching and the way students learn. It indicates a process that starts from the maximum help and responsibility from the teacher and proceeds to transfer the responsibility of learning and doing to the students themselves, until the students are able to meet the requirements set out in the teaching curriculum. We believe in the effectiveness of this process in guiding the classroom teaching of *Oral Business English* and the following is devoted to describing how the teaching design and practice of a certain unit can take place with the application of the scaffolding process.

### Teaching Design and Practice

As an example, this paper takes the teaching design and practice of Unit 2 – *Jobs and Responsibilities* in the course *Oral Business English*, so as to illustrate how the scaffolding process can be put into practice. Considering the fact that most students don't have any experience in real jobs, and the comparatively high requirement of this unit – competence to introduce different jobs and responsibilities and talk about one's likes and dislikes regarding a certain job, we have decided to achieve the teaching goal in 6 periods of class for this unit. The scaffolding process is in good accordance with the actual steps of teaching and facilitates students' learning, see Table 1.

**Table 1. Teaching Design and Practice of Unit 2 – Adopting the Scaffolding Process**

Steps	Content	Teaching method	tool	Student activity	Scaffolding Process
Preparation	Students search the job website for different jobs and responsibilities and give one's ideal job and explain reasons.	Show & tell	Cyber resources	Oral presentation	<b>Recruitment</b> (Arouse students' interest)
Warm-up	Vocabulary study: match job titles with department names	Asking questions	PPT	Matching game and memorization	<b>Recruitment</b> (Useful vocabulary to support further talk)
Introduction of core sentence patterns	Talk about each other's job by asking and answering questions in turns, referring to the sentence patterns in Language Focus A & B	Pair work show & tell	Textbook	Dialogue simulation	<b>Reduction of degrees of freedom</b> (a simple task, as the preparation for a major task)
Practice	Listen to short conversations and note down different people's jobs and responsibilities	Asking questions	PPT audio	Listening and Filling in the blanks with the help of note-taking	<b>Direction maintenance</b> (go around the classroom to assist students)
	Choose one of the conversations to repeat in pairs.	Pair work show & tell	PPT audio	Find where they have difficulty in repeating.	<b>Marking critical features</b> (Pause, explain where difficulties appear, and stress important language points)

**Table 1. Teaching Design and Practice of Unit 2 – Adopting the Scaffolding Process (continued...)**

Enhancement	Watch the video and finish the structure of a certain company	Asking questions	PPT video	Discussion, viewing and note-taking	<b>Marking critical features</b> (Ask students to generalize the structure of a company and its ranks)
	Simulate the Dialogue in the video	Pair work and act-out	PPT video	Imitation of the dialogue with the help of note-taking	<b>Frustration control</b> (Repeat difficult parts, and show part of the script)
Further Improvement	Simulate an alumni reunion, where students talk about each other's job and responsibilities, likes and dislikes.	Group discussion and act-out	PPT	Role playing	<b>Demonstration</b> (A brief assessment of each group work, stress the strength of each group)
Assessment	Inter-group assessment	Show and tell	Vote	Discussion and explanation	

As can be seen from Table 1, the teaching method involves two approaches to scaffolding (planned intervention and opportunistic intervention) throughout the 6 functions of the scaffolding process. Planned intervention is mainly seen in the first two functions: recruitment and reduction in degrees of freedom, where the greater responsibility lays on the teachers' shoulders, and should be planned in the teaching curriculum in advance. On the other hand, opportunistic intervention is used with a very high frequency in the later four functions: direction maintenance, marking critical features, frustration control and demonstration, where the teacher has to observe and discover situational factors indicating students' learning status and provides help in various forms: hints, clues, questions, emphasis, demonstration, instruction, examples, assessment, and etc.

### Conclusion

This paper is a preliminary study on the application of the Scaffolding Process into the teaching design and practice of Unit 2 in the *Oral Business English* for vocational college Business English majors. We are fully convinced that the scaffolding process aligns with the usual steps in classroom teaching and the way students learn. The teaching practice of this unit witnesses students' command of useful expressions and sentence patterns essential to the topic of this unit, and the establishment of the flexibility to simulate a dialogue in a given situation and the competence to maintain a conversation even met up with minor difficulties.

However, this paper is only indicative of how the teaching design of a unit is produced and put into practice and it is "ideal" in some sense. No statistics have yet provided any quantitative evidence with regard to the effectiveness of the application of scaffolding process compared with other teaching strategies or methods. More relevant studies, especially quantitative researches in this field are expected to shed new light to building up a learner-facilitated learning environment and improving students' engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking.

## Acknowledgements

This research was mainly sponsored by a Scientific Research Project 2017 issued by Guangdong Provincial Education Bureau – Young Creative Talents’ Project (Humanities and Social Studies) in China. The title of this project is: *Teaching Reform on the Oral English Competence of Vocational College Talents for the Supply Side – A Scaffolding and Task-based Teaching Model*.

It was also sponsored by another Guangdong provincial project: A Study of Intercultural College English Teaching Based on Constructivism under the Background of the Belt and Road (B & R), 2018.

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# Commercialization of Business English Teaching from the Perspective of the Economics of Language: A Case Study of Anhui Agricultural University

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*[Abstract] As a discipline and a newly-emerged major in university, the teaching model of Business English is not mature, and its teaching system is far from complete. The paper, with the economics of language as the theoretical basis, puts forward a new teaching model: “Commercialization” of business English teaching and provides further illustration. In the era of a highly developed commodity economy, it is practical and meaningful to guide business English teaching with mature commodity system.*

*[Keywords] the economics of language; business English; commercialization; commodity economy*

## **Introduction**

As a research field of economics, the beginning of the economics of language can be traced back to the 1960s. Jacob Marschak, the pioneer of information economics, revealed the economic nature of language in his research of information economics in 1965, and held that language was an indispensable tool in human economic activities and had economic property as other resources (Marschak, 1965). He, therefore, advocated that economics and the optimization of language were closely related and pointed out further that language had economic properties in the following four aspects: value, utility, cost and benefit. (Marschak, 1965, pp. 135-140)

Business English is a newly-emerged discipline, belonging to English for Special Purposes (ESP), and combines international business and English linguistics. Business English as a discipline can be categorized into linguistics, economics or management, or an interdisciplinary subject of related subjects (Wang, 2012, pp. 6-9; Wang & Li, 2011, pp. 6-9; Cao, 2011, pp. 63-68; Lv, 2013, pp. 19-23; Wong, 2010, pp.2, etc.). Business English has three disciplinary propositions: the properties of human capital, public products and institution (Lv, 2013). Business English meets the language requirement of the workplace, the content of which involves all aspects of business activities.

With the prosperity of international business and trade of China, business English is becoming increasingly important and its demand is growing day by day. Many universities in China established business English majors or business orientations for their undergraduates. Business English is booming as a newly established major in university, and its teaching is destined to have unique features. The teaching modal of which is far from mature, so then a new teaching modal with sound theoretical basis is in great demand. This paper, based on the analysis of the close relationship of economy and business English, applies the theory of the economics of language into business English teaching, proposes a new teaching modal and further expounds it, using Anhui Agricultural University as a case. It intends to gain some insight into business English teaching with the help of mature economic theories.

## **The Commercialized Model of Business English Teaching**

In light of the special characteristics and economic properties of business English, we put forward a new teaching model for it – the Commercialized Model. Under this model, business English is regarded as a

commodity, and the teaching practice of business English is guided by the basic principles of commodity circulation in economics.

The economics of language includes four basic concepts: 1) Language itself is capital. 2) Foreign language learning is investment. 3) Language use reflects its economic value, and the value can be much or little. 4) The economic benefit of language is influenced by many external factors, such as the number of people or institutions or organizations using one language.

According to the basic theories of the economics of language, business English is considered as capital with its economic value, and the economic value is the fundamental basis of commodities, which is also the main reason why we could deem business English as a commodity. In terms of the basic ideas of the economics of language, the economic value of business English can be much or little, and its economic benefit is determined by many external factors, among which the language level and experience of language users, and the intensity of the use of business English are the leading factors. This can also be applied to “The Commercialized Model” of business English teaching, as the market is the carrier for commodity circulation, and the demand in the market is the main factor that determines the value of a commodity. What’s more, language learning is a kind of investment in the economics of language just as a commodity in the market can be invested in. The investment can be divided into cost and expected benefit in investing in learning business English. The cost includes money spent on buying tangible objects like language books, videos, language courses and intangible investments like time and the energy one devotes to learning business English. Meanwhile the expected economic benefit is related to the length and width of language use, language level and experience of language users.

In this teaching model, business English is a commodity; the design of curriculum and the teaching plan of business English are the formula of the commodity; the teaching process is the manufacturing process of the commodity, the ultimate teaching efficiency refers to the quality of the commodity; the social demand for business English is the demand of the commodity in the market. In the whole process, the students of business English majors are the investors, the universities are the suppliers, the teachers are the manufacturers, the engineers, and the universities and teachers provide services for the students, which is like sellers and buyers, or manufacturers and customers (as in the following chart).

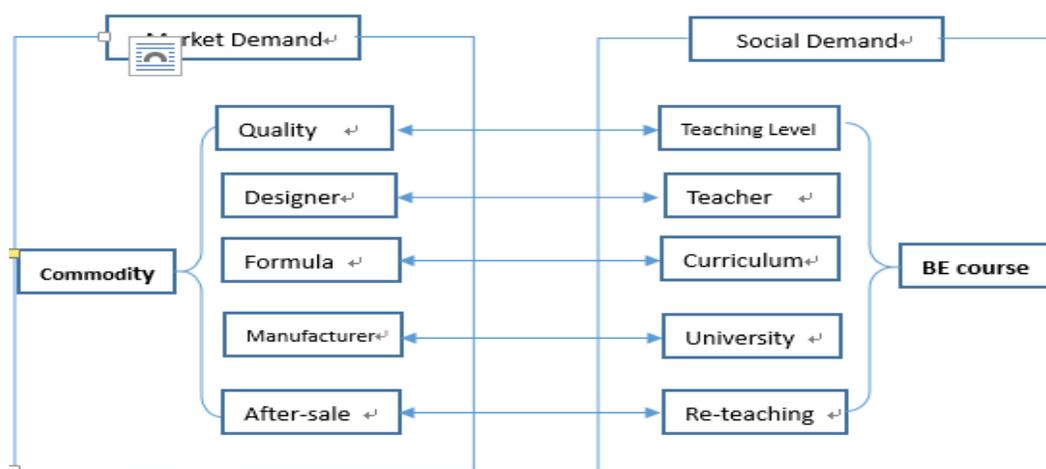


Figure 1. The “Commercialized Model” of Business English Teaching

## **Exploration of the Commercialized Business English Teaching Model**

After the “Commercialized Model” of business English teaching is built, we could conduct further exploration to business English teaching, based on the position a commodity has in economics. The discussion is mainly summarized in the following points:

### ***Quality, as the Essence of the Commodity***

To keep the advantage of a commodity, a company’s engineers have to improve the formula of their commodity continually and make the quality better. Correspondingly, the teachers, should optimize the curriculum design of business English, improve the teaching efficiency and mobilize the students’ learning enthusiasm.

With regards to the talent-cultivation plan, Anhui Agricultural University (AHAU for short), based on the National Standard for business English and the communication and experience of other universities, knows what abilities business English majors need, and designs its talent-cultivation plan combining the strength, advantages and special features of the university.

As for the curriculum provision, the establishment of the credits and types of the courses should be based on the National Standard and the talent-cultivation plan, taking the teachers’ strengths and interests into consideration. Educators should ensure there are the proper proportion of compulsory courses and optional courses, theory courses and practice courses, and continually optimize the course setups, thus improving students’ abilities in language, business knowledge, business skills and humanistic quality, cultivating talents with professional skills including language, business and culture.

For example, we have set 82 credits of compulsive courses, 38 credits of selective courses and 33 credits of practice courses, meeting the requirements of the National Standard. We have courses related to trade of tea and agricultural products, which are the strengths of our university. The teachers will open selective courses combining their research, PHD study and interested areas, like management and psychology courses.

And we will collect the feedbacks from the graduates and their employers through questionnaires or surveys and rectify our talent-cultivation plan in a timely manner. We are now building our alumni connections, inviting successful graduates to give lectures to students, or going to visit their companies.

This is the formula for manufacturing a commodity and also the basis, as only with a better formula, that the quality of the commodity “business English talent” can be guaranteed.

Scientific as the curriculum provision is, the ultimate objective cannot be achieved if the teaching efficiency is not satisfactory. The teachers, who are the manufacturers and engineers, control the manufacturing process and supervise the commodity’s quality, which affects the quality of the finished products to a large extent. In addition, the selection of textbooks and teaching materials, teaching approaches and evaluation methods for the teachers all influence the teaching efficiency, and then the manufacturing can be better guided, which is an essential part of the production of a commodity.

### ***Supply and Demand, as the Determiner of the Commodity Value***

From the perspective of the economics of language, supply and demand dominates the economic value of a commodity. The teaching of business English must cater to the demand in the market and be directed by it, which requires that universities and teachers fully investigate the dynamic change in the supply and demand of business English talents in the market and make appropriate course adjustments. For example, in AHAU, we have done some research with companies especially related to our university, and the results

of the questionnaires and investigation specifically reflect the social and market demand of business majors of AHAU.

The design of business courses must be guided by the demand in the society. Many scholars in China put forward suggestions like cutting down on the contents and length of language courses, while increasing practical contents, and providing students with more opportunities in companies and allowing them to combine business with English in business activities (Tan, 2012; Li, 2014).

At present, it's an essential condition that universities with business English majors must have internet business training system and off-campus internship bases. At present, AHAU has cooperated with YIXUE SOFTWARE and built three online training systems of comprehensive business training system, business correspondence and documentation. On the one hand, the internet training system reflects the real business world to some degree and simulates the working procedures in the companies, such as the outgoing and incoming business correspondences, business negotiations or the circulation of business documents in different organizations. On the other hand, AHAU has set several off-campus internship bases in Shanghai, Xiamen and Hefei, Anhui, which allow students to go to the companies to practice what they have learned in school in real business activities. The above-mentioned points are essential conditions for the National Assessment of business English, which reflects the cooperation between universities and companies and the cultivation of innovational and enterprising talents are the great social need.

The value of business English is highly connected with the need in the market and society and due to the great demand of business English, business English is booming today. If the use frequency or the demand level of business English is high, the commodity value is high.

### ***Talents, as the Core of the Competitive Advantage of a Manufacturer***

In a commodity economy, talents are the essential power of a company. It's necessary for universities to build a comprehensive teaching body. Business English is a strong inter-disciplinary subject with practical features, which requires the teachers of business English to have both firm language abilities and professional international business knowledge. Thus, universities should attach importance to the introduction of business English teachers with both English and business backgrounds, strengthen the training of the teachers, and create more chances for teachers to go to companies to do business practices, so that the teachers can accumulate experience and improve their business abilities.

In AHAU, we actively apply for the postgraduate program of business English. The school leaders, on the one hand, try to recruit business English PHDs, and on the other hand, strongly support teachers to get their doctorate degrees in business English, become visiting scholars in prestigious foreign or domestic universities in business, encourage them to go to the companies, and attend academic business conferences to communicate with teachers in other universities. We have high requirements for business English teachers' comprehensive qualities such as professional qualities and practical business experiences. The teachers must make breakthroughs in degrees, business experience, business theories and teaching approaches. Only by achieving higher degrees and broadening their visions, can the "engineers" ensure their technology is advanced and new.

From the perspective of the economics of language, business English has the characteristic of human capital. Business English, as a commodity itself, is capital, which can bring economic benefit relating to income or payment, and there are people who engage in jobs which directly relate to business English reflecting the economic benefit of a commodity. The quality of business English talents also directly reflects

the quality and level of the manufacturing process of a commodity, which is the core of a company's competitiveness.

### ***After-Sale Service, as the Guarantee of the Sales of a Commodity***

The after-sale service is a promotional means which guarantees the sale, thus it's significant for universities and teachers to maintain communications and connections with their graduates and the employers who have a demand for business English talents. However, this is insufficiently done at the present, the communication is not enough, and the link is not strong enough. Universities provides business talents for companies directly in the form of finished products, but most graduates are in the state of half-finished products when they graduate due to the lack of business practice in real life and the insufficiency of the curriculum provision and teaching contents.

Therefore, AHAU continues to provide the support of professional knowledge and theories to their graduates and employers in the form of training courses in the companies or within universities. There are graduates who find their knowledge and skills are not enough for their positions and ask their teachers for their old textbooks or materials to review the knowledge they've learned. This phenomenon is largely due to their ignorance of what kind of knowledge, skills or abilities the employers need. They lack learning motivation and enthusiasm, have no clear goals, and they even attach no importance to learning. Still other graduates find their language abilities dropping and their knowledge becoming outdated after working for many years. Thus, AHAU has respective training courses, which will help them upgrade their language level and their professional knowledge.

Only after students really have a job, can they know the real need of the companies, and then they can give practical suggestions to the curriculum provision. Thus, it's really necessary to maintain contact with the graduates, as it can do good for curriculum provision and make the courses more useful. Now, AHAU values their alumni resources and our school leaders often visit and communicate with our graduates, to learn of their situations in the companies, learn about their experiences and listen to their advice on talent-cultivation plan. Then, we will go back with the advice and perfect the talent-cultivation plan and optimize our curriculum provision.

Graduates are invited to give lectures to the undergraduates to help them gain a general idea of what jobs they can do in the future, the problems and difficulties they will meet in workplace, and learn lessons from their experiences. In this way, we can know the social demand for business English talents. That is to say, we can know the demand of a commodity in the market and what economic value of a commodity has in the market. And we invite our graduates to recruit students from their alma mater to work for them.

Business English teachers, through the connection with graduates, know which field of business the graduates are in, their development, salary and the overall market needs, and offer good after-sale services for the graduates. They can pass the information of market demand on to the undergraduates, the commodity in the process of manufacturing. With the above-mentioned aspects done, AHAU and its teachers can provide good after-sale services for its customers, the students.

### **Implications and Conclusion**

In light of the newly-emerged business English discipline, its teaching needs further exploring, and its teaching model is not mature and not theoretically based. A sound theory is needed to support the innovation of its teaching model. Based on the discussion of the relationship between the economics of language and business English, this paper applies the theory of the economics of language to the teaching practice of

business English and puts forward a new teaching model, “The Commercialized Modal” for business English. The teaching model is defined and illustrated from four concepts: good quality is the essence; the supply and demand relationship determines the economic value; talents are the core of competitive edge and after-sale service is the guarantee, which prove it’s reasonable and feasible from the perspective of the economics of language. In the highly developed commodity economy era, this teaching modal enables us to utilize the principles and features of a mature commodity economics to guide the teaching practice of business English, which is implicative and practical, and the model not only is applicable to business English teaching, but also to other courses.

### **Acknowledgements**

This paper was funded and supported by the Key Project of Prosperity of Philosophy of AHAU, 2016zs05zd, and Key Project of Humanities and Social Science of Anhui Province, SK2018A0139.

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# **Business English Teachers' Professional Identity Changes in the Context of College English Curriculum Reform: The Cases of Five College EFL Teachers**

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***[Abstract]** Drawing on in-depth interviews with five college teachers of Business English (BE), this qualitative study explores their professional identity changes associated with a transformation from teaching English for General Purposes (EGP) to teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the context of college English curriculum reform. Productive identity changes are commonly found among the interviewed teachers, indicating that the transformation has exerted a positive influence on their professional identity. Additive identity changes reflect a gap between the teachers' pedagogical practice and academic research. Subtractive and split identity changes imply their self-agency to seek for a breakthrough in professional development. To promote these teachers' professional development in the long term, joint efforts at both individual and institutional levels are suggested to be made.*

***[Keywords]** professional identity change; business English; college English curriculum reform*

## **Introduction**

Since *Syllabus for College English Test* (2016) and *Guidelines on College English Teaching* (2016) were respectively issued by the Ministry of Education of China, college English teaching has been undergoing a transformation with its focus shifting from developing language skills to cultivating comprehensive English application capability. Universities and colleges nationwide have gradually conducted a college English curriculum reform, setting up a modified college English course system with three modules: English for General Purposes (EGP), English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and intercultural communication. In such a context of the curriculum reform, college English teachers who used to specialize in imparting language knowledge and teaching language skills are unavoidably faced with a career transformation: Rather than merely being a language teacher, they need to equip themselves with updated teaching and research capabilities to offer extended English courses tailored to students' needs and interests.

Concerning the ESP module, international and domestic scholars have conducted research mainly from three perspectives: one is on curriculum design (Richards, 2001; Basturkmen, 2010), the second on teaching theories and practice (Cai, 2004; Yan, 2009), and the third on ESP teachers' professional qualities (Wang, 2010; Guo & Li, 2015). However, scant attention has been paid to ESP teachers' identity research, especially in how these teachers perceive their own identity changes. To fill this gap, through in-depth interviews with five teachers of Business English, who, involved in the college English curriculum reform, have experienced an EGP-ESP transition, this study attempts to explore these teachers' professional identity changes, which may generate implications for a further professional development.

## Grounded Theories

### *Teacher Identity*

Generally, identity is the understanding of who we are and of who other people are, and, reciprocally, other people's understanding of themselves and of others, which embeds beliefs, values, attitudes, knowledge and capabilities (Farrell, 2000). Olsen (2008) stated that it is an understanding and confirmation of "who I am" and "where I belong"; hence the integration of a personal attribute and a social attribute.

Teacher identity also has a personal attribute and social attribute. It refers to a teacher's teaching beliefs and his/her understanding and confirmation of their social and cultural roles (Richards, 2008). Teacher identity is, rather than unitary, pluralistic; rather than static, fluid; rather than preset or fixed, undergoing construction and reconstruction (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005). These process-oriented views assume that teacher identity is open to being redefined, "being reconstructed and negotiated" (Li & Qiu, 2016).

Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) summarized four distinctive features of teacher identity: (1) Teacher identity is a dynamic process that is undergoing constant change; (2) Teacher identity is a combination of self identity and identity in specific situations; (3) Teacher identity consists of sub-identities under various circumstances and relationships; (4) Self-agency is a key element in teacher identity, which means that teachers should exercise their agency during the course of their professional development, ways of which depend on professional goals that they pursue and available resources that facilitate them to achieve the goals.

### *Identity Change*

Identity change, as indicated by Burke (2006), involves changes in the meaning of self as a member of a group, in a role or as a person, serving as a reference for judging self-in-situation meanings. In the field of EFL and ESL research, Lambert's theory (1975) and Fromm's concept (1947) were widely applied. According to Lambert (1975), there are two forms of identity changes for bilingual learners: "additive" change, which means the learner's native languages and native cultural identity are maintained and, in addition, the target language and target cultural identity are acquired, and "subtractive" change, where the native language and native cultural identity are replaced by the target language and target cultural identity. Fromm's concept of "productiveness" (1947) is another perspective, which refers to a fundamental attitude, with which individuals experience themselves as the embodiment of their powers, and at the same time these powers are not masked and alienated from them. "Productiveness" and its related terms describe what positive or ideal identity changes may be like.

In light of Fromm's "productiveness" (1947), Lambert's "subtractive bilingualism" and "additive bilingualism" (1975), Gao, Cheng, Zhao, and Zhou (2005) proposed six types of identity changes among Chinese learners of English: self-confidence change, subtractive change, additive change, productive change, split change, and zero change.

With Gao, et al.'s (2005) proposal as the theoretical framework, Hao (2011) investigated the types of professional identity changes of nine college English teachers associated with their in-service PhD study experience, finding that the nine teachers demonstrated multi-leveled, achievement-oriented and discipline-focused professional identities, which are shaped and reshaped in the process of negotiating and balancing between personal beliefs and rules at different levels.

Enlightened by Gao, et al.'s (2005) proposal of six types of self-identity changes and Hao's (2011) investigation on teachers' professional identity changes, this study intends to explore business teachers' professional identity changes in the context of college English curriculum reform. A specific research question is formulated: What are the professional identity changes associated with these teachers' teaching transformation from EGP to ESP?

## Research Method

### *Participants*

The participants in this study were five college EFL teachers who used to teach EGP courses and were assigned to teach Business English (BE) as an ESP course during the curriculum reform. Their background information is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1. Biographic Information of the Participants**

Participants	Gender	Qualifications	Teaching experience (years)	Times of interview	Length of interview (hours)
T1	F	MA	10 (EGP: 7; ESP: 3)	1	1.5
T2	F	MA	9 (EGP: 7; ESP: 2)	1	2
T3	M	MA	9 (EGP: 6; ESP: 3)	1	2
T4	F	MA	6 (EGP: 3; ESP: 3)	2	1; 1.5
T5	M	MA	2 (EGP: 1; ESP: 1)	2	2; 1.5

The five teachers were chosen as the focus of the study for the reasons below. It has been found that there are several critical moments in the development of teachers' professional identity, such as the first time to choose a teaching career and becoming employed, the first experience of institutional reforms or organizational changes, getting promotion, obtaining a higher degree, etc. (Liu & Su, 2006). It is also a vital incident in the five teachers' teaching career that they were involved in an institutional curriculum reform and a career transformation, which might bring about professional identity changes. Whether this critical transformation has a positive or negative impact on such teachers' professional identity remains to be explored; hence, the necessity and significance of the present study, which may help to provide implications and suggestions for understanding and promoting their professional development.

### *Data Collection*

In order to collect information on the participants' relevant learning and teaching experience, their engagement with BE, their self-perceptions and views of teaching, research and professional development prior to and after BE teaching, in-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out among the five participants. Each participant was interviewed at least once, and the length of each interview ranged from one hour to two. The interviews were conducted in Chinese and were all audio-recorded and transcribed in full. The quoted data in this paper were translated into English.

### ***Data Analysis***

The transcriptions of each participant's data were first coded and categorized according to the emerging themes. In light of the above-mentioned different types of identity changes, all the categorized data were then compared and analyzed so as to generate commonalities and noteworthy differences.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***The Professional Identity Changes of the Participants***

Based on data analysis, zero change was not found in the participants' identity development and for each participant, their identity changes were more than one certain type; thus, it is unreasonable to define each participant with a single type of identity change.

**Productive identity changes.** The productive professional changes were mainly reported in the five participants' identification of themselves as an interdisciplinary teacher, who was able to impart professional knowledge by using English as a tool. English turned out to be a prerequisite and an indispensable tool throughout their BE teaching practice, and the new teaching experience improved their professional literacy in return. The interaction between their original role as a language teacher and the new role as a BE teacher yielded productive benefits.

*Since I majored in English literature, in the past several years of EGP teaching, I never thought I could step into such a different field. The BE teaching experience really helped to expand my knowledge structure and broaden my horizon. It's a rewarding experience.*  
(T2)

Before the curriculum reform, teachers of college English who used to major in literature, translation or linguistics, the three main branches for English postgraduate study, were seldom exposed to English courses associated with other professional fields such as business management, accounting, and E-commerce, etc. Since the reform, these courses had been offered to students so as to extend their professional knowledge under the context of English as a global language. Consequently, teachers also became beneficiaries in this case as their knowledge structure was updated and it was their major, English, that functioned as a significant tool. In addition, it was also reported by the participants that some teaching techniques that they had developed as an EGP teacher served well in the BE class and, meanwhile, the newly adopted pedagogical approach in BE class enriched their teaching skills in return.

*I tended to adopt a task-based approach in EGP teaching. Then in my BE class, with the guidance of reference books, I developed a content-based instruction approach, which can also be applied to EGP as an alternative. I consider it my pedagogical progress. I wouldn't have achieved this if I had not taught BE.* (T4)

*BE teaching has enriched my teaching experience and helped me to jump out of the box where I used to confine my teaching to language drills. It seems like I am now able to think and reflect outside the box.* (T5)

Thanks to the new BE teaching practice, the participants reported having experienced obvious improvement and enrichment of their knowledge structure and pedagogical skills. Meanwhile, their previous EGP teaching experience played a counteractive role in their BE class. Thus, with the interaction and integration between EGP and BE teaching practice, there is a productive reshaping of their professional identity.

**Additive identity changes.** The additive identity changes were also found in all five interviewed teachers, and reported that although there was a coexistence of double roles as a language teacher and a BE teacher, none of them had conducted relevant academic research on the subject of BE. They felt that their teaching and research were on a parallel rather than integration. In a word, they found it difficult to combine the roles of *should-be academic BE researcher* and *real teaching-oriented BE craftsman*.

The main reasons for this, according to the participants, were due to the facts that, firstly, as novice BE teachers at the initial stage of teaching, they were still occupied with pedagogical practice in class. It would be more demanding for them to enter the research stage.

*I spent most of my time figuring out how to make my class meaningful. After all, BE is a practical subject for the students who are eager to learn something helpful for their future career. I know we are obliged to conduct academic research related to teaching. But I haven't yet spent time thinking it over. (T3)*

Secondly, the interviewed experienced EGP teachers had already found their research focus based on their education background or previous teaching practice. For instance, T2, who used to be a postgraduate of English Literature, maintained her research interest in literature studies. And consider T4's case:

*Despite my master's degree in BE, so far, I've shifted my research focus to EGP based on my previous teaching practice. It would take me some time to pick it up, I mean, to return back to BE research. (T4)*

Another reason that accounted for the parallel state of teaching and researching was that there was not yet any collaboration team set up to facilitate the teachers to conduct relevant research. T5's story was an example:

*I do want to combine BE teaching with academic research. But as a novice I can find no clue by myself. It would be much better if there is a specialized research team to guide me or someone to collaborate with me. (T5)*

**Subtractive identity changes.** The subtractive changes of professional identity mean that teachers' identification with the original professional role as an EGP teacher was severely threatened or even denied. Their original disciplinary and professional commitment was being replaced by their commitment to the new BE disciplinary identity.

Take T1's story as an example. Faced with a bottleneck or a burnout after seven-year EGP teaching, she embraced the curriculum reform by taking the initiative to sign up for BE teaching. She claimed that her role as a "general" teacher had been transformed into a "professional" one.

*I don't want to be called a teacher of EGP for my whole life as to me it sounds somewhat impractical and unprofessional. ...I've been fed up by repeating the cycle of EGP teaching as a mechanical job. I don't think it's beneficial to my professional development. So, I'd like to try something refreshing and challenging. (T1)*

When asked whether she would accept to resume the role as an EGP teacher, she responded, "I prefer BE to EGP."

It is noteworthy that such subtractive identity changes do not necessarily imply the participants' negative identification with college English teaching. On the contrary, it can be reflected that these teachers managed to exercise self-agency (Beijaard, Meijer, Verloop 2004) to seek a breakthrough in professional development by accomplishing a career transformation.

**Split identity changes.** Split identity changes were found in the novice interviewed teacher, T5, who reported suffering from identity conflict and failing to find a sense of belonging as a teacher of either EGP or BE. He expressed his own inadequacies by using a metaphor:

*I don't think my mixed teaching experience of EGP and BE has turned out to be a case of  $1+1>2$ , which means the experience brings abundant benefits and enrichment. I suppose it's  $1+1<2$  to me. It does not mean I gain nothing from the experience. As a novice, I'm not even skillful at EGP teaching yet. So, the transition has been a bit tough to me. (T5)*

Unlike the other four participants who took the initiative to sign up for BE teaching, T5 was assigned by the department because of a lack of teachers and the popularity of this course among students. Before he stepped into the BE class, he had just finished his one-year EGP teaching. In his words, "No sooner had I adapted myself to EGP teaching than I was assigned a new mission." Since his major was English language teaching, BE was a blank page to his education background. What's worse, he did not show much interest in the field. During his struggle between the personal will and the institutional pressure, he felt confused and marginalized. "It's hard for me," He said, "to define myself as an EGP or BE teacher. After all, I'm not experienced enough to be labeled either one of them. Maybe next semester I would choose to teach Intercultural Communication, which appears to be more interesting to me, and hopefully I would find my sense of belonging."

Since identity development is a dynamic and fluid process (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005), there will be upcoming identity reconstruction with T5's professional development from a novice to an experienced teacher.

### Characteristics of Professional Identity Changes

In spite of the diversity of their identity changes, the tendency of their identity development was positive and active. All the participants established some degree of commitment for BE teaching and their role as a BE teacher.

First, productive identity changes and additive identity changes were commonly reported. Table 2 shows that all the participants reported both identity changes.

**Table 2. Distribution of Participants' Report of Professional Identity Changes**

Participants	Productive changes	Additive changes	Subtractive changes	Split changes
T1	√	√	√	×
T2	√	√	×	×
T3	√	√	√	×
T4	√	√	√	×
T5	√	√	×	√
Numbers of mentions	5	5	3	1

Based on the two types of identity changes that took place among all the participants, it can be inferred that the teaching experience of EGP-ESP transition positively influenced the participants' professional identification as an interdisciplinary teacher in terms of knowledge structure, English literacy and pedagogical approaches. In addition, it indicates that there are two parallel, rather than integrated, lines during the reshaping of their professional identity, one as *should-be academic teacher* and the other *real teaching-oriented craftsman*.

In some teachers' cases, their identification with the original role as a teacher of EGP was threatened or even denied; hence, the subtractive identity changes. However, while revealing the dissatisfaction and

low identification with the original role, they still thought highly of their professional identity as a college English teacher. They exercised self-agency to accomplish the EGP-ESP transformation, which they valued as a professional breakthrough. For example, four of the five participants took the initiative to embrace the curriculum reform.

As an exceptional case among the participants, the novice teacher was the only one who reported split changes. This may indicate that when face with an institutional reform, more experienced teachers tend to have more capabilities and resources to cope with the transition, enjoy more autonomy and opportunities, and are more likely to have a sense of achievement. Fortunately, the teacher who suffered identity crisis did not give up his pursuit for academic autonomy and professional development.

In Gao, et al.'s (2005) study, it was pointed out that the experience of identity struggle or conflicts does not necessarily lead to passive or negative consequences. The subtractive and split identity changes revealed in this study more often than not occurred during certain periods of most teachers' professional identity development (Hao, 2011).

### **Implications and Conclusion**

This study explored Chinese Business English teachers' professional identity change in the context of college English curriculum reform. Diverse identity changes were found: Firstly, productive identity changes indicate that the EGP-ESP transformation has a positive influence on their professional identity. Secondly, additive identity changes reflect that to engage in new academic research turns out to be more demanding than to conduct pedagogical practice during a curriculum reform. Thirdly, the existence of subtractive and split identity changes does not necessarily imply negative or passive meanings. Rather, these types of changes imply that the teachers are exercising or trying to exercise their self-agency to break through the bottleneck of professional development.

From the research findings, to facilitate language teachers to accomplish a career transformation and promote their professional development, some implications can be drawn. First of all, individual teachers should take responsibility by actively exercising their self-agency in the face of a curriculum reform. To fulfill the academic role as a teacher researcher, collective efforts in both pedagogical practice and collaborative research need to be encouraged. Experienced teachers, with more autonomy to manage the transition, may provide timely guidance and support for novice teachers.

Second, school management and department leaders need to create supportive conditions to improve teachers' professional expertise. For instance, sufficient training for ESP teaching should be offered through workshops, seminars, and courses, etc. More importantly, to promote teachers' professional development in the long term, it would be a sustainable strategy to set up a community of practice to guide and support teachers to integrate ESP teaching and academic research through collaboration.

To conclude, this study sheds light on college English teachers' professional identity change during the curriculum transformation with practical implications for their professional development. Since it is situated in specific time and space, drawing on data collected from the participants after their one-to-three-semester BE teaching, this study has its limitations. In order to further reveal the dynamic and fluid process of teachers' professional identity change, more findings are supposed to be found and reported based on follow-up interviews.

## Acknowledgement

This research was financially supported by the Key Program of the English Language and Literature of Guangdong Province, 2016.

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# **Novice Teacher Professional Identity Formation in the College EFL Classroom: A Case in Mainland China**

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*[Abstract] This study adopts the method of a case study to deeply explore how a novice college English teacher developed in her teaching practice, and how the teaching practice contributes to her construction of teacher identity. This is a longitudinal study, aiming to observe and record how a novice teacher feels and experiences in her first year of teaching. This research finds the formation of the novice teacher's identity and the change of her teaching practices are mutually influenced. Some suggestions are given as follows: developing a teachers' learning community which can play an important role in guiding and leading younger teachers in academic research and empowering teachers in decision making to raise their obligations and responsibilities for developing themselves with the whole group, so that they can know themselves better and make future plans for their professional development.*

*[Keywords] novice teacher; teacher identity; teaching practice*

## **Introduction**

It has been brought to our attention that English teachers' professional development has been discussed intensely. In recent years, experts and scholars have tried to explore teachers' learning and development in a sociocultural context, with much attention paid to teachers' cognition, beliefs, and identity. Second language (L2) teacher educators consider teacher learning as socially negotiated and contingent on knowledge of self, students, subject matter, curricula, and setting. The study of English teachers' professional identity gives rise to a wide discussion. Many scholars have investigated the issue from different perspectives. Knowles (1992) concentrated on the selfhood of teachers. In contrast, Cooper and Olson (1996) maintained that teacher identity is shaped and reshaped over time through interaction with others. Although researchers differed in their opinions, they all agreed that teacher identity is featured by multiplicity and it is a dynamic process of construction and reconstruction. People always consider college teachers as a group of people who are professional, highly accomplished with extensive papers and research. However, it is important to know how novice teachers construct their teaching identity. This research aims at exploring the formation of a novice teacher's identity in terms of her teaching practice. This research adopts the method of a case study to deeply explore how a novice college English teacher developed in her teaching practices, and how the teaching practices contributed to her construction of teacher identity.

## **Literature Review**

This research is based on situated learning, which indicates learning is a social practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Under such theory, this paper investigates the formation of a novice teacher through her teaching practice. There are two aspects of situated learning: one is learning in practice (Lave, 1996), and the other one is identities in practice (Wenger, 1998). Learning in practice emphasizes that learning is the final goal, and a novice just achieves his role in practice.

### ***The Definition of a Novice Teacher***

A novice teacher is considered a new teacher or newly qualified teacher. In foreign countries, the definition of the novice teacher from the angle of the teaching competence, working responsibilities and working years is widely used. According to the viewpoint of McDonald (1982), the novice teacher is regarded as the one who has accomplished all pre-service courses, including the teaching practice at the students' stage, the one who has been awarded the certificate and employed by a certain school, the one who has taken the same responsibility with the expert-teachers or experience-teachers, and the one who has experienced his or her teaching career for only one year in the school.

In China, scholars usually adopt two dimensions to define the term of novice teachers: 1) the working years of teachers; 2) the low teaching competence of teachers. A novice teacher refers to the one who lacks a good sense of efficacy and effective teaching monitoring ability, and who cannot handle the flexible teaching contexts properly (Wang, 2004; Li, 2005; Li, 2005; Wu, 2006). They believe that a novice teacher is the one who has worked as a teacher for no more than three years without achieving the professional or expert level. A teacher who has less than three years of teaching experience can be called the novice teacher.

In this paper, a novice English teacher in colleges is defined from the following three aspects:

1. He or she is working as an English teacher in a university or college.
2. He or she has, at most, five years of teaching experience in his or her teaching career.
3. He or she mainly does the teaching practice and research teaching tasks rather than teaching-assistant or administrative jobs.

### ***Teachers' Professional Identity***

Wenger (1998) thought that identity is constructed as a series of negotiations where the individual attempts to reconcile perceptions of self with those of others, including the broader social and cultural communities in which he or she practices. In the website of Psychology Wikipedia, professional identity is an aspect of personal and social identity that develops in professional personnel as a result of their work activities. Miller (2011, p. 172) compared some definitions of teachers' professional identity and concluded keywords and concepts that those definitions revealed, and she wrote that "identity is relational, negotiated, constructed, enacted, transforming, and transitional."

In the literature review written by Beijaard, et al. (2004), professional identity has four features:

1. Professional identity as an ongoing process implies that it is dynamic, not stable or fixed.
2. Professional identity implies both person and context.
3. A teacher's professional identity consists of sub-identities that more or less harmonize. The notion of sub-identities relates to teachers' different contexts and relationships.
4. Agency is an important element of professional identity, meaning that teachers have to be active in the process of professional development (Coldron & Smith, 1999; cited in Beijaard, et al., 2004). There are various ways in which teachers can exercise agency, depending on the goals they pursue and the sources available for reaching their goals.

From these four features, we can see that teacher identity is a multiple, dynamic and shifting process of formation rather than a singular, fixed or predetermined entity (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005).

Beijaard (1995) gave a definition of teacher professional identity from three distinctive categories: the subject on teachers, the relationship with students, and the teacher's role or role conception. Later, he

and his colleagues presented a new category covering teachers' professional identity in 2000: the teacher as a subject matter expert, the teacher as a pedagogical expert and the teacher as a didactic expert. Brewer and Gardner (1996) proposed individual identity, interpersonal identity and collective identity according to the levels of self representations. Clandinin, et al. (2006, p. 6) suggested that teachers' identities are constructed in a landscape narratively formed with historical and sociocultural dimensions, highlighting "the relational, temporal, and the shifting nature of school contexts".

### ***College EFL Teachers' Professional Identity***

In higher education, teachers' activities have been viewed of two domains, which are the academic domain and administrative or management domain (Clarke, et al., 2013). In the academic domain, teachers are required to strike a balance between teaching and researching, and teachers' identity is linked to the institutional environment.

In China, most college EFL teachers are defined as two types: "the researching teacher" who shows a great interest in researching and has done plenty of research, and the other one is called the "classroom practitioner," or "craftsman" who is committed to teaching.

Practice of academic research has played an important role in college EFL teachers' lives especially in the big context of College English Teaching Reform in China. Hao (2011) used "academic identity" to replace "professional identity", and proposed that the academic identity is multi-leveled, achievement-oriented and discipline-focused, and contains three levels: signs linked to the site of one's work; signs linked to the discipline of one's work; and universal signs of "being an academic". The first level refers to relationship with the employer and work; the second level refers to the identification with an academic discipline; and the third level is associated with publicly recognizable set of rules and values which focused on two values: "academic autonomy" and "academic freedom". From the previous research, scholars and experts classified college EFL teachers with sorts of identities, however, further research illustrated college EFL teachers' professional identity as a dynamic process.

## **Research Methodology**

### ***Research Questions***

This paper tries to explore the following questions:

1. How do teaching practices affect a novice teacher' identity construction in the college EFL classroom?
2. How does a novice teacher' identity construction affect her teaching practices?

### ***Research Design***

The institutional community under investigation was the College English Department of an Independent College in Guangzhou. Lily (assumed name), a novice teacher, has obtained her MA degree from a British University. After graduating from that university, she joined this college. She had taken an internship as an English teacher in a language training center before joining this college. During the internship, she was only asked to just revise students' work, and had no opportunities to teach. She had the opportunity to listen to other teachers' classes four times. She was chosen to make a report on behalf of the interns after listening. She received positive feedback from other teachers and was awarded a prize due to her good performance. After her internship, she didn't have chance to give a lecture. Teachers who started teaching in the first three years are defined as a "novice teacher" (Farrell, 2012). The subject in the

present study has just joined this college without sufficient teaching experience, and at the same time, her teacher identity is not constructed. That is why she was chosen to be the subject in this research.

This study used two ways to collect data, including observation and interview. After observing her class three times, I interviewed her and invited her to listen to the audiotape and analyze the problems together, helping reflect on the class practice together. During the interview, Lily gave three courses in the first term and had to finish at least 420 periods for one academic year. Under her consent, I observed and audiotaped the class for four sessions, 8 periods this term. After observing, I interviewed her and listened to the audiotape with her, thus reflecting on the teaching practice. The interview aimed to look at how she felt of her development and what attitude she has taken toward her identity change. In addition, I collected the schedule, materials, and handouts she used in the classroom.

### **Findings and Discussions**

Lily began her teaching career with great passion and was very devoted to teaching. But passion could not be converted to identity. Britzman (2003) identified *role* and *identity*. He thought that *role* was given by the outside, while *identity* was constructed by oneself. Lily was, to some extent, playing the role of a teacher. And the role will differ as her teaching practices change. From the interview, she mentioned that she has come to recognize her teaching identity, and her teaching practices were completely different from the first term when she joined in this college. Therefore, teaching identity and teaching practices are verified mutually.

#### ***The Effect of Classroom Teaching Practices on the Construction of Teacher Identity***

Teaching practices help in constructing Lily's teacher identity. First, the good relationship between the teacher and student contributed to the acknowledgment and development of her teacher identity. During her classroom teaching practices, the relationship with students was repeatedly focused on in her class. In the beginning of her teaching, Lily placed too much importance to how students thought of her, hoping to build a good relationship with them.

*"In the first term, I asked every student to hand in his or her photo and made a name list using the photo. I tried to remember them as quickly as possible. Keeping a good relationship with students is a recognition of herself. However, as the time went by, I realized that the intimate relationship with students made me puzzled. One day, I received a student's email, asking me for the video that I had played in the class. I felt that the student didn't show respect since the student's writing was quite rustic, even without any salutation. In the beginning, I didn't reply to the student immediately, instead, showed it to the class next day and corrected the format and layout of the email. Meanwhile, I discussed with students about the problems of writing when communicating with teachers and friends. And I asked students to begin to write the formal email by communicating with me on the condition that students should follow the principles and criteria of writing" (Lily, interview, 1).*

Lily also mentioned: "she should not only keep good terms with students and treat them with equality, but also keep the authority with them." Lily defined the relationship with students through teaching practices and her teacher identity became more definite. From Hao's survey in 2011, he mentioned the novice teacher was better at handling the relationship with students, which contributes to the construction of teacher identity, but not every novice teacher had the advantage to handle that.

Therefore, in the beginning of constructing teacher identity, how to deal with students' relations should be focused on.

Second, teaching practices help novice teachers realize the teaching procedures that she or he is concerned with (Taylor, 1989). In the course of teaching, a novice teacher may fully understand what teaching procedures or steps she or he is concerned with, which is also the result of construction of teacher identity. Initially, Lily focused her main attention on how to handle the relationship with students. Compared with the experienced teacher, novice teachers are more likely to concentrate on classroom management (Nunan, 1992). After conducting teaching practices, Lily began to shift her attention to teaching skills and teaching content.

*“When I analyzed the text, one of students in the class asked me a grammatical question. I have no idea about the question and actually I didn't notice the grammar in the text. All the students are waiting for my answer. And I felt nervous and asked if other students have the same problem and share their ideas with the rest. Some of them raised hands and gave their opinions. Therefore, I choose the most-recognized answer as my reply and I repeated it” (Lily, interview, 2).*

This is the first time that Lily felt quite embarrassed in teaching. What most frustrated her was that she would lose trust and authority if her answer was “sorry, I don't know, or I can't”. After that, she began to refer to many grammar books and materials in order to enrich this kind of knowledge. Similarly, she realized that she should make full preparation for the class. From observing her class, I found Lily had divided the whole class into several groups. When students were asked to discuss some questions, they first discussed in groups and some difficult questions were discussed in class. During the discussion, Lily walked around the classroom and helped some student work out problems. If the problems were not solved in class, Lily told students she would explore and seek the right answers after class. This way was also recognized by students. After more than a half year of teaching, Lily came to realize what needed to be improved on and what needed to be emphasized in class. Meanwhile, teaching practices contributed to her construction of novice teachers' identity.

### ***The Effect of Teacher Identity on Teaching Practice***

Teacher identity is not constructed in a short time, but gradually established over a long time. Teacher's decisions for the classroom depends on how the teacher identifies the teacher role. In the beginning of Lily's teaching, she turned a blind eye to the fact that some students were late for class and didn't finish their tasks after class. She tried to make the students finish the homework at ease and seldom pointed out their mistakes. In this term, she made some changes and flexibly handled students' problems. After observing her class, I found one of her students wasn't focused on the class and kept looking at his mobile phone. Lily walked up to him and placed his mobile phone on the desk and communicated with him after class. She didn't criticize the student in the classroom. This is a strategic way to address the problem. Therefore, the flexible classroom management is based on the teacher's understanding of teacher identity.

### **Conclusion**

This research found novice teachers' identity was not easily constructed. Identity was formed and developed in practices. Similarly, teacher identity also affected teaching practice. They are mutually influenced. The frustration and problems in teaching practice have a great impact on the development of teachers' identity. Meanwhile, teachers' understanding of identity largely affects novice teachers'

practice. Anyway, The novice period of teaching plays a key role in the construction of teacher identity. On one hand, only by teaching practices can a novice teacher seek and construct his or her teacher identity. On the other hand, the problems novice teachers confront in teaching practices are quite specific and concrete. Therefore, the pre-service training is a must for the novice teachers, which helps them in teaching design and working out the practical problems. In the meantime, not every teacher shows the same understanding of teaching. In other words, every teacher has different cognition of teacher identity. Teacher identity is a dynamic process. Since the time is limited in this study, further longitudinal study on the novice teacher should be conducted in order to better understand the development of novice teacher.

### Acknowledgement

This paper was supported and funded by *The Research Project of Novice Teacher Identity Formation Based on Community of Practice* (No. 21 in the official letter [2017] from South China Business College, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies). This paper was also supported and funded by *The Research and Practice of the ESP Course Teaching Model Based on Cognitive Needs in the Application-oriented Higher Institutes*, the Teaching Reform Project of Higher Education in Guangdong Province in 2017 (No. 173 in the official letter [2018. No.1] from the Department of Education of Guangdong Province).

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# **‘Sorry’ as a Pragmatic Marker in L2 Adult Learners’ Talk: Its Position and Function**

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*[Abstract] This paper summarizes some findings from the analysis of L2 classroom interaction with a focus on how ‘sorry’ is employed by adult learners in L2 classroom talk. Applying conversation analysis (CA) for second language acquisition (SLA) research (CA-for-SLA) as its analytical approach, and drawing from the analysis of approximately 33 hours of automatically recorded video online tutorials for L2 Chinese courses, this study attempts to interpret the function and meaning of each case of sorry used by L2 learners. It examines the position of sorry occurring in the learner’s utterance and its local corresponding functions which may demonstrate how learners use sorry to negotiate in meaning and define their own roles as expert, as well as novice, for L2 learning. The major finding of this study is that sorry, as a pragmatic marker, has multifunctionality which orients to dual dimensions of classroom interaction and language learning. The occurring of positions and functions of sorry depends on the context, organizational and learning needs. The findings from this study can enrich our understanding on how sorry serves pragmatic purposes for L2 classroom interaction and provide us with pedagogical implications for L2 learning and teaching.*

*[Keywords] use of sorry; pragmatic marker; L2 learner; conversation analysis; position and function*

## **Introduction**

This article argues that *sorry* as a pragmatic marker perform various conversation management functions in L2 language learners’ classroom. *Sorry* could be considered as a process of grammaticalization (see Hopper & Traugott, 2003), or a process of semantic change whereby lexical items lose their propositional meaning over time and take on grammatical, discursal or pragmatic meaning.

*Sorry* could occur in different positions of utterances due to learners’ troubles in performance, especially in pronouncing L2 language items in the right tones; sometimes, *sorry* could be used alone or with specific requirements like “could you repeat?” to invite help from the tutor as the learners show troubles in understanding or hearing the content at the previous turn. All of these features demonstrate that in language-based foreign language classroom, the correct content should be the focus of both learners and tutors. Besides, it examines the occurring position of *sorry* in learner’s utterance and its local corresponding functions which reveal how learners use *sorry* to negotiate meaning and define their own roles as novice in L2 learning classroom.

*Sorry* has been considered as open-class practices of repair initiation (Drew, 1997) and a term of apology for “claiming personal responsibility for repair-related trouble”, and accomplishment of non-apology actions, like condolences or other-initiated repair (Robinson, 2004). Also, Robinson stated that such apology-based other initiation of repair “communicates a stance” that repair-initiators, instead of their addressees, should claim responsibility due to their own hearing or understanding trouble (2006).

Therefore, the functions of *sorry* could be further investigated from different aspects in CA-for-SLA. Our research aims to investigate how *sorry* could be used by L2 adult learners to perform a learning-oriented organizational function, such as signaling for understanding checking, correcting errors, word searching,

mistaken or potential misunderstanding, disagreement, new or important information. On the other hand, *sorry* could also serve a few conversation organizational needs, such as turn-taking, holding or passing the floor, utterance closing, or a shift in topic.

### Literature Review

CA framework is considered to be a fine-grained methodology widely used in the area of SLA as it focuses on interactional practices to comprehensively understand the processes of L2 learning. In a talk-in-interaction, each participant's own perspective will be examined along with their changing identities as expert or novice (e.g. Hall, et al., 2010; Macbeth, 2004; Waring, 2009). To be specific, CA-driven research tends to look closely at sequential development of speakers' collaborative effort to manage problems occurring in interaction, which is believed to be a more complicated method than IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) model (Seo, 2015). Additionally, with regard to objects of language acquisition study, there has been seen a shift away from abstract linguistic items to various interactional practices exploiting "participants' co-construction and orientation to social order" e.g., turn construction or turn taking (Hellermann, 2009, p. 231). As one of these interactional practices that draws researchers' attention most, conversational repair is defined as a mechanism used to deal with trouble in speaking, hearing, or understanding (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). Being a focus of sustained interest in CA (e.g. Birkner, Henricson, Lindholm, & Pfeiffer, 2012; Bolden, 2012; Fox, Maschler & Uhmman, 2010; Hosoda, 2006), it has been found to consist of three components: the trouble source or repairable; the repair initiation, which is the indication that there is trouble to be repaired; and the outcome, which is either the success or the failure of the repair attempt.

Other insightful findings have also been illustrated by studies conducted in the setting of classroom. For example, Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain (2003) focused on repair-initiation used in second language classrooms and showed how repair initiation in classroom interaction is different from repair in ordinary conversations. They found that students in second language classroom tend to use the most specific repair type when they initiate repair from, such as, "could you repeat that?" or "what does it mean?" Also, they pointed out unspecified repair initiations were never used by students in their data, possibly because students who did not pay attention would worry using the unspecified repair initiations would make them look not so good. Additionally, in terms of self-repair initiations, students preferred to use them when asking for specific vocabulary items and providing candidate repairs or a candidate understanding.

Lexically speaking, *sorry* is a term used to express apology, but in real conversations, it is recognized by many studies to have non-apology actions (Drew, 1997; Robinson, 2004, 2006; Rhys, 2013). What is worthy of noting is the observation that *sorry* could suggest that the "shortcoming lies with the recipient" as opposed to pardon (Hayashi, et. al., 2013). Cheng W. and Cheng P. (2010) also identified all of the 14 instances of *sorry* were found out to be used as repair for self-correction in a large-scale speech act business corpus. In terms of relation with trouble source, Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008) noted that *sorry* as self-repair initiation identified trouble source, i.e. the problem connected to instance at the earlier turn but did not repair it.

Robinson (2004) examined sequential organization of *sorry*-based units and their different implications for the organization of apologizing as an action. It was observed that turns in which apology units initiate a sequence of action would accomplish apology as the primary action, but also non-apology, such as condolences and other-initiated repair. In some cases, they noted that *sorry*, always with upward intonation, can be used as other-initiated repair and comprise the entirety of the first part of an adjacency-

pair sequence. In special circumstances, i.e. in aphasic conversations, the functions of *sorry* were pointed out to be far different from apology when aphasic speaker was observed to use *sorry* to close down collaborative word searching, apart from moving the conversation forward, as he displayed his non-competence arisen from aphasia in difficulties in lexical choice (Rhys, 2013). Their research concluded that even *sorry* is indexed with regret due to its linguistic capacity, its apology function is subordinate to its word-search closing function.

### Methodology

The Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK), a distance education institution in which study takes place, has adopted an Online Learning Environment (OLE) for the delivery of its courses (Yang, & Zhang, 2017). The program of Basic Chinese for Non-Chinese Speakers is offered exclusively through the OLE. The program consists of five courses from Basic Chinese 1 to Basic Chinese 5. Each course lasted three months at the time this study was conducted. This study was carried out while the students were enrolled in the first two courses – Basic Chinese 1 and Basic Chinese 2 – over a period of six months. Each course included eight study units, two computer marked assignments and teacher marked assignments, a discussion board, an overview and checklist, dialogue video, online exercises, and other animated and interactive learning activities. The students could access the OLE anytime within the time-frame of the course offering.

The database for the study was video recording with a total amount of approximately 33 hours between three teachers (one female and two males) and 9 adult students (four females and five males). All of the students were English native speakers or had near native speaker competence. Each session involved 2-5 participants. All recordings were transcribed and analyzed following a CA tradition of qualitative ‘single-episode analysis’ (Schegloff, 1987).

### Excerpt Analysis and Discussion

In the following excerpts, the left table of transcription is the authentic transcription; the right transcription is its English translation; words in italics are translated from Chinese to English.

#### *Take Turn to Speak for Understanding Checking*

In the following Excerpt 1, *sorry* was used to give tentative understanding and initiate other-repair. Either for seeking confirmation or modified output from the tutor, learners employed *sorry* to check their understanding with the tutor, because of problems in understanding language content at the previous turn.

#### Excerpt 1.

1	L1:	Is to sell?	Is to sell?
2	T:	[So...	[So...
3	L2:	[Mǎidongxi. Mǎidongxi.	Buy something, sell something.
4	L1: →	<i>Sorry</i> , mǎi is to buy, and mài- ái is to sell?	<i>Sorry</i> , buy is to buy, and sell is to sell?
5	T:	Yeah, yeah.	Yeah, yeah.

In this interaction, the two learners and the tutor were discussing two action verbs, Mǎi (to buy) and Mài (to sell). The first learner was not sure about them as these two verbs only differs in tones; as a result, he said *sorry* at the beginning of his utterance to take this turn in order to check his understanding of the previous utterance by the other learner (line 4). His tentative understanding following *sorry* was then confirmed by the tutor, which indicated that his problem has been resolved and their exercise could be moved forward.

## ***Pass the Floor Because of Lack of Knowledge***

### **Excerpt 2.**

1	T:	How to say Coca Cola? [Liang xiaojie?	How to say Coca Cola? Miss Jones?
2	L1:	Kéle (2)	Cola.
3	T:	Kele.	Cola.
4	L2:	→ Sorry!	Sorry!
5	T:	Kele!	Cola!
6	L2:	Kele!	Cola!

In comparison, *sorry* in Excerpt 2 is used with exclamation mark to show the speaker's intention to pass the floor to the tutor. During this exercise, the tutor was asking Learner 1 and Learner 2 how to say Cola in Chinese. Learner 1 has successfully answered it, but Learner 2 only said *sorry* to let the tutor know that he did not know the answer and needed help (line 4). So, in this example, *sorry* was used as an independent utterance to pass the floor to others.

### ***Hold the Floor to Correct Mistakes***

In the following excerpt, *sorry* was used by learners as a marker in the middle of their utterance to produce modified output of teaching content or improve their performance on some exercises. These examples indicate the learner's intention to correct troubles in their own utterance and move the conversation forward after the improvement of their performance. Mostly, the learners felt their pronunciation or tones of Chinese expressions could be improved further. Therefore, *sorry* could be used as a signal that the floor is being held by the current speaker.

### **Excerpt 3.**

1	L1:	Wo ye xiáng chi zhongcan.	I also like eating Chinese cuisine.
2	L2:	Wo xiángdápěngyóuyíqìqu, keyi ma?	I want to take my friends with me, is it alright?
3	L1:	→ Keyi, wo ye xiangdai ... <i>Sorry</i> , Wo ye xiāng...	Yes, I also want to take ... <i>Sorry</i> , I also want...
4	T:	It's OK, Jones!	It's OK, Jones!

In Excerpt 3, the learner was practicing the pronunciation of cai dan (menu), and the tutor confirmed it was alright for the learner to proceed forward. However, the learner said *sorry* in the middle of this turn to reattempt the pronunciation of cai (courses) as he realized the tone was not as good as the previous time. Thus, the speaker could hold the floor to buy some time to attempt to pronounce it again.

### ***Hold the Floor to Avoid Potential Misunderstanding***

### **Excerpt 4.**

1	T:	And, how to say friend?
2	L:	→ <i>Sorry</i> , say it again?
3	T:	Friend, friend, friends.

For example, in Excerpt 4, the learner said *sorry* to indicate his difficulty in understanding the question from the tutor at the previous turn. Thus, *sorry* functioned with "say it again" to avoid misunderstanding as the learner expressed clearly the problem in which he needed the tutor to repeat the question.

### Excerpt 5.

1	T:	Nǐqǐng .Nǐqǐng .	After you, after you.
2	L:	→ Sorry? What?	Sorry? What?
3	T:	You please.	You please.
4	L:	Oh, oh. You first?...	Oh, oh. you first?...

In Excerpt 5, *sorry* occurred at the beginning of the learner's utterance, together with a specific initiation "what", to ask for more explanation of the trouble source. The tutor used a common expression Ni qing (after you) to let the learner start their exercise first. Being unfamiliar with this expression, the learner asked the tutor to illustrate it further by the use of *sorry* because he did not understand the tutor's utterance at the previous turn.

### ***Hold the Floor to Show Disagreement (Propose Different Expression)***

#### Excerpt 6

1	T:	Ni ting xieshenmege, means what kind of music do you like to listen to, OK?	What kinds of music do you like to listen to means What music do you listen to, ok?
2	L:	→ Uh... <i>sorry</i> , you couldn't just say ni ting shenmege?	Uh... <i>sorry</i> , you couldn't just say what music do you listen to?
3	T:	Uh, ye keyi, ye keyi.	Uh, yes, you could.

The learner said *sorry* before he proposed his different expression of the sentence they were discussing, expecting the tutor to confirm his understanding. *Sorry* was used to hold the floor so the learner could express this idea differently,

### ***Pass the Floor to Others to Close Utterance***

#### Excerpt 7.

1	T:	-Gelinxiangsheng. Ni pingshizaoshangshenmeshihouqichuang ne?	Mr. Green, when do you get up usually?
2	L:	→ Wo:::wo:::. Oh, <i>sorry</i> .	I:::I:::. Oh, <i>sorry</i> .
3	T:	It's ok	It's ok
4	L:	Wo__ liǔ dian(3) shòng	I__ six o'clock (get up)

In Excerpt 7, the tutor was asking the student a question about when he usually gets up. The learner failed to give a complete answer in L2, so he said *sorry* at the ending of his current utterance to pass the floor to the tutor (line 2) as he failed to find appropriate words. Thus, *sorry*, here, could be considered as a signal by the learner to end his own unsuccessful attempt to answer the question raised by the tutor at the previous turn.

## Conclusion

Drawn from authentic data from online tutorial adult learner learners, this study examines the different functions of the apology-based term, *sorry*, in a language-based classroom using the methodology of conversational analysis. Moreover, one major type of conversation identified in our excerpts reveal that *sorry* could occur in the middle of learners' utterances, usually right after their first attempt to practice some L2 expressions and before they produced modified output of certain teaching content. Thus, *sorry* functions

here as a marker for improved performance on some language points, indicating learners' intention to self-repair troubles in their own utterance and move the conversation forward without tutor's intervention so as not to change the turn of the conversation. Mostly, the learners feel their pronunciation or tones of Chinese expressions could be improved further. So, *sorry* could be employed to hold the floor and give the current speaker an opportunity to produce an improved output.

Thus, the major finding of this study is that '*sorry*' could be used as a signal for some conversational actions, turn taking, floor holding or passing, utterance closing and so on. Moreover, the occurring positions and functions of '*sorry*' depend on the context, organizational and learning needs.

The implications of this study lie in its pedagogical significance with regard to the use of a popular L1 apologetic term in L2 classroom to facilitate learning and teaching of L2 to adult learners.

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### Appendix – Transcription Notations

L	Learner
T	Tutor
<i>I</i>	Translated words from Chinese
<b>B</b>	keywords under discussion
[]	overlapping talks
@	laughter
(3)	level of pitch out of 5, with 1 being lowest and 5 being highest. Series of numbers indicated change in pitch within a word.
...	stuttering or non-fluent speech
—	pauses or intervals
(( ))	transcriber’s notes

Other than a few unusual cases only wrongly pronounced tones will be explicitly marked

# The Effect of Business English Curriculum on Second Language Reading Comprehension of English Text

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*[Abstract] This paper investigates the role of the Business English curriculum in second language reading comprehension of business text. We recruited two groups of Chinese-speaking ESL students, 30 students taking courses in a Business English undergraduate program and 22 students enrolled in a non-business program. Participants read two English texts, one with a business topic and one with a non-business topic, and then took a reading quiz composed of both explicit and implicit comprehension questions targeting their literal and inferential reading abilities, respectively. The results showed that background knowledge facilitates L2 reading comprehension of business text. Students trained in the Business English program had a better understanding of business-related text than students without business knowledge when answering both literal and inferential comprehension questions.*

*[Keywords] background knowledge; business text; literal comprehension; inferential comprehension*

## Introduction

With the development of economic globalization, more and more businesses are conducted in English, the lingua franca of the world. In accordance with this trend, many colleges in China have established Business English as an undergraduate major. Since Business English was approved by the Ministry of Education as an undergraduate program in 2006 in China, there have been 216 Business English programs as of 2015 (Zhong, Zhang, & He, 2015). One typical feature of the curriculum of Business English programs in China is the combination of business courses and English-for-Business-Purposes (EBP) courses (Yu & Liu, 2013). For instance, many programs offer business courses such as Financial Management, and International Taxation, etc., and EBP courses such as Integrated Business English, and Business English Reading, etc. Being trained under this kind of curriculum, Business English majors are expected to acquire systematic knowledge of international business and develop a solid foundation of English language. Yet, whether the current curriculum as opposed to the curriculum in tradition English programs indeed improves L2 students' EBP skills is unknown. To fill this gap this paper investigates reading comprehension of English texts by learners enrolled in Business English programs in Chinese universities.

Reading comprehension is not only a process of information processing, but also a complex dynamic psychological activity, and a communicative act between the reader and the writer. With the help of the existing knowledge, readers can identify and interpret the information conveyed by the writer, and then form their own understanding of it. Because the author's information cannot be completely articulated in a direct and explicit way, the reader must actively infer the intended meaning with the help of the background knowledge of reading materials. Thus, reading comprehension is a connection between new information and known knowledge (Johnson, 1981). The more links the reader can have, the wider the

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understanding of the text. Only when the reader has enough background knowledge can reading comprehension be fully realized.

Background knowledge is not only important in native or L1 reading but also important in second language or L2 reading. Numerous studies have established that background knowledge facilitates L2 speakers' reading comprehension (e.g., Alptekin, 2006; Al-Shumaimeri, 2006; Barry & Lazarte, 1995; Chen & Donin, 1997; Johnson, 1981; Johnson, 1982; Levine & Hause, 1985). For example, Alptekin (2006) explored the role of cultural familiar background knowledge in inferential and literal comprehension in L2 reading. Ninety-eight Turkish EFL university students read either the original version of an American short story or a nativized version, textually and contextually modified to reflect the learner's own culture. The results demonstrated that there is a meaningful relationship between culturally familiar texts and the culture-specific background knowledge L2 readers bring to the reading task such that L2 readers understood the nativized version better than the original version. Further, this advantage of cultural background was bigger in inferential reading than literal reading.

Given the importance of background knowledge in L2 reading comprehension, the study intends to find out whether learners' background knowledge of business acquired in a Business English program helps them understand business texts better than those without business knowledge. Following Alptekin (2006), this study focuses on two types of comprehension: literal comprehension and inferential comprehension. Literal comprehension involves what the author directly said. The reader has access to the surface ideas and details in the reading material. Inferential comprehension, on the other hand, involves what the author indirectly stated. Readers must make inferences about the deep meaning by the lines. Inferential comprehension seeks to connect a reader's prior background knowledge and experiences with their understanding of the text. If background knowledge is helpful in L2 reading comprehension, we would expect to see L2 learners trained in Business English programs perform better in understanding business text than L2 learners without Business English knowledge.

To address this issue, we conducted an experimental study on fifty-two Chinese-speaking English learners from Jinan University. The experimental group consisted of thirty students who had taken Business English courses for two years in a dual-degree program; the control group consisted of twenty-two students whose major was not English or Business. Participants took a reading quiz that contained two English passages, one with a business focus and one with no business content. Each passage was followed by both literal and inferential comprehension questions. The comparison between the two groups in terms of their performance in each type of questions reveals whether business English curriculum helps improve their comprehension of business text.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

Two groups of participants were recruited from the undergraduate population of Jinan University in Guangzhou, China. All were native Chinese speakers learning English as their second language. The experimental group included 30 students (23 females) who had Business English as a second major and was enrolled in the fourth semester of the dual degree program (the last semester) at the time of testing. All passed College English Test - Band 6 (CET-6). The curriculum of the program contains two sets of courses: business courses taught in English including International Business Negotiation, Introduction to Business, and Introduction to Management; EBP courses such as Comprehensive Business English,

Business English Reading/Writing/Translation. Thus, it can be tentatively concluded that students in the experimental group had at least basic background knowledge of business.

The control group consisted of 22 students (15 females), whose major was Electrical Engineering (9 sophomores, 13 juniors). All passed CET-6. They all took the required course of General English for two semesters in their freshman year and had not learned any business-related knowledge. Although no independent English proficiency test was administered to the two groups of participants, they can be roughly considered as upper-intermediate English learners given that all of them passed CET-6.

### ***Materials and Design***

Both the experimental and control groups took a paper-and-pen reading quiz composed of two English texts of around 700 words each. One was taken from TOEFL (<http://www.kekenet.com/toefl/201410/335099.shtml>), discussing the importance of early children education. This article did not involve any content related to business. The other was adapted from an article published in *The Economist*, March 27, 2008, discussing the great influence and consequence of bankruptcy in capitalism. This article was closely related to the theme of business and covered a large number of specialized terminologies and professional statements.

Each text was followed by ten randomly-ordered multiple-choices questions, a convenient and well-established method to test participants' reading comprehension. There were two categories of questions with five items in each category. The first category is textually explicit literal items, the answer to which can be found or recalled directly from the surface of the text. The other type is implicit inferential items, whose answer cannot be found directly from the text. Readers had to understand the whole article and then deduce the answers from the context.

The experiment had a 2×2×2 design, with two within-subjects variables of text (business vs. non-business) and question (explicit literal vs. implicit inferential), and one between-subjects variable of group (business background vs. non-business background).

### ***Procedure***

The experimental group took the reading quiz in class. Participants were not allowed to use a dictionary. The quiz was not timed. It took participants 20-30 minutes to finish the quiz. Participants in the control group took the quiz separately in their spare time, because it was difficult to find a suitable time and location to administer the test in a group. They were given the quiz paper and instructed to hand in the paper the second day. They were instructed not to use dictionary when taking the quiz.

## **Results and Discussion**

The dependent variable was the participants' scores in the reading comprehension. Each question was worth one point. Participants got one point for each correct answer. Any blank answers were regarded as wrong ones. There was a maximum total of 10 points for each text and five points for each type of questions of each text. Table 1 presents the mean scores of the two groups' reading comprehension of the two types of texts.

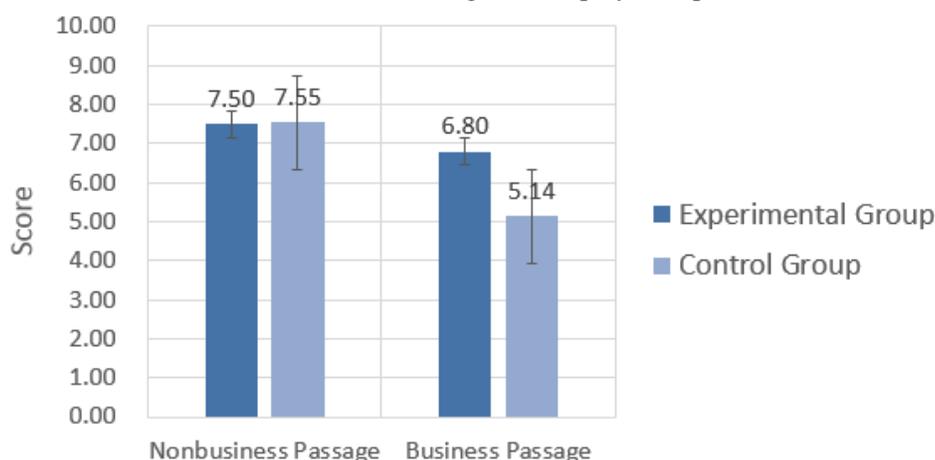
**Table 1. Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Participants' Reading Comprehension**

Item	Non-business Text		Business Text	
	Experimental	Control	Experimental	Control
Literal	3.87 (1.04)	4.00 (0.87)	3.83 (0.91)	3.00 (1.35)
Inferential	3.63 (1.19)	3.55 (1.01)	2.97 (1.03)	2.14 (0.99)
Total Score	7.50 (1.98)	7.55 (1.44)	6.80 (1.67)	5.14 (2.01)

Note: SDs are presented within parentheses.

As shown in Table 1, the experimental group and the control group gained similar mean scores for the non-business text (7.50 vs. 7.55), but the experimental group scored higher in the business text condition than the control group (6.80 vs. 5.14).

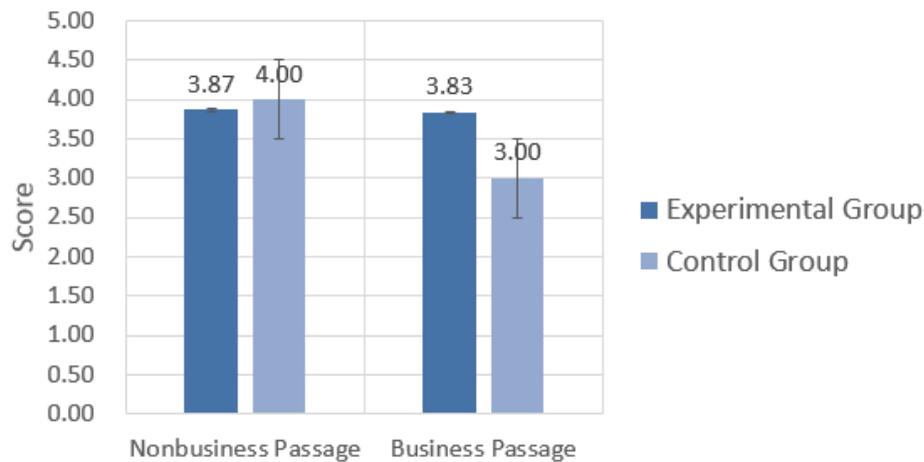
To determine whether the difference was statistically significant, two-way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the data using SPSS 19.0. The alpha level was set at .05. As far as participants' overall scoring for the two types of texts was concerned, the analysis of variance yielded a marginally significant main effect of group,  $F(1, 50) = 3.34, p = .074$ . That is, the experimental group did slightly better than the control group in the reading quiz. There was a main effect of text,  $F(1, 50) = 9.59, p = .001$ , with participants receiving higher scores in the non-business text condition than the business text condition. However, the interaction effect between group and text was also significant,  $F(1, 50) = 6.99, p = .011$ , indicating that the main effect of text was modulated by the variable of group. Pairwise  $t$ -tests showed that the experimental group had significantly higher scores than the control group in the business text condition,  $t(1, 50) = 5.87, p = .029$ , but no significant difference was observed for the non-business text. Figure 1 displays the patterns of results.



**Figure 1. Mean Total Scores of Participants' Reading Comprehension**

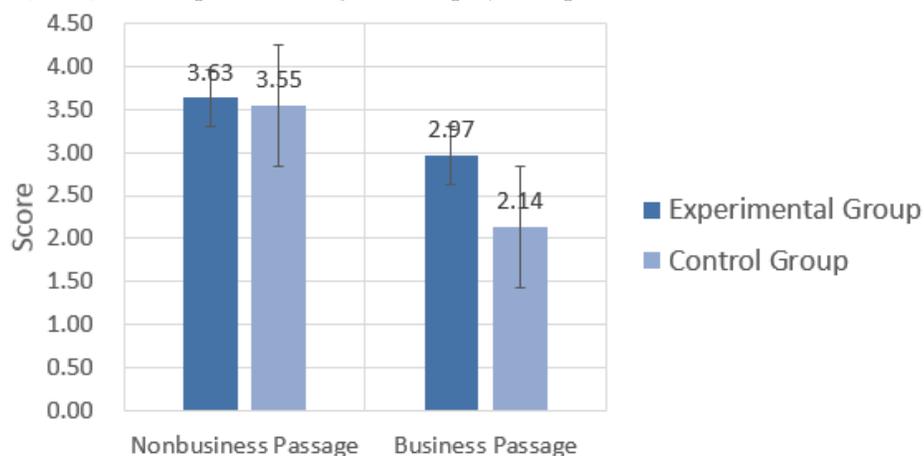
Following the previous steps, additional ANOVAs were carried out on explicit literal items and implicit inferential items, respectively. As far as explicit literal items are concerned, the analysis of variance yielded an insignificant effect of group,  $F(1, 50) = 2.46, p = .12$ . There was a main effect of text,  $F(1, 50) = 7.29, p = .009$ , with participants receiving higher scores in the non-business text condition than the business text condition. And the interaction effect between group and text was significant,  $F(1, 50) = 6.379, p = .015$ , indicating that the main effect of text was modulated by the variable of group on explicit literal comprehension. Pairwise  $t$ -tests showed that the experimental group had significantly

higher scores than the control group in the business text condition,  $t(1, 50) = 5.57, p = .028$ , but no significant difference was observed for the non-business text. Figure 2 displays the patterns of results.



**Figure 2. Mean Scores of Participants' Literal Reading Comprehension**

As for implicit inferential items, the analysis of variance yielded a significant main effect of group,  $F(1, 50) = 4.05, p = .049$ . That is, the experimental group did much better than the control group in the inferential reading comprehension. There was a main effect of text,  $F(1, 50) = 8.49, p = .001$ , with participants receiving higher scores in the non-business text condition than the business text condition. And the interaction effect between group and text was marginally significant,  $F(1, 50) = 3.63, p = .064$ , indicating that the main effect of text was marginally modulated by the variable of group. Pairwise  $t$ -tests showed that the experimental group had significantly higher scores than the control group in the business text condition,  $t(1, 50) = 6.16, p = .031$ . Figure 3 displays the patterns of results.



**Figure 3. Mean Scores of Participants' Inferential Reading Comprehension**

In the above analyses, the results in the non-business passage show no significant difference between the experimental and the control groups, indicating that the two groups had comparable levels of reading proficiency in general English. In contrast, the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group when reading the business passage. Since the experimental group had more background knowledge of business than the control group, the results indicate that business background knowledge facilitates L2 readers' comprehension of business text. This facilitative effect was shown in both literal

and inferential comprehension. In general, the results described above are consistent with previous studies showing that there is a meaningful relationship between background knowledge and second language reading comprehension, both for explicit and inferential comprehension. The greater the background knowledge a reader has of a text's content area, the better the reader will comprehend the text about it.

### **Conclusion**

This paper is a tentative investigation into the effect of Business English curriculum on second language reading comprehension of business text. We recruited two groups of Chinese-speaking ESL students, 30 students who had Business English as a second major, and 22 students whose major was Electric Engineering. Participants read two English texts, one with a business topic and one with a non-business topic, and then took a reading quiz composed of both explicit and implicit comprehension questions targeting at their literal and inferential reading abilities, respectively. The results showed that background knowledge facilitates L2 reading comprehension of business text. Students trained in the Business English program had a better understanding of business-related text than students without business knowledge when answering both literal and inferential comprehension questions.

These findings had implications for the construction of Business English curriculum in Chinese universities. The Business English courses participants in this study took include content courses of business taught in English and language courses for business purposes. The fact that students who had taken these courses performed better in reading comprehension of business text than students who had not taken these courses shows the effectiveness of these courses in improving students' reading comprehension of business text. This advantage they gained in Business English program would help them function better in the English business environment. It should be noted that although the study indicates a facilitative effect of Business English curriculum in improving students' EBP reading ability, it is not clear whether the effect is attributed to business courses or EBP courses. Another popular type of Business English curriculum in many Chinese universities is a combination of business courses and general English courses (Yu & Liu, 2013). Future studies can compare the two kinds of curriculum to examine whether business courses alone would be sufficient to improve students' EBP skills.

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# **On Cultivating Application-Oriented Business Translation Talents through the Mode of Cooperative Talents Cultivation**

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***[Abstract]** With increasingly frequent global business activities and economic and trade cooperation , business translation has become an important bridge and medium for international communication. Highly-qualified application-oriented business translation talents are badly needed in the talent market. By adopting the cooperative talents cultivation mode, the cultivating strategies of application-oriented business translation talents are put forward and cultivating the application-oriented business translation talents who can meet the need of the market is explored.*

***[Keywords]** cooperative talents cultivation; business translation talents; cultivating strategies*

## **Introduction**

In recent years, with increasingly frequent business activities and international exchanges, business translation has become an important bridge and international communication medium, and application-oriented business translation talents are badly needed in the labor market. However, there is a phenomenon that the training of business English translation talents in colleges and universities is out of the actual demand nowadays, and the students' ability structure is not in line with the professional requirements. It is an urgent task for the applied undergraduate colleges and universities to explore a new business translation talents cultivation mode in order to cultivate high-quality application-oriented business translation undergraduate students. This paper first, analyzes the main problems in traditional translation talents education. Second, it explores application-oriented business translation talents cooperative cultivation mode by means of college-enterprise cooperation and intercollegiate cooperation. Finally, a conclusion is drawn by the reform and practice of business translation talents cultivation.

## **Main Problems in Traditional Translation Talent Cultivation**

Against a backdrop of closer economic and trade exchanges between China and foreign countries, business translation talents have played a crucial role in international exchanges and interactions. Business translation talents refer to those talents who should master English and Chinese proficiently and a variety of translation skills, and have a solid business English knowledge, strong foreign business etiquette skills, and career development and innovation abilities. Nowadays, however, the cultivation of business translation talents cannot cater to the needs of various and complex business activities. In traditional business translation talent cultivation, some problems should be paid attention to for improvement of their translation abilities.

Firstly, traditional teaching methods of business translation are outdated and not diversified enough. It is often the case that students are just taught by teachers in class. In many colleges and universities, it often takes only a semester for students to study business translation courses, and therefore, they just acquire a very limited knowledge and skill of business translation. Besides, there is little interaction in the teaching process. Students often listen to their teachers and take notes for key points in examinations. Lacking initiative and enthusiasm, they just receive a cramming education from their teachers and therefore, cannot have a good command of the knowledge.

Secondly, traditional business translation talent cultivation places an insufficient emphasis on practice. As a professional and specific course, business translation is different from general English. Students are required to translate what they hear or read into the target language in a written or spoken way when they are exposed to business activities. They should have both a wide range of business knowledge and qualified English capabilities. However, teachers just introduce some translation theories and explain examples and cases in textbooks. Therefore, students may be acquainted with some business materials in the textbook, but this is far from enough for them to deal with problems in the real business activities that are more complicated and varied. They lack opportunity to apply what they have learned into practice to enhance their translation abilities, so when they enter the business circle in the future, they may have difficulty responding to various challenges promptly since they are not well prepared.

Thirdly, there are few qualified business translation teachers. Business translation is a comprehensive course, in which teachers should combine business knowledge and translation methods. However, some teachers may be good at translation, but lack enough business knowledge, and therefore, they teach students in a way that is similar to general English translation. They ignore that business translation is a highly professional course with specific business words and expressions. As a result, students lack enough business knowledge and training. What's more, some teachers may master translation theories but fail to integrate theories with practice. Without rich experience in the real-world business translation, they just cite examples from books, failing to keep pace with the changeable world. As for resources, some universities and college don't have enough equipment or proper classrooms for teachers to conduct their classes or for students to exercise in their spare time. For example, because there are few language labs and multimedia classrooms in some colleges, students have little access to language training and practice.

Since the problems in traditional business translation talent cultivation will lead to disqualification of business translators when students graduate from universities and work, new modes to train business translation talents should be explored to address the existing problems.

## **Exploration of Training of Application-oriented Business translation Talents**

### ***Definition and Importance of Cooperative Talents Cultivation***

Cooperative talents cultivation mode refers to the mode in which two or more than two education organizations jointly formulate training plan, make full use of the teaching resources, improve the students' practical innovation ability through mutual cooperation so as to adapt to and meet the needs of the economic and social development (Cai, 2014). Cooperative education is an effective way to cultivate college students' practical ability and innovation ability. The Outline of National Medium-and Long-Term Program for Education Reform and Development (2010-2020) points out that through collaborative innovation system the realization of cooperative education is a problem that needs to be solved from the concept, system and mechanism of education at present and in the future. Therefore,

cooperative talents cultivation will play an important part in developing the application-oriented business English translation talents. Cooperative education is a education mode of combining classroom-based education with practical work experience, which facilitates the school-to-work transition for students. This paper aims at exploring the business translation talents cultivation mode in line with market demand and cultivating excellent application-oriented business translation talents.

### ***Reform and Practice of Training of Application-oriented Business translation Talents***

Cooperative talents cultivation is a new mode of talent cultivation which includes some cooperative ways. The college where this author works has adopted the cooperative talents cultivation mode by two means: college-enterprise cooperation and intercollegiate cooperation. In recent years, the author's college has always adhered to the systematic concept of education and has made a bold attempt to cultivate application-oriented business translation talents and achieved obvious results by adopting cooperation talents cultivation mode.

### **College-Enterprise Cooperation**

College-enterprise cooperation is the most mature collaborative cultivation mode, whose characteristic lies in the conjunction between the knowledge and talent resources in colleges and universities and the advantages of the business acumen to the market and capital operation in the enterprises. This mode can make full use of the resources of college and enterprises and closely integrate the process of talents cultivation with the enterprise, which is beneficial to realize “seamless docking” between the talents training and social needs (Wu, Liang, Li & Wang, 2016).

To establish talents training bases is an important guarantee for the effective implementation of business translation talents training. Relying on the resources and advantages of higher education institutions, the colleges and universities adopt the international advanced “quality + foreign language + professional skills” teaching mode, and actively organize and carry out a variety of practical training activities (Zhang, 2015). The college where the author works has signed an agreement with nine enterprises, including China International Small and Medium Enterprises Fair, China Import and Export Fair (Canton Fair), Guangzhou Xinshi Translation Service Co., LTD., Guangxin Shipbuilding and Heavy industry Co., LTD., Gongguan Yimingdeng Co., LTD., Shenzhen Tongbao Investment Co., LTD., Shenzhe Zhonghe Tea Industry Co., LTD., Shenzhen Chuanghongcheng Electronics Co., LTD., and Guangdong Jinzhong Famous Brand Collection Car Supplies Co., LTD. The colleges and the enterprises establish the practice bases together, continue to deepen reform of business translation talents cultivation mode and actively explore the approach and regularity of the cooperation between colleges and enterprises, striving to train the application-oriented business translation talents who can meet the social needs. Students who work in these companies in the process of translation service improve their business translation skills and accumulate business translation experience, as well as increase the enterprise's economic benefit, which brings a win-win situation for colleges and enterprises.

The cultivation strategies include the following four aspects: (1) Establishing the cooperative innovation mechanism between colleges and enterprises. The college-enterprise cooperation is a kind of operation mechanism which is oriented by market and social needs. It is the process of joint participation of both colleges and enterprises. In order to develop business translation talents suitable for different employers, colleges and enterprises should build a collaborative innovation mechanism and make full use of two different kinds of education resources and the environment in the form of classroom teaching and

enterprise practice participated in by the students. The college where the author works has cooperated with the China International Small and Medium Enterprises Fair each year, sending 120 translators to participate in translation practice, which has achieved good results. (2) Opening experimental classes in cooperation with colleges and enterprises. Due to the undocking of talent training and social demand, the college students are stronger in theory while their practice ability is weak, which leads to the structural contradiction in the employment of college graduates. In order to realize the direct docking between talents training and the social demand, it is necessary for colleges and enterprises to jointly open experimental classes, and jointly develop application-oriented business translators. Both the enterprise personnel and the college teachers give lessons for students. (3) Implementing a “school-enterprise dual tutor” system. On one hand, the tutor in the college is mainly responsible for the students’ professional cognitive education, strengthening the students’ professional ideas, guiding them to carry out career planning and stimulating their enthusiasm for learning. In professional learning, students are instructed to carry out curriculum selection, classroom study, scientific and technological innovation, practice and internship and so on. On the other hand, the tutors, from the enterprises who are mainly from well-known entrepreneurs in the industry, are the head of human resources department and the technical department of the company who guide students to carry out practice. They combine their own work experience to help students solve practical problems in career, job application, and internship etc., and improve their employment competitiveness and comprehensive ability. The college where the author works adopts a “double tutors” system, inviting executives or school graduates working in enterprises as tutors, who jointly develop business translation talents with the tutors in college. (4) Having an internship. In college-enterprise cooperation, combined with the classroom teaching, the college-enterprise cooperation is strengthened by means of three levels from individual skills, professional ability of comprehensive skills and three progressive stages from cognitive practical training, simulation practice to internship (Zhu, 2013). When there is a vacancy for the business translation talent in the cooperative enterprise, we will send the students to the company to take an internship. In the process of participating in the internship, students gain practical experience and improve their practical ability. Thanks to the exploration and practice of the college and the enterprise in cultivating the business translation talents, the practical ability of the students has been improved greatly.

College-enterprise cooperation is a very important training mode, which can increase the students’ practice opportunities as well as practice and improve their work ability. It is conducive to cultivating business translation talents who conforms to the economic development practically.

### **Intercollegiate Cooperation**

In recent years, co-teaching has become one of the most widely used models of collaboration, found in classrooms across all grade levels and content areas (Rytivaara & Kershner, 2012). Intercollegiate cooperation refers to the education mode of cooperation between colleges and universities, which covers the following six aspects. Firstly, they exchange undergraduates and postgraduates, which exposes students to different environments and helps them to gain different knowledge and experiences. Secondly, some teachers are employed to teach among cooperative universities. It is a good way to share faculty resources and ensure better education for students. Thirdly, they share library resources and conduct cooperation in technologies. Therefore, students can have more access to books which they need in their studies and researches. Fourthly, they conduct cooperation in scientific researches. Major discipline subjects are studied by cooperative universities and high-level seminars are jointly held. In addition, great

scholars are sent to give lectures among those universities. Fifthly, a variety of activities are held such as summer camps, recreational activities and academic activities, which facilitate exchanges and cooperation between students in those universities. The last aspect is focused on the training of teachers. Young teachers are sent to cooperative universities to go further studies for a doctor's degree or conduct academic exchanges, which is an effective way to improve faculty quality. By means of intercollegiate cooperation Colleges cooperate with each other in courses, faculty exchange and training, equipment sharing, scientific researches and other relevant aspects. It is feasible and flexible approach to mutual development and talent cultivation. It can be domestic cooperation and international cooperation between colleges and universities. Through the exchange of students, it aims to cultivate the international academic perspective of the students.

The college where the author works sends more than 10 students majoring in Business English to study in the United States, Britain and Australia every year, as well as accept foreign students from the cooperation colleges and universities of these countries. At the same time, it has established the cooperation cultivation ties with University of California and Bellevue from America, Saint Mary's University and York University from Canada, University of the West of England, and the University of Bolton from Britain, jointly training business translation talents. Through this intercollegiate cooperation mode, our college has built a good platform for talents cultivation where various resources are open to cooperative universities.

For colleges and universities, this model can optimize an allocation of resources and pool superior resources to improve education quality. For example, qualified teachers of business translation and relevant equipment for business translation can be shared among cooperative colleges to improve faculty and resource conditions. Besides, it is also a good way for students to be exposed to professional knowledge and make use of various resources in cooperative colleges.

### **Conclusion**

In the background of global economic integration, it is becoming more and more urgent for colleges and universities to develop high-quality application-oriented business translation talents who meet the needs of the talent market. They should combine regional economic development with the need of talents in the society to reform and practice in cultivating business translation talents. Cooperative talents cultivation mode in the form of college-enterprises and intercollegiate cooperation is an effective way to cultivate business translation talents, which will promote the cultivation of business translation talents in the colleges and universities so as to serve the economic development better in the society.

### **Acknowledgment**

This research was financially supported by the province-level research project "On the Innovative Empirical Research of Training Application-oriented Business Translation Talents through Cooperative Talents Cultivation" (2015GXJK206)", the college-level research project "On the Reform and Innovation of Cultivating Internationalized English Translation Talents in Application-oriented Undergraduate Colleges and Universities" (2015JG02) and the college-level research project "The Training of Translation Professionalism under the Policy of Cultivating Applied Talents" (2016JG05). This paper was also funded by English Language and Literature a Key Program in Guangdong Province.

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# **Loyalty Principle in Business Conference Interpreting: Qualitative Research of Summit Forum**

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*[Abstract] From a qualitative research in business conference interpreting, informed by Skopos theory and loyalty principle perspectives, this paper explores a qualitative transcribed textual analysis on the source language and target language to probe the faithfulness of interpreters' renderings and the appropriate adjustment of interpreting strategies in accordance with definite functional purposes in the business text. In addition, it also proposes a self-assessment questionnaire to survey the applicability of interpreter's moral loyalty after interpreting as the feedback to analyze coordination and contentment of communicative purposes among the parties concerned in business conference interpreting. It concludes with the application of Loyalty Principle in business conference interpreting and expands to the outstretched post-study on conference interpreting assessment research.*

*[Keywords] Loyalty Principle; business conference interpreting; all parties concerned; purpose; interpreting strategy*

## **Introduction**

Skopos theory came into being to make up for the unsatisfying parts of previous equivalence-based translation theories (Nord, 1997). Not only did it account for different strategies in different translation situations in which source texts are not the only factor involved, but also it coincided with a change of paradigm in quite a few disciplines among linguistics, which had developed a stronger focus on communication as a social, culture-bound occurrence, on the individuals involved, on the spatiotemporal conditions of communication, and on communicative intentions and functions (Nord, 2001). This paper first, from a Skopos theory and Loyalty Principle perspective, identifies and describes the feasibility of Loyalty Principle applied into business conference interpreting. Second, it analyzes qualitative research on the Loyalty Principle from the perspective of the interpreter in two aspects, transcribed textual analysis and interpreter's self-assessment, to probe the application of the Loyalty Principle in business conference interpreting, which advocates that an interpreter's loyalty is not merely embodied in adjustments of interpreting strategy referred to textual function based on translation brief in the business conference. And more importantly, it examines interpreter's self-assessment on the communicative function to meet the needs and expectations of parties concerned in the business conference. Finally, it applies the Loyalty Principle to business conference interpreting as a pragmatic and possible approach to expand its application in a more communicative and dynamic approach instead of traditional source and target textual analysis, not merely based on the single perspective of textual function.

## **Literature Review**

The Loyalty Principle was proposed by Christian Nord, a German functionalist. She noted that there were two shortcomings in the Skopos theory (Nord, 1991). The first shortcoming is that translation purposes may be contrary to intentions of the authors of source texts (Nord, 1997). And it's caused by the indefinite contractual relationship between translators and authors of source texts in terms of differentiated purpose

in the context (Nord, 1997). Though there is a principle of fidelity in the Skopos theory, it is subordinate to the Skopos of the event. “If the communicative purposes required in the Skopos theory are contrary to the intentions of the authors of source texts, how should translators do this?” (Zhang, 2005). In terms of Loyalty Principle, the translators are required to be faithful to the authors of the source texts and coordinate the purpose of the target texts and the author’s intentions because the Loyalty Principle cares about the social relationship between translators and other participants in the process of translating (Zhong, 1999).

The second point is the intentions of the target-text readers are differentiated in the different receiving cultures, so it’s hard to please all of the readers in the targeting cultures. People have different views over a translation due to their different cultural backgrounds. Some may obtain the faithful reproduction of the form of the source text; however, others may prefer processed rendering of the essence in the source text. Then, what should the translator do if the target culture calls for a faithful rendering of the form in the source text, but target listeners require the rendering of the ideas of the author in the source text? According to Loyalty Principle, translators have to take these expectations into account. This does not mean that translators are always obliged to do exactly what readers expect. Yet, there is a moral responsibility that is to not deceive the readers. Here, *translator* is a generalized term for all translators and interpreters, as the scope of the paper analyzes business interpreting, therefore, the latter expression is centered on the interpreter.

Nord suggested “function plus loyalty” model as a supplement for Skopos theory to prevent “racial functionalism”. Loyalty Principle was proposed to remedy the shortcomings of the previous functionalism approaches (Nord, 1991). “Function” refers to the factors that make a target text work in the intended way in the target situation. “Loyalty” refers to the interpersonal relationship between the translator, the source-text producer, the target addressee and the initiator (Nord, 1991). Loyalty is different from fidelity or faithfulness. Loyalty Principle limits the range of justifiable target-text functions for one particular source text and raises the need for a negotiation of the translation brief between translator and the initiator. Under this rule, it is illegal for the translator to produce the target text entirely at the initiator’s will, without taking into consideration the factors of the source text producer and the target addressee.

### **Features of Loyalty Principle in Business Conference Interpreting**

Translation brief and text analysis are the essence of Loyalty Principle. This article intends to introduce two important approaches to the business conference interpreting, trying to obtain a connection to apply Loyalty Principle to probe the pragmatic and dynamic interpreting research.

#### ***Translation Brief***

The translation brief is considered to be source text that describes the type and functionality of the business conference to which this term refers. A translation brief helps the translator draw profiles of the source text and the required target text, as well as deciding from the very beginning what type of translation is needed. In other words, a translation brief not only informs the translator in choosing what kind of translation strategy or type, but also helps him/her make these decisions. When experienced translators infer the purpose of a text from the translation situation, such as translating a technical source text into a corresponding target text, the information inferred acts as a translation brief. Nord (1997) calls this a “conventional assignment.” Taking great considerations of above the aspects in business conference interpreting, the brief of each interpreting performance should include: the purpose of the initiators of the

business conference, the expectations of the target language listeners or audiences, and the intentions of the source language speakers.

### ***Text Analysis***

Source text analysis before each interpreting, a crucial part in Loyalty Principle of Nord's theory, also can be applied to business conference interpreting especially for immediacy in simultaneous interpreting and consecutive interpreting in business conferences. On these occasions, interpreters are provided with speech texts to be analyzed beforehand from extra-textual factors. With the speech text, interpreters can analyze the text type and function overall promptly, meanwhile, intra-textual factors like text lexical and syntactic features and some other supplementary information in the speech text also need to be probed relevantly. Therefore, they can flexibly and timely choose the suitable and feasible interpreting strategies, such as, omitting, paraphrasing, adjusting and coordinating with parties concerned at business conferences to deliver a better rendering for the speakers and the listeners generally according to the specific interpreting purpose.

### ***Parties Concerned in Loyalty Principle***

According to Nord, the Loyalty Principle means the interpersonal relationship among interpreters, source text authors, target text receivers and initiators of translation (Zhang, 2005). This is also the case in business conference interpreting. Generally speaking, the purposes of the initiators are the ones of the conference. Being loyal to initiators, interpreters are supposed to facilitate the realization of the purposes through their work. The initiators expect a great success for the conference, which depends on the smooth communication between speakers and audience. Thus, the primary task for interpreters is to promote the communication. Interpreters must be loyal to the speakers in the source language. The speaker is one of the inevitable parts in interpreting events. No matter what kind of conference, interpreters are expected to transmit the speech of the speakers to the target receivers. Interpreters must be loyal to the target language listeners; that is, they ought to hold responsibility to the target audience. They take part in the conference with their expectations from different perspectives of the speech. The language barrier prevents them from understanding what speakers say, so interpreters are obliged to tell them what they want to know from speaker's speeches. Since every party has his own purpose, it is necessary for interpreters to balance and mediate all those purposes and figure out a common ground among the interests of all parties. This is why interpreters are also called as mediators whose purpose is to let all parties concerned satisfied with the communication.

### **Qualitative Research on Loyalty Principle in Business Conference Interpreting**

In this article, two qualitative approaches were mainly adopted. One is the questionnaire on interpreter's self-assessment based on the participant – the interpreter at the spot, a dynamic analysis on parties concerned could be to a convincing perspective to probe into the application of Loyalty Principle in business conference interpreting. The other is the transcribed textual analysis to analyze the flexible strategies widely applied by the interpreter in terms of Loyalty Principle in a more comprehensive and systematic way.

### ***Self-Assessment Analysis***

The rationality of self-assessment of interpreters lies in that interpreters will have direct perception of their own interpreter performance (Qian,2007). Self-assessment can be an all-round approach for the interpreters to take the self-evaluation before, during and after the conference interpreting, which requires that the

interpreters are well-prepared, well-informed and well-balanced in the stressful conference interpreting situation coordinating with initiators and speakers' purposes and interpreting users' expectations.

### ***Questionnaire on Interpreter's Self-Assessment***

Based on Cai's (2006) study, the author designed a questionnaire centering on three major parts. Part 1 included the first 9 questions, which investigated the interpreter's self-professional competence. Part 2 consisted of Questions 10 and 11, highlighting the interpreter's self-coordination with parties concerned. Question 12 is in Part 3, emphasizing the interpreter's interpreting performance. There is a complete questionnaire result of self-appraisal from one of the interpreters at the summit forum. For details, see Appendix 1.

This questionnaire adopted a Likert Scale and ranked five levels in each category, namely, each category has a different level. If we take level 5 as full marks, level 4 should be 80 marks, and levels 3, 2, and 1 should respectively be 60, 40, and 20. The author calculated the final marks of the interpreter's professional competence,  $(8*80+60)/9*100$  equaled 71. Part 2 was designed for the coordination among the different parties concerned: interpreters, initiators and interpreting users. No doubt that the interpreter gave comparatively lower marks for this part, especially for the initiators the level of 2, and the average marks for coordination,  $(2*60+40)/3*100$  equaled 53. The result was unsatisfactory. The interpreter showed that the coordination among the parties concerned has certainly influenced her performance at the forum. And this was proved further during the interview after the forum with the interpreter. Because the forum initiator didn't offer sufficient relevant information, such as, forum agenda and general information of the keynote speakers on the stage during the entire interpreting process, she felt quite physically and mentally stressed, and she said she was catching up with the speaker all the way during the interpreting, which exhausted her that morning. For the last question on the interpreter's self-assessment, the interpreter gave herself a level of 3, as just fair. This result for a skilled expert with more than 10 years of interpreting experience is far from satisfaction.

To analyze the results of this questionnaire, it's not hard for the author to find that a perfect interpreting performance needs sound and elaborate coordination and cooperation among all parties concerned during the conference interpreting. In other words, the interpreter's self-assessment can be a breakthrough to probe the issue of how important the interpreter's self-assessment is has influence on the interpreting performance and takes the research of the extra-textual relationship among the purposes of the parties concerned and the interpreter more than the intra-textual corpus-based analysis of source text and target text according to translation brief, which can broaden the scope of research of this issue from a more dynamic and multidimensional approach.

### ***Transcribed Textual Analysis***

Another approach originates from the corpus-based transcribed textual analysis as exemplified illustrations according to the speakers' speech and the interpreters' rendering. With deep probing into the Loyalty Principle, the textual analysis of source text and target text tends to be very crucial to analyze the feasibility of the interpreting task, the faithfulness of interpreters' rendering and the adaptation of interpreting strategies, which provides an objective and deep qualitative approach. In terms of interpreters, it's inevitable for them to be loyal to the source speech, the source speech text style and the target receivers' culture, which is in line with the requirements of translation brief in the Loyalty Principle. Interpreters should adapt relevant interpreting strategies to handle cultural barriers and misunderstandings referred to the extra-

textual factors, such as the interpretation purposes may be contrary to the intentions of the authors of the source text. On the other hand, what should interpreters do if the target culture calls for a faithful rendering of the form in the source text, but target listeners require the rendering of the ideas of the author in the source text? Such issues need to be taken into full consideration by interpreters to deeply probe the embodiments of the Loyalty Principle as an objective and all-round qualitative approach into business conference interpreting.

### ***Exemplified Illustration***

The transcribed text in both source language and target language is from a 25-minute long panel discussion on the topic “Future of Green Building and Eco-city Development in China and Australia” chaired by Mr. Laurie Smith, Regional Director, Australia NEA Region and Mrs. Ye Qing, Chair of Shenzhen Green Building Association and President of Shenzhen Institute of Building Research. The Australia Trade Commission and the Organization Committee of China International SME (CISMF) hosted this summit forum, after gaining approval from seven ministries of the Chinese national government including China's Ministry of Commerce and Guangdong provincial government.

The audience was mostly comprised of intermediate and higher lever professionals in green building architecture and other relevant industries. The interpreters were from the School of Interpreting and Translation studies of GDUFS and they transferred the whole panel discussion with simultaneous interpreting. The author gives specific exemplified illustrations for some typical examples for probing into the suitable interpreting tactics based on translation brief and text analysis under the Loyalty Principle.

#### ***Segment 1 – Laurie Smith***

*(Source text): 我想请问 Steven Smit 先生, 水立方就是跟中方联手设计非常有代表性的一个设计, 这是你们一个有代表性的项目, 在中国合作这么多年, 你学习到最大... 呃... 最重要的教训是什么? 要在中国成功合作的话, ... 呃... 成功做一系列的设计的话, 最关键在哪里? ... 呃... 如果能够实现成功的合作呢?*

*(Target text): I have a question to Mr. Steven Smit. Water Cube is a very typical design and project that you collaborate with Chinese partners, what's the most important experience that you've learned since you collaborated with Chinese partners for many years? In other words, if you hope to make a successful collaboration with Chinese partners to do the architecture, what's crucial to make a success?*

Ms. Laurie Smith gave a very general idea of his question, which was not concise or cohesive, but clear and simple to the interpreter. She integrated the message into “what's the most important experience that you've learned since you collaborated with Chinese partners for many years?” The interpreter didn't follow the routine method to translate the information corresponding to the source speech, but instead adopted an integrated sentence structure to deliver the speaker's speech accurately and cohesively. The adjustment of the interpreting was also loyal to the translation brief of the initiator of the business conference. More importantly, the interpreting could be easily perceived by the audience at the spot as concise and accurate delivery of the source speech. That is the loyalty the interpreter kept to as it for her interpreting task according to the purposes of the parties concerned at the conference.

#### ***Segment 2 – Steven Smit:***

*(Source text): ... So you know, maybe in 50 years, some Australians will ask questions to Chinese planners, you know, the more I see is to simplify not one-way processes, is to simplify...the*

*collaboration. You know in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the collaboration ... the collaboration almost does not matter any more in China ... in Australia ... in America or in Germany.*

*(Target text): ...所以我觉得...呃...在未来的话, 就需要把情况颠倒过来, 需要...呃...向中国取经问问他们成功的经验是什么? 国籍不是很重要的, 解决问题是共同的。*

The source speech shows an obvious message, collaboration is a very important issue among the world. However, the interpreter omitted much of the information, this is a normal case which occurs impromptu, on the spot, where she endures the mental stress coming from a tense situation. Actually, the interpreting is not so perfect, but the interpreter still does her best to figure out a concise, but plain, target speech to the audience, being loyal to the target language receivers' culture. Also, she abides to the fidelity of the source speech, reproducing the essence of the source speech. After that, she maximizes the loyalty of the translation brief referring to the conference initiator, and is effective and accurate to interpret the speech according to the keynote of the business conference. From this rendering of interpreting, the interpreter achieved good effect and completed full loyalty to the parties concerned.

### ***Segment 3 – Vince Pirrello:***

*(Source text): Steven showed what I said .... that PVC film can be applied on the glass which is see-through, which is collected technology, or some technologies will change all the buildings all around the world. So I, Steven Smit think the investment of technology is really now focusing in (on) China, and the responsibility of Chinese government has showed to the world by speaking, ...one of the government (officials) has said that he will reduce carbon dioxide by 2025, shows the leadership.*

*(Target text): 刚刚给我们的例子, 有些膜可以在玻璃上, 就可以...呃...改变楼宇和表层技术的应用, ...呃... 能够在2025年的时候, 大幅度地减少二氧化碳的排放是非常重要的。*

There is quite a specific statement about the Chinese government's responsibility for reducing carbon dioxide by 2025, more specifically, the speaker also mentioned the title of the Chinese government officials, that there is no doubt the Chinese government is sure to obey this promise to the world. However, it's a higher level international forum; the real highlight should focus on the solution of this issue, not on the speaker. If the interpreter had delivered the segment faithfully word-for-word, it might have caused the target language receiver to misunderstand, and it may have been contrary to the purpose of the initiator of the conference. The interpreter adopted omission to give priority to the key point of this issue and achieve a very good effect in culture transferring and really practiced loyalty to the goal of the initiators.

## **Implications and Conclusion**

The corpus-based textual analysis in source speech and target speech is a qualitative research approach, which contributes to the analysis of whether the interpreting task is feasible, whether there is a consistency between the information in the source text and the function in the target text, what kinds of interpreting strategies can be adopted to comply with the translation brief, and whether the interpreter's self-assessment after interpreting is supportive to comprehend the functional purpose of the parties concerned in the conference. On this basis, the author elaborately analyzed intra-textual and extra-textual factors in this source text speech so as to obtain some flexible and purposeful interpreting strategies in different situations, such as omission, amplification, and repetition to deliver a more expressive and faithful rendering and improve communicative effectiveness in interpreting.

The interpreter's preparation before the conference and the interpreting performance during the conference are on-the-spot events subjected to all parties and other objective factors, which can be regarded

as being loyal to the parties concerned due to the coordination with all the purposes of the parties and the mediation of conference interpreting communicative purpose and speaker's expressive intention in the source text. Meanwhile, those flexible and purposeful strategies used in conference interpreting are loyal to the objects of Loyalty Principle, because it's an all-important step for the interpreter to integrate optimized and maximum loyalty to the source text message, the source text style and the target listener's culture before and during interpreting. Furthermore, the interpreter's self-assessment can serve as the feedback of parties concerned in terms of different specific purposes and effects of rendering in interpreting, which is a pragmatic approach to witness how Loyalty Principle is closely used in an interpreter's performance and genuinely reflects more credible and objective effect after the conference.

Furthermore, business conference interpreting is a dynamic and multifaceted linguistic communicative process, and multidimensional approaches have become an irresistible trend in interpreting research. Not only is abundant qualitative research on Loyalty Principle need to be applied in business conference interpreting, a scientific data analysis based on quantitative researches to probe into the interactive relations between parties concerned and interpreter's performance also needs to be given greater priority to conceive a more multidimensional approach in future relevant researches. In addition, in terms of probing into interpersonal relationship and maintaining moral loyalty among the interpreter and all parties concerned, the Loyalty Principle will be expanded to the outstretched post-study on conference interpreting assessment research.

### **Acknowledgments**

This research was sponsored by the Key Program of the English Language and Literature of Guangdong Province, 2016. Also, this research was supported and funded by The Research of Quality Assessment Criteria in Conference Interpreting from the Perspective of Loyalty Principle, the Characteristic Innovation Program of the Ordinary University of Guangdong Province, 2017 (No. 139 in the official letter [2018. No. 64] from the Department of Education of Guangdong Province). This paper was also supported and funded by The Research and Practice of the ESP Course Teaching Model Based on Cognitive Needs in the Application-oriented Higher Institutes, the Teaching Reform Project of Higher Education in Guangdong Province in 2017 (No. 173 in the official letter [2018. No. 1] from the Department of Education of Guangdong Province).

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## Appendix 1

### *Questionnaire Result on Interpreter's Self-Assessment*

1. Do you think you have conveyed the speaker's speech accurately? (5 is the highest level)  
A. 5    B. 4    C. 3    D. 2    E. 1
2. Do you think you have conveyed the speaker's speech completely?  
A. 5    B. 4    C. 3    D. 2    E. 1
3. Do you think whether your delivery is clear and coherent?  
A. 5    B. 4    C. 3    D. 2    E. 1
4. Do you think whether you can comprehend the information in the source language?  
A. 5    B. 4    C. 3    D. 2    E. 1
5. Do you think whether you can use terminology accurately?  
A. 5    B. 4    C. 3    D. 2    E. 1
6. Do you think whether your delivery in interpreting is fluent?  
A. 5    B. 4    C. 3    D. 2    E. 1
7. Do you think whether your pace and pause in interpreting is moderate?  
A. 5    B. 4    C. 3    D. 2    E. 1
8. Do you think whether you have got a full preparation before interpreting?  
A. 5    B. 4    C. 3    D. 2    E. 1
9. Do you think you have got the sufficient expertise in interpreting?  
A. 5    B. 4    C. 3    D. 2    E. 1
10. Do you think the coordination between you and the party concerned (the initiator of the conference):
  - 1) The communication between the initiator and you before the conference:  
A. very good    B. good    C. fair    D. poor    E. extremely poor
  - 2) The cooperation between the audience and the spokesman during the conference:  
A. very good    B. good    C. fair    D. poor    E. extremely poor
  - 3) Your feedback delivering to the initiator after the conference:  
A. very good    B. good    C. fair    D. poor    E. extremely poor
11. Do you think the coordination of parties concerned has influenced on your today's interpreting performance?  
A. It completely has    B. It certainly has    C. It has got certain    D. It's uncertain    E. It scarcely has
12. Are you satisfied with your today's interpreting?  
A. Very satisfied    B. satisfied    C. fair    D. dissatisfied    E. very dissatisfied

# **A Study on Business Interpreting from the Perspective of Interpreters' Subjectivity – A Case Study of a Business Negotiation Interpreting Task**

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*[Abstract] As an indispensable part in bilingual business communication, interpreters play a significant role in facilitating business exchanges. Interpreters' subjectivity that exerts great influence on the progress of communication is an inevitable and important topic. Despite constant debate on interpreters' subjectivity, there are a measurable number of researches showing that it plays an active role in bridging the gap in communication. This paper reviews the studies in this sphere and probes into the roles of interpreters' subjectivity. An ensuing interpreting strategy analysis further explores interpreters' subjectivity in use.*

*[Keywords] business interpreting; interpreter's subjectivity; interpreting strategies*

## **Introduction**

With the progress of economic globalization, booming business exchanges among different nations are growing in an unprecedented way. Under this context, a competent interpreter undoubtedly plays an increasingly significant role in facilitating business exchanges. Business interpreting, as a branch of interpreting that boasts characteristics of interpreting, distinguishes itself with distinctive features such as a need for an understanding of professional knowledge of products and business procedure (Wang, H., 2005). Apart from conference interpreting, in companies that are dealing with foreign customers, an overwhelming amount of interpreting tasks fall into the category of consecutive interpreting. Unlike conference interpreters, foreign trade companies or factories seldom hire professional interpreters in business negotiation. Instead, the sales people who can speak good English act as the interpreters. On one hand, sales people themselves are always required to be graduates from English Major as their job description is for the maintenance of business with foreign customers. English is a threshold for them to start their careers. Generally speaking, their English competence is sufficient to deal with the interpreting task in business negotiation. On the other hand, they tend to have a more profound understanding of the products, prices and customers compared with third party interpreters. They are also always keen on solutions to sensitive and tricky business issues popping up from business negotiation. In short, interpreting in business occasions is considered an inter-disciplinary task involving both English competence and business background knowledge. Sales people who meet both requirements are, thus, considered as good options in a business interpreting scenario.

This author worked in a foreign company for a long time and accumulated rich experience in interpreting in bilingual business occasions. Through exposure to interpreting work, this author has a deep understanding of interpreters' subjectivity in business communication. This paper explores the three kinds of roles that an interpreter plays under the guidance of subjectivity theory with the analysis of interpreting coping strategies on business occasions.

## **Origins and Development of Interpreters' Subjectivity Research**

When researches in Interpreters' Subjectivity are probed, an important notion of "Interpreters' Subjectivity" should be introduced. It was once believed that invisibility for an interpreter was very important as it displayed the professionalism of an interpreter (Venuti, 1995). The concept of "visibility" first came into being when Claudia Angelelli proved the inevitability of the interpreters' subjectivity with detailed examples and research. According to her, an interpreter's visibility is to facilitate the two parties to better deal with difficulties in the communication. An interpreter should not only decode and encode what speaker says but also act as an active part in the communication (Angelelli, 2004).

In China, relevant studies have been carried out on the definition of the subject of a translation/an interpreting task and on the analysis of translators' and interpreters' subjectivity. Researches in definition of subjects in translation practice vary among different researchers. Xu Jun believed that the subject of translation changes among who engages in communication process (2003). Yuan Li probed from the stand point of Hermeneutics and developed her understanding that translator stands at the Hermeneutics center and act as the sole element of subject (2002). Chen Daliang believed that interpreters are the sole subject in translation practice (2004, p. 4). Zhong Weihe argued that the author of source text and readers is impossible to be the subject of translation, instead, interpreters are the most vibrant and subjective initiative element (2006, p. 42). Chronically reviewing relevant researches in this field, it is remarkably evident that more and more importance has been attached to interpreters and translators themselves about their subjective roles in practice.

Another research trend should merit attention is that some scholars have begun to conduct researches in the deconstruction of how translators' subjectivity takes effect. Cha Jianming and Tian Yu concluded that translators display subjectivity initiative in the translation practice on the basis of a respect for source text, and is characterized by cultural consciousness, humanitarian character and aesthetic creativity (2003:, pp. 19-21). Ren Wen analyzed roles that a liaison interpreter may play and arrived at the conclusion that interpreters' subjectivity is classified into three categories which are gatekeeper, co-speaker and coordinator (2010).

This paper refers to Ren Wen's classification and probes into subjectivity with examples drawn from a specific business negotiation interpreting practice when a brand company vice president led a team of designers, merchandisers and cost coordinators to a fashion accessory export company for a business visit. It lasted four days and covered a wide range of business topics, such as quality, cost and lead time. Apart from the business talk, personal exchanges were also escorted by the interpreter. The analysis for this paper is divided into two parts which are interpretation of interpreters' subjectivity and strategies concerning how to make use of interpreters' subjectivity.

## **The Roles of Interpreters' Subjectivity in Interpreting**

### ***Gatekeeper***

Kurt Lewin put forward the concept of gatekeeper in 1943 (Munday, 2001). According to Kurt Lewin, a "gatekeeper" metaphorically vividly indicates that an interpreter who should play the part of a go-between in the communication to filter information. As a gatekeeper, one interpreter has to take two aspects into account, namely, the delivery of what the speaker says and the way of expression. The gatekeeper role is fundamentally for the hearer's sake as interpreters have filtered and processed partial information or maneuver the way of expression to make the delivery gentle and tentative.

The “gatekeeper” role for an interpreter can be frequently seen in business negotiation. As an interpreter who acts as gatekeeper of speaker, his or her task is to ensure the appropriateness for the message that delivers to the receiver.

*Example 1:*

*Company owner: 家里人还好吗?*

*The Interpreter: Wish you a smooth visit!*

Privacy is taboo at the beginning of a partnership, but this topic may be brought up with their deepening relationship and growing trust. The reason why the interpreter ignores the speaker’s utterance is that she gets a heads up that the customer is extremely traumatized as he had just lost his little boy in an earlier car crash. The particular personal situation was not well-known yet. To avoid potential embarrassment, the interpreter transformed the regards to be a more general one devoid of family. And the interpreter should also report this to the boss and explain what happened to prevent more communication malfunction afterwards.

*Example 2:*

*Company owner: 中国归菩萨管。*

*The Interpreter: You are such an ardent believer!*

This exchange happened at dinner. The customer was a highly religious person, so he prayed before dinner. In contrast, the Chinese boss is a devout believer of Buddhism. It is widespread that people holding different religious faith cannot get along. However, on a business occasion, the principle is seeking common ground and shelving the difference should be upheld. After considering the odds of irritating customer with literal translation and the cost of potential conflict, the interpreter converted the speaker’s expression which was obviously offensive and impolite to a moderate one. With the filtering function played by the interpreter, a potential outbreak is quenched.

### ***Co-Speaker***

In the process of business communication, the interpreter is a participant of the discourse, and separately established a relationship with the speaker and the hearer. By contributing his or her own comments to the receiver of the discourse, an interpreter becomes an indispensable part of the communication. Claudia Angelelli believes that the visibility and the degree of visibility of the interpreter can be expressed through the text ownership of the interpreter (2004). For the role of co-speaker, the speaker and interpreter have the shared ownership of text

*Example 3:*

*Foreign customer: It is so expensive!*

*Company owner: 给您的已经是最优惠的价钱了!*

*The Interpreter: It is the best price we can offer. It is even 2% lower than the similar style we shipped to you last month. This price already hit the bottom.*

In this conversation, the interpreter added the second sentence by herself as she follows the job, so she knows the details accurately, while the boss, who is in charge of the overall business, may not dig into details. By providing the statistics, the interpreter actually showed vendor’s efforts on the price. In this conversation, the interpreter and the boss are in a cooperation relationship. The boss made the decision not

to concede cost and the interpreter affirmed this information to the customer with additional arguments to justify the decision.

*Example 4:*

*Brand Designer: Why do you surcharge \$0.5/pc?*

*Company owner: 最低起订量呀!*

*The Interpreter: There is a MOQ (Minimal Order Quantity) charge for the material which is requested by material supplier. They charge for orders less than their minimal quantity order based on their cost consideration.*

The interpreter amplifies the information with a lengthy description of the MOQ. Designers sometimes prefer to select exotic material in hopes of inventing a novelty design. However, it involved a minimal order issue as concept orders are always a small quantity. In this conversation, the interpreter made a detailed explanation of what the MOQ was so that the concept of this terminology was much clearer for the customer. By extending what the speaker says, the interpreter creates a new text by which the speaker, the hearer and the interpreter are more closely connected on the same page of discussion.

### **Coordinator**

An interpreter is believed to be an active third part to exert influence on the trend and result of communication. An interpreter plays a very important role in the communication as they not only bridge the language gap, but also influence the progress and consequence of the communication (Katan, 2004). They effectively and actively help two parties to achieve the optimal communication by means of various interpreting techniques to coordinate both parties in the cross-language exchange. An interpreter, often the only person who knows both cultural backgrounds, should adjust the discourse structure and language in the conversation to push communication forward.

*Example 5:*

*Customer: We have clearly instructed you the correct leather we want! This plastic thing will bring our whole key item into jeopardy! Why did you do this?*

*The Interpreter: 客人说这个皮料不是他们理想的材料。现在用的皮料塑胶感太重, 不能体现客人的设计感。客人非常不满意。*

*Company owner: 贵公司想要的皮料太贵了, 之前报的预报价都不被接受, 做了也是白做, 我们只好用便宜的替代品。*

*The Interpreter: 客人坚持认为皮子太差。要不我们做两个方案, 一是选价钱范围内其他的材料给客人自己挑选, 一是按照客人理想的材料, 和客人协商改动其他的配饰部分, 看下报价客人是否可以接受?*

*Chinese boss: OK! 按照你的想法, 跟客人建议。*

*The Interpreter: We are sorry. Actually, the quotation of sample with your desired leather was rejected. So, we want to figure out a substitute leather to meet your target price. We apologize for rushing this collection without getting approval beforehand. But given the tight lead time, we were thinking to drag your design out of sketches first. Kindly please understand the situation. Well understand your concern now. How about the two alternative plans? The first is for us to submit other articles that are within price range and the second is that we use the same leather you want with some changes*

*on the sketches to bring the cost down? How do you think?*

*Customer: Ok! Try both, please!*

In this case, the interpreter was actually a buffer in the communication when both parties became hostile and aggressive to each other. With the worsening foreign trade environment, both the customer and the vendor actually were having a tough time and the partnership between both parties was not as solid as that in the prosperous days. Foreign customers are not satisfied with the ongoing request of cost increments from vendors, while vendors accuse customers of their tight budget in face of the constant deterioration of business circumstance. As a sensible interpreter who understands the whole picture, he or she knows how to roll back the communication gap by drawing each part closer and conjure up a solution that caters to the benefit of both parties.

### **Coping Strategies in Interpreting Subjectivity**

To achieve the ultimate goal of maximizing business communication, it is recommended that a competent interpreter should take full advantage of subjective initiative with combination of a good mastery of coping strategies to improve the interpreter's competence in the interpreting practice (Liu, Y., 2004). There are a number of techniques that can be employed in the analysis of the role of interpreters' subjectivity in interpreting. This paper discusses three techniques of simplification, amplification and adaptation in use. The three strategies are frequently entwined in use on business occasions with the aim of achieving an enhanced communication effect. Through the study on the three strategies, a clearer picture regarding interpreters' subjectivity can be revealed.

#### ***Simplification***

Interpreting is well known for its intense pressure as a bunch of information is delivered in a transitory way. Under this circumstance, interpreters may automatically choose the simplification technique to highlight the speaker's gist of utterance (Wang, D., 2001). This strategy enables interpreters to save time and efforts while making the hearer easier to understand.

*Example 6:*

*Sample Room Master: 这个五金片偏薄, 如果装上弹簧, 底片会不停向上顶, 因为工牙的位置留的不够, 舌片也没办法固定的很紧, 所以不论怎么样, 都是没有办法扣合的很紧的。唯一的办法是重新开模具, 调整工牙位, 加厚底片 0.5mm, 就没什么问题了。*

*Interpreter: The problem for the lock lies in the inaccurate mold which doesn't make enough room. The only solution is to reopen a mold to increase the bottom piece slightly by 0.5mm.*

In this case, the sample room worker was very proficient, so he speaks in quite a professional way. But for customers, they did not need the bulky information as their goal was quite straightforward, which was to settle a nonfunctional lock issue. Thus, the interpreter adopted the simplification strategy to convey the core information.

#### ***Amplification***

The amplification technique is used to compensate for the loss of information, to connect the context and remove ambiguity (Yuan, C., 1999). Unbalanced information between vendor and buyer is widespread.

Sometimes, one party may not be conscious that their so-called common knowledge is not universal for the other party. In this case, amplification is a good vehicle to fulfill the purpose of communication.

*Example 7:*

*Vendor:* 工厂国庆还有中秋要放假，所以这批货至少需要100天的交期。

*Interpreter:* Sorry to inform that it takes at least 100 days for the goods to ship. The lead time coincides with two big Chinese festivals which are National Day and Middle Autumn Day. According to China's regulation on official public holidays, factory is scheduled to close 7 days. And many workers will go back to their hometown for the reunion with family, so we will encounter a labor deficiency after holiday. All these add up to an extended 10 days.

In addition to cost, delivery is also a key topic in business. Customers are extremely sensitive to lead time. They almost deny any request on extension once the on-board date is fixed. So, the interpreter adopted amplification to explain that a delivery extension is a must and the factory should not be blamed, with a very detailed explanation in hope of consent from customer.

### **Adaptation**

Adaptation is a strategy that takes place when the speaker unconsciously makes mistakes which are caught by the interpreters. The interpreters would adapt the mistakes in the interpreting calmly and initiatively (Liu, H., 2001). By using the adaptation strategy without pointing out these mistakes on the spot, the interpreter both saves face for the speaker and contributes to a smooth communication.

*Example 8:*

*Vendor:* 谢谢贵公司的大力支持! 我们去年和贵公司做了150万美金的生意! 希望今天可以生意可以持续增长!

*Interpreter:* Thanks for your great support! Our business volume reached fifteen million dollars last year. We wish to grow our business this year!

Regarding the business volume, the interpreter realized that the speaker's number was a slip of tongue as the yearly volume is highlighted in the company profile which enabled the interpreter to know the correct number beforehand. The interpreter spontaneously changed to the correct number to avoid the discomfort from customer as they would have been unhappy when the vendor mistakenly diminished their business power.

### **Conclusion**

Interpreters should give full play to subjectivity as a way to optimize their potential and facilitate communication effect. This paper probed into interpreters' subjectivity in specific business negotiation with the analysis of the three roles of interpreters – as gatekeeper, co-speaker and coordinator, followed by the discussion of coping strategies. The coping strategies of simplification, amplification and adaptation were discussed for a better understanding of techniques employed in a realistic business setting. There is much yet to be explored and discussed in terms of interpreters' subjectivity as this paper focused on the positive side of interpreters' subjectivity, but there should also be a negative effect caused by subjectivity. It is hoped that more researches and papers revolving this topic is to be conducted in the future.

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# On the Nature of Translation as a Tool

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*[Abstract] The present paper discusses the nature of translation as a tool. The word “tool” is used with regard to the translation proper, a “process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another”, which plays the role of a tool for the purpose of communication. This translation proper part is value-free and subject to a large inventory of social and cultural factors that are value-loaded and able to exert an influence on translating. However important such cultural influences may prove to be, they are only a peripheral part of translating.*

*[Keywords] translation proper; tool; manipulation; fidelity*

## Introduction

News translation differs mainly from other types of translation in that it “can involve all kinds of textual manipulation”, in which information that passes between cultures through news agencies is not only translated in the interlingual sense, it is “edited, rewritten, shaped and repackaged...to such a degree that any clear distinction between source and target ceases to be meaningful. This is in total contrast to the more established research into translation practice... and hence challenges established definitions of translation” (Bielsa, & Bassnett, 2009, p. 11).

When an established definition of translation does become challengeable, it is most likely that the definition is to blame, not the translator or the translated work. Any definition of translation results from translation practice, not the other way around. If the definition and the practice are at odds, as in the case of news translation where manipulation is enormous and causes the translation to deviate so much from the original text, we cannot change the way news translation practice is carried out, since news translation has its particular purposes and consequent justifiable norms. Furthermore, it is commonly known that manipulation does not exist in news translation alone – it is actually ubiquitous in all kinds of translation, only differing in degree according to various situations. This is the reality of translation, on the basis of which we build our definitions of translation. So, the question we have to ask is: Is there a different way in which we can define translation and make it less prone to challenge? Our answer is affirmative and the different way we suggest is that translation can be defined as a tool.

## What is translation?

There are many definitions of translation, falling roughly into four types. One puts emphasis on the linguistic perspective of translation, defining translation as “an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another (Catford, 1965, p. 1). The second type focuses on the function of translation, claiming that “interlingual translation may be defined as a bilingual mediated process of communication, which ordinarily aims at the production of a TL text that is functionally equivalent to the SL text” (Reiss, 2000, p. 160). The third type is artistic effect-oriented, seeking spiritual resemblance between the SL text and the TL text in a way that a painter creates a painting. The fourth type turns to culture, regarding translation as “a cross-cultural event” (Snell-Hornby, 2001, p. 39).

Of these four types of definition, the notion of translation as a “a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another” is the most fundamental one, because whether translation is regarded as an

art, or a cross-cultural event, or as being functionally equivalent of the source text, it is essentially a linguistic transference between the two languages. If we divide translation into two parts, one part is the linguistic part, which we can call the translation proper, and the other part is the non-linguistic part, which we can call the peripheral part.

The translation proper is based on the idea of the binary distinction between the SL text and the TL text. That means there is an inherent relation between the SL and TL texts: the TL text has to bear some resemblance to the SL text, and this naturally leads to the translation standard of equivalence or fidelity.

Therefore, a TL text is qualified only when it is faithful to the SL text. That is why E. A. Nida and C. R. Tabler (1969) held equivalence as the central notion in their definition of translation: “translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message” (p. 12).

As a result, while the translator has to strive to achieve fidelity in translation, he has to make efforts to overcome obstacles caused by linguistic and cultural differences between the SL and the TL texts. And this is a process full of subjective factors. First, the translator’s choices are subjective. Translation is done by the translator. He understands the SL text in his own way and chooses what he thinks are appropriate words and sentences to express the meaning and style of the source language. Such choices vary from translator to translator and are subject to various social and cultural elements; Second, the translator’s abilities are subjective. Different translators vary in their proficiency in using the source and target languages and in applying their cultural background knowledge; Third, the social and cultural factors involved in the translation process are subjective. Such factors along with the linguistic context impose various limits on the translating process and exert direct influence on the translation quality and the degree of fidelity to which the translation can reach; Fourth, the purposes of translation are subjective. People may choose to translate for information, or for ideology, culture, aesthetics, etc., depending on different needs of different people.

With such subjective factors in the translation process, it is natural that the standards of translation of equivalence between the SL and the TL texts and the definitions of translation are also subjective. By claiming that they are subjective we also mean they are value-loaded and vary in conformity with different translators. Every translator has his own value. Translator A has every right to regard translation as an art, and Translator B is free to regard translation as a form of communication. Translator A can disagree with Translator B concerning how to define translation.

So, the best way to ensure that the definition of translation is beyond challenge from any perspective, is to define it as a tool, a pure linguistic tool.

### **Translation is a Tool**

To construct an appropriate definition of translation is necessary because the definition reveals the essence of translation and provides guidance for the translator in translating. Fu Lei believed that translation was like painting, and this as a principle can remind the translator that he is not creating a machine drawing but an artwork. If translation is regarded as a cross-cultural event, that means the translator should pay more attention to cultural factors in the translation. For different purposes we can define translation in different ways.

The disadvantage of such definitions is that as they are value-oriented, they do not have a stable and all-purpose quality and easily becomes challengeable when manipulation in translation reaches a high degree. For example, in “要出于公心为党交一大批肝胆相照的党外朋友” (Xi Jinping, 2017a, p. 305),

which is translated as: “Instead, we should make a large number of sincere friends for the Party” (Xi Jinping, 2017b, p. 333), the idiom “肝胆相照” is not translatable, although it is of vital importance in terms of culture. Then, when such an important element is not translated, do we still call this translation a translation? Or shall we challenge the definition of translation as a cross-cultural event? Similarly, when we translate 古人说:”欲知平直, 则必准绳; 欲知方圆, 则必规矩。” (Xi Jinping, 2017a, p. 151) into “As our ancestors said, ‘Nothing can be accomplished without regulations and rules’” (Xi Jinping, 2017b, p. 164), there are also elements that are not translatable. One is the original archaic style; the other is some original information. If we define translation as an effort to seek functional equivalence, then this translation is obviously not functionally satisfactory. Again, shall we challenge the definition of translation as a functional equivalent?

If we define translation as a tool, the matter would be much simpler. By tool, we mean that translation is regarded as a “process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another”. This substituting process is, first of all, a linguistic one which we have named as the translation proper, a linguistic operation free of value, though it serves to convey the meaning and style and other things in the SL text. The peripheral part of translation, value-loaded, including a large inventory of social and cultural factors, can affect the translation process to various degrees, but cannot replace the proper part of translation.

Defining translation as a tool has three advantages. One is that the translation proper is objective. It is objective in the sense that the translation proper is a linguistic operation that involves vocabulary, grammar, use of language, denotation, and structures, etc., and these are not to be changed by any peripheral factors such as ideology, culture or purposes of translation. It is true that the peripheral factors exert a strong influence on the translator who in turn would manipulate the translating process, but he can never change the language itself.

The second advantage is that the definition of translation as a tool is not to be challenged from any perspective. In the case of news translation where there is so much manipulation, we do not think it poses a challenge to the definition of translation, it is a combination of translation and editing. That is to say, the translation part is still translation because it involves linguistic transference to some extent, while the remaining part is editing.

The third advantage is that when we regard translation as a tool, it would be simpler for us to establish the standard of translation. Quite generally, scholarship recognizes fidelity as the basic standard of translation. But very often this standard is a subjective and elusive one. That is why some scholars have proposed that the standard for translation should be a multivariate one. The root of this pluralism in translation standard lies in its value-orientation. Values, different from facts, are subjective and are not to be judged by a single standard, or not easily judged as to which is the best. But it would be a different situation if we were to regard translation as a tool. In that case there is only one standard: fidelity in linguistic transference. Fidelity or equivalence exists only when there is a faithful transference of the SL text. For example, “眉毛胡子一把抓, 是做不好工作的” (Xi Jinping, 2017a, p. 23) is translated as “Different problems cannot be solved by undifferentiated measures” (Xi Jinping, 2017b, p. 23). The translation is not very faithful to the original, because the original images “眉毛胡子” (eyebrow and beard) are not translated. But the translator has to make a compromise by allowing the formal infidelity so as to convey the main idea of the original sentence.

## Infidelity in Translation

Translation is necessary in human communication because the two parties involved in the communication speak different languages. The differences between the source and target languages and cultures create various kinds of obstacles for the translator and force him to manipulate the translating for various kinds of purposes, for example for a faithful interpretation of the original meaning, for an ideological need or for a better rhetorical effect. Here, manipulation means to control or influence the translating to one's advantage so as to overcome the obstacles in translation.

The very reason that manipulation in translation is possible is that translation is a linguistic tool with which the translator can conduct the manipulation to achieve his purposes. The essence of manipulation in translation is to give up something in order to gain something. So, when we judge whether or not a translation is faithful to the SL text, we should distinguish the linguistic tool in translating from the purpose of using the tool. If a translation is not faithful to the SL text as a result of manipulation, this is a matter of ways of manipulation, not a matter of translation definition. You may challenge the way in which the translator manipulated the translation, but not the translation definition.

### Example 1.

*I'm not the first man who has made mistakes.*

自来出错的人多了,我又不是头一个。(黄邦杰)

### Example 2.

*A diamond is forever.*

钻石恒久远,一颗永流传。

### Example 3.

*提出改革举措当然要慎重,要反复研究、反复论证,但也不能因此就谨小慎微、裹足不前,什么也不敢干、不敢试。(Xi Jinping)*

*Before putting forth a reform measure, we must research and discuss it carefully, but this does not mean being overcautious or hesitant to try anything new. (Foreign Languages Press)*

### Example 4.

*A nobler want of man is served by nature, namely, the love of Beauty.*

大自然除供给人类衣食之需之外,复满足一种更高贵的要求——那就是满足了人爱美之心。(Tr.by Xia Ji'an)

### Example 5.

*The practical effect of Edwards's teachings about the relations of God and man has bequeathed a lesson not to be forgotten (Oliver Wendell Holmes: Jonathan Edwards).*

爱德华兹关于“天人关系”的教训,其实际效果至为可怕,实足为后世警戒(Tr. by Xia Ji'an)

All of the above examples underwent linguistic manipulation of different degrees and are not exactly faithful to the original structure. Examples 1 and 2 changed the single sentence structure of the original version into two in the translation. This is first of all a linguistic adjustment, but it also serves the purpose of building a more idiomatic Chinese sentence structure and achieving a better reading and aesthetic effect. Example 3 omitted the cultural image “裹足不前”, which was translated into “hesitant”. It was omitted because of its untranslatability. In other words, translation as a tool has its limits in expressing the original

idea. The present translation is only a substitute that expresses a similar idea to the original one. The Chinese version in Example 4 adds something that the original version does not have in form but that is implied in meaning. Example 5 arranges its logic in a straight line: effect – teachings – not to be forgotten. But the translation inserts something into this chain. So its logic becomes: effect – teachings – *terrible* – not to be forgotten.

Manipulation in the above translations shows that manipulation, as a linguistic operation, can help the translator achieve his purposes in translation. And this raises a further question: How much manipulation can translation tolerate?

It is impossible, of course, to provide a clear-cut single answer for this very subjective question. But we can offer some possibilities for consideration. First, however much manipulation is involved in the translating, so long as it is based on the SL text, which is the prerequisite of the manipulation, it is still a translation; Second, quite generally, manipulation in translation aims to overcome obstacles the translator came across in translating and to achieve a better or particular effect of translation, linguistically, culturally or ideologically. But since the assessment of translation is subjective, and there is no objective standard for manipulation, then any amount of manipulation is acceptable if only it is made from the perspective of the translation.

### **Conclusion**

Nowadays, translation studies have shown greater momentum than ever before. However, these studies seem to have been largely devoted to cultural or ideological aspects of translation, namely the peripheral part of translation. While it is absolutely true to maintain that translating is not merely an activity of transferring the meaning of a text from one language into another, and it is certainly beneficial to conduct more research into those aspects beyond linguistic aspects and to gain more insights; and we have every reason to attach great importance to cultural or social or ideological aspects of translation. We still firmly believe that we should not deviate from the studies on the translation proper and should avoid substituting the peripheral part of the translation studies for its main part.

We have made it clear that the translation proper or linguistic part plays the role of a tool in translation. It is necessary to bear this in mind because each of the two parts of translation carries out different functions in translation. The part that the translation proper plays is the most fundamental role of transferring the messages from the source text to the target text in terms of form and meaning. This is like using a tool, for the purpose of completing the basic translation operations. The role that the peripheral part plays is that of manipulation, dealing with difficulties that may have occurred due to differences between the SL and TL texts in culture, ideology or poetics. Manipulation therefore helps the translator to overcome the difficulties and achieve better effects in translation.

It is worth remembering that all the elements involved in the peripheral part are heavily value-loaded. Actually, this important feature has generally been neglected by many people, especially by translation studies. When people define translation as a cross-cultural event, a functional equivalent, or a communication activity, they forget that these are different values that can vary from individual to individual. These values can reveal different aspects of translation but cannot represent the whole picture of translation. What can reveal the essence of translation is its linguistic nature, the translation proper, which is value free. It is the translation proper that can defy challenges because it is largely objective.

### **Acknowledgements**

This research was funded by the School Project (15-001A) of Nanguo Business College, the English Language & Literature as a Key Program in Guangdong 2016 in Guangdong University's Foreign Studies Nanguo Business College, and *Research on Chinese Political Metaphoric System*, granted by GDUFS.

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# A Diachronic Survey of C-E Chinese Cosmetic Brand Name Translation

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**[Abstract]** *In the era of globalization, English translation of brand names plays a significant role in helping Chinese cosmetic enterprises to win out in the international market. The present paper conducts a comprehensive diachronic survey of 129 brand names in the Chinese cosmetics industry ranging from time-honored brands to newly-emerging ones. It is found that brand name translation bears close relevance to the social and economic development of Chinese society, and in recent years, it has increasingly demonstrated a tendency of target-orientation in pace with the surging wave of globalization.*

**[Keywords]** *brand name translation, Chinese-English translation, translation methods*

## Introduction

A brand name is a term, design, symbol, or other feature that distinguishes an organization or product from its rivals in the eyes of customers (Pride & Ferrell, 2009). Brand names are widely used in business, marketing, and advertising. A good brand name can attract customers' attention, promote sales, convey corporate culture. In the era of globalization, an English translation of brand names plays a significant role in helping Chinese cosmetic enterprises to win out in the international market. Previous studies have focused on discussing the translation methods and rules of brand names, which shows a strong prescriptive orientation. From a historical and descriptive perspective, the present paper combines a comprehensive survey of brand names with an in-depth case study. It first conducts a diachronic survey of 129 brand names in Chinese cosmetic industry, primarily based on the time when their English counterpart first appeared, ranging from time-honoured brands to newly-emerging ones. Then, it examines the evolution of the English translations of a time-honoured cosmetic brand to further explore the changing patterns that happen to the translation of Chinese cosmetic brand names.

## Brand Name Translation Methods

Many scholars have paid attention to brand name translation, especially its translation methods and rules. Gu (1997) found that three translation methods are usually applied in brand name translation, namely, sense translation, transliteration and word coinage. Sense translation means translating the meaning of the original brand name into English like 英雄 into *Hero* and 永久 into *Forever*, while the method of transliteration aims to retain the phonetic form of the original brand name whether on the basis of Chinese pinyin system or by means of English transliteration. The method of word coinage attaches importance to both sense and sound through clipping or a combination of some English words so as to create new images in the concerned English brand names like *Cowind* for 椰风 and *Plumum* for 梅菊 (Gu, 1997, p. 46). Hu and Chen (2000) suggested that brand name translation should make a compromise

between form and sense so as to realize its practical value, as well as maintain good aesthetic effects. Liu (2003) pointed out that brand name translation involves three key problems – word use, cultural factors and treatment of Chinese characters. Wang and Jian (2013) conducted a survey study of the status quo of English translation of Chinese brand names and summarized eight translation approaches. Most of the previous studies can be divided into two types: those that purport to identify common translation methods that are applied in brand name translation, and the another that is of a prescriptive nature with an aim to formulating guidelines or criteria for future brand name translation. There is clearly a need for a historical perspective to the study of brand name translation.

Based on the data from the State Administration for Industry and Commerce of the People’s Republic of China, the present study conducted a diachronic investigation into 129 brand names in the cosmetic industry. It combined a comprehensive examination of the English translations of the 129 cosmetic brand names with an in-depth discussion of a case study in order to offer a thorough description of Chinese brand name translation along the history.

Basically, six translation methods are identified in our corpus: (1) pinyin transliteration (*Xiefuchun* for 谢馥春; *Meifubao* for 美肤宝); (2) sense translation (*One Leaf* for 一叶子; *Miracle* for 迷奇); (3) English transliteration (*Yommy* for 咏梅; *Proya* for 珀莱雅); (4) word borrowing (*Cathy* for 佳雪); (5) word coinage (*Skinice* for 肤美灵; *TJOY* for 丁家宜); and (6) non-English translation (*Marubi* for 丸美; *Hanhoo* for 韩后).

### A Diachronic Survey

To obtain the data about changes that happen to the translation methods of brand name rendition, we divided brand names into three groups, namely those before 1980, between 1990 and 2000, and after 2000, based on the time when they first appeared.

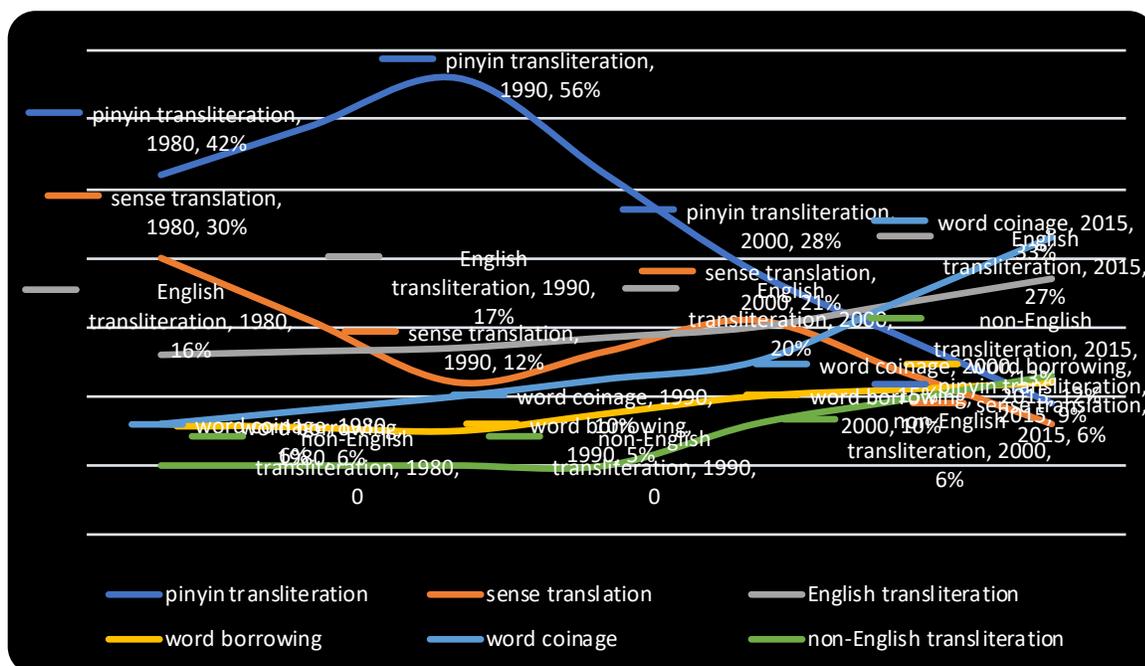


Figure 1. The Revolution of Translation Methods

As shown in the above chart, pinyin transliteration was the dominant method before 1990s, accounting for 56% of the English brand names under the survey. Pinyin transliteration is primarily based on the official romanization system for Standard Chinese which was first issued in 1958 by the PRC. It is also worthwhile to note that many acronyms derived from their pinyin names and such acronyms are included as one type of pinyin transliteration. Famous brands at that time like *Kongfengchun* for 孔凤春 (1962), *Dabao* for 大宝 (1980), *Chunjuan* for 春娟 (1980), and *Anan* for 安安 (1985) all adopted Pinyin transliteration as their English brand names. Others like *GD* for 宫灯 (1962) and *PZH* for 片仔癀 (1980) used acronyms of their full pinyin names as the English brand names.

After 1990, the method of pinyin transliteration lost its popularity in brand name translation. Towards the end of the 20th century, enterprises began to try different ways to have their brand name presented in English. Brand name translation during this period demonstrated more diversity and variety. All six methods mentioned above are applied by different cosmetic brands, with no strategy dominating the field. New strategies like word coinage are used by more enterprises. For example, the English brand name of *Chinfie* (清妃) combines *China* and the English suffix *fie* while retaining the original sound of the Chinese characters. *Chin* is not only the Wade-Giles transliteration of the Chinese character *qing* (清), but also associated with *China* and the suffix *fie*, for its association with female names like *Sophie* may impress the target customers with the image of a young girl, thus, a well fit for its brand image as a female cosmetic manufacturer (Xu, 2003, p. 49). For one thing, it is because many new cosmetic brands were created and registered during this period. For another thing, globalization becomes the trend of the new era. After 2000, word coinage became the dominant method in brand name translation, increasing from 15% in 2000 to 33% in 2015.

A retrospective study found that English transliteration, word coinage and word borrowing are on the rise along the time axis. These three methods are fundamentally target-oriented. In other words, they attach more importance to the acceptability of the target customers than the expression of the brand original image. What underlies this trend is the fact that Chinese cosmetic brands started to adopt a global perspective and tried to win customers in the international market. Until 2015, word coinage and English transliteration had become dominant methods of brand name translation. In the former case, the English brand names of some herbal cosmetics such as *Herbelle* for 草木年华 (2004), *Herbetter* for 千纤草 (2006), and *Inoherb* for 相宜本草 (2000) made use of the keyword *herb* in their brand names to show what their products are made from. In the meantime, their English brand names also emphasized the effects of the cosmetics by putting herb and better or herb and belle together. Some other brands created new words as their English brand names by utilizing both sound and sense of some English words like *BRIBRILLIANT* for 芭睿芭睿 (2010) and *cocool* for 珂珂 (2001).

In the latter case, some brands adopted English transliteration as the main method such as *Carslan* for 卡姿兰, *Winona* for 薇诺娜, *MAYSU* for 美素 and *Chioture* for 稚优泉. Their brand names follow English phonetic rules and spelling principles so that they sound similar to the local brand names in the target society.

It is worth noting that some brand names that appeared after 2000 were found to be similar to brand names of non-English countries, particularly similar to those of Japan and Korea. For example, the English brand names of 丸美 (*Marubi*) and 春纪 (*Haruki*) are actually based on the Japanese translation of their Chinese brand names and then transliterated into English. Other English brand names like *Hanhoo* for 韩后 and *Kans* for 韩束 are associated with Korean both in sound and sense.

Such a diachronic survey finds that, with the development and opening of China's economy, the English translation of cosmetic brands is paying more and more attention to the acceptability of their target customers and the internationalization of Chinese cosmetic products. Before 1990, pinyin transliteration was the dominant method, whereas after 2000, more target-oriented translation methods like word coinage and English transliteration took the lead. Enterprises at this time obviously took into consideration the target market including their culture, economy, language and customers' psychology with a view to increasing the acceptability of their products by international customers (Zhu, 2003).

### **A Case Study: from Peh-Chao Lin to Pechoin**

百雀羚 (Pechoin) is a cosmetic brand which was created by a local cosmetic company in Shanghai as early as the 1930s. The brand became very popular at that time, so in 1941, the company introduced a new cream with the English brand name Peh-Chao Lin first used on the package. Since then, Peh-Chao Lin has undergone a half-century development and won great popularity in China and many other countries.



**Figure 2. The Old Package of Pechoin in 1941**

However, China implemented the reform and opening policy in 1980s and many international brands swarmed into Chinese market, which impacted Chinese national brands to a considerable degree. The company of Peh-Chao Lin was also affected and was on the brink of bankruptcy towards the end of 1990s.

In order to find a way out of its difficulties, the company launched a series of reforms and innovations in the first decade of the 21st century. Since 2000, Peh-Chao Lin has made consistent efforts to rejuvenate its image to cater for young consumers. In April 2008, well before the Olympic games in Beijing, Peh-Chao Lin changed its English translation to Pechoin and took chance to pursue a global vision.



**Figure 3. Pechoin's Trademark in 2008**

As an appellative text type, brand names fulfil the function of arousing potential consumers' interest and inspire them to buy the products. The original English brand name Peh-Chao Lin was based on Wade-Giles romanization and as such was actually source-based.

The new English brand name Pechoin, on one hand, is the English transliteration of the Chinese name, and on the other hand, it is associated with a French female name. Through such adaption, the brand establishes a new international image, that of a young and graceful western girl (Yuan & Xu, 2011, p. 14). The new brand name demonstrates a global vision and is easy to be accepted by international customers. The success of the brand in the recent years is good evidence of its popularity in global market.

In fact, there are a lot of similar cases in Chinese cosmetic industry. Many famous national cosmetic brands changed their English names including, among others, *Kongfengchun* (孔凤春) to *Kophenix*, *Xiafei* (霞飞) to *Sopheia*, and *Yongmei* (咏梅) to *Yommy*. Changes in their English brand names reinforce the findings in the previous part that Chinese cosmetic brand name translation has become more target-oriented. With the development of social and economic globalization, Chinese enterprises are eager to exploit new markets, to attract international consumers and finally to promote their products. Brand name translation has become an integrated part of their strategic plan. Target-oriented brand name translation methods like word coinage and English transliteration aim to smooth over cultural divergence and create familiar cultural experience by bringing new and more acceptable product images to international consumers.

### Concluding Remarks

Since China implemented the reform and opening policy in the 1980s, international trade and economic development has always been on its agenda. With the entrance of China into the WTO in 2001, the Chinese economy entered into an era of globalization. In constant surging waves of economic reforms, the Chinese cosmetic industry started to seek new opportunities by aiming at international markets. Up until 2016, there were more than 3000 cosmetic enterprises in China and the sales volume of the whole cosmetic industry reached 222.2 billion RMB (Liu, 2016, p. 5). The expansion of the cosmetic industry also brought about fierce competition between enterprises. How to establish a good image in the global market and to attract potential international consumers is of great significance to the development of Chinese national cosmetic brands. Many enterprises have already realized the importance of their English brand names and started to integrate brand name translation into their general strategic plan. A good English brand name does not simply fulfil the function of labeling a product but also speaks for its quality and expresses its uniqueness so as to attract target customers and win new markets.

The survey shows that many cosmetic enterprises have shifted from source-oriented English brand names such as pinyin transliteration to more acceptable target-oriented ones like word coinage and English transliteration. Such a shift is evidence of the globalization process of Chinese national cosmetic industry. In this process, there are many good examples of brand name translation. Many brand names based on Chinese herbal medicine such as *Herbelle* (草木年华), *Herbetter* (千纤草) and *Inoherb* (相宜本草) are well accepted by Western consumers, while in the meantime, their English names also demonstrate uniqueness of traditional Chinese medicine.

However, on the other hand, we can find many brands simply imitate brand names of other countries, which conveys a sense of diffidence with their own products. At present, most enterprises have known the importance of brand name translation, but it is still an urgent task as to how to work out a best

translation in a proper way so that the English names of Chinese products can reflect our own uniqueness while smoothing over misunderstanding and obtain wide acceptability.

### Acknowledgement

The author acknowledges support from Guangzhou Philosophy and Social Science Planning Foundation [Project Name: An Imagological Study of the Translation and Promotion of Lingnan Culture (Grant No. 2017GZYB80)], Guangzhou Yangcheng Young Scholars Foundation [Project Name: A Study on the Translation of Traditional Cantonese Culture and the Image Construction of Guangzhou City (Grant No. 18QNXR57)] and Guangdong Higher Education Research and Reform Project (Project Name: A Study of Non-English Major Students' Textual Translation Competence).

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# **Does Infrastructure Matter? Potential Impacts of China's Belt and Road Initiative on Its Bilateral Trade**

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**[Abstract]** *The construction of infrastructure facilities has become the initial project of China's Belt and Road Initiative. By using export and import data between China and its Belt and Road partners for the period 2001–2012, this paper estimates an augmented gravity model that specifically includes infrastructure indicators as explanatory variables to examine their potential impacts on trade flows. The findings show that infrastructure facilities are positively related to trade flows between China and its Belt and Road partners. This finding is statistically more significant for exports to China than imports from China.*

**[Keywords]** *Belt and Road Initiative; gravity model; infrastructure; One Belt One Road*

## **Introduction**

The Belt and Road Initiative, first proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, “directly impacts 4.4 billion people, around 63 percent of the world’s population, and deals with an economic aggregate of \$21 trillion, 29 percent of the global volume ([www.cctv-america.com](http://www.cctv-america.com), 2015).” For the first stage, the Belt and Road Initiative has been scheduled to connect Asia, Europe and Africa along five routes and six international economic cooperation corridors. For this purpose, an intercontinental Eurasian infrastructure network of railways, highways, ports, airports, underground pipelines of oil and natural gas, telecommunications, other logistics facilities, and various power stations, etc. should be established initially, which, in return, will facilitate and enhance the intercontinental mobility of goods, capital and labor force. Geographical factors and transport infrastructure are among the most relevant determinants that affect international competitiveness, and infrastructure construction is supposed to be the priority and very foundation for road connectivity and unimpeded trade of the Belt and Road Initiative, particularly for those inland or landlocked trade partners since the unit cost of overland transportation is still much higher than that of ocean shipment. Moreover, China will “invest more than \$890 billion into more than 900 projects involving 60 countries, as part of its efforts to bolster the initiative” ([www.ecns.cn](http://www.ecns.cn)). Naturally, we are interested in such a question: what are the possible impacts of a better infrastructure network on bilateral trade between China and its Belt and Road partners?

The rest of this paper will be structured as follows: Section 2 is a brief literature review; Section 3 gives an introduction to our model, samples and data; Section 4 reports the regression results, and the last section concludes our findings.

## **Literature Review**

Since the inclusion of transportation costs into standard trade theories and models, such as the iceberg approach adopted by Samuelson in 1954, more and more theoretical and empirical research papers have focused on trade frictions caused by transport. Even in an era of “the death of distance” as described by Frances Cairncross (1997), transportation and border related trade barriers still account for 65% of the 170% of the tax equivalent of trade costs for industrialized countries (Behrens, et al., 2007). Infrastructure facilities, including hardware and software are, thus, critical for powerful national competitiveness and booming international trade. Conrad and Seitz (1997) have illustrated that infrastructure policy can be used as an instrument for strategic trade policy. Madden and Savage (1998) found that FDI inflows can accelerate economic growth of those countries. Bougheas, et al. (1999) examined the role of infrastructure in a bilateral trade model and found a positive relationship between the level of infrastructure and the volume of trade. Nordas and Piermartini (2004) found that infrastructure facilities such as rail, roads, telecommunications, ports, and airports are important with ports having the biggest impact on trade. Clark, et al. (2004) showed that port efficiency is largely relevant to international trade. Portugal-Perez and Wilson (2012) showed that trade facilitation reforms do improve the export performance of developing countries and there exists complementarity between hard infrastructure and soft infrastructure. Fabling, et al. (2013) found that a fall in the marginal cost of exporting caused by the uptake of new inland ports can raise both the number of exporting firms and the extent of their exports. Bensassi, et al. (2015) showed that logistics is important for the trade flows in goods, and that the number, size and quality of logistics facilities positively influence export flows.

Our contribution in this paper is that we initially and empirically apply an augmented gravity model to the bilateral trade between China and its partners along the Belt and Road routes. Our research covers more than 40 sample countries ranging from East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, West Asia, Central and East Europe, and finally to West Europe, which heralds an intercontinental co-development, co-operation and co-existence. Our benchmark hypothesis, here, is that better infrastructure facilities reduce transaction costs and increase cross border flows of goods and services among countries and regions. For this purpose, we particularly include typical factors of infrastructure as important explanatory variables in our model to highlight the potential impacts of the Belt and Road Initiative on bilateral international trade.

## **Methodology, Model, Variables and Data**

The Gravity Model has long been used to explain empirically the determinants of bilateral trade flows since Tinbergen’s initiative in 1962. The rationale behind the gravity model is that trade is generated by mass or economic size, which is proxied by GDP or GDP per capita (PGDP), and is inhibited by distance, which increases transportation and other transaction costs. It has become a normal practice to add dummy variables or other variables which can explain international trade flows to certain given specifications.

In this paper, we try to augment the gravity model to include infrastructure facilities and estimate the potential impacts of the Belt and Road Initiative on the bilateral trade flows between China and its trade partners. For this purpose, a few more variables for each trade partner are added to the standard gravity model, namely the length of rail lines, container port traffic, investment in telecommunications, internet users. Because inland or landlocked nations and coastal countries do not have some infrastructure facilities in common, we estimate an overall model of all countries and a model for coastal countries separately.

To follow the normal practice of regression with a gravity model, a log-linear transformation is made and all variables, but binary ones, are expressed in natural logarithms. All core variables of a gravity model are included, namely PGDP, bilateral distance, common language, regional or bilateral free trade agreement. Except for bilateral distance and exchange rate in the case of import, all variables are expected to have positive effects on bilateral trade flows. The overall augmented gravity model can be specified as shown in Equation (1):

$$\ln XM_{c,j,t} = \alpha + \beta_1 \ln PGDP_{ct} * PGDP_{jt} + \beta_2 \ln DST_{c,j} + \beta_3 FTA_{c,j} + \beta_4 LNG_{c,j} + \beta_5 \ln EXrate_{jt} + \delta_1 \ln ITnet_{jt} + \delta_2 \ln Itelec_{jt} + \delta_3 \ln Rail_{jt} + \varepsilon_{c,j,t} \quad (1)$$

The separate augmented gravity model for coastal countries can be specified as shown in Eq.(2):

$$\ln XM_{c,j,t} = \alpha + \beta_1 \ln PGDP_{ct} * PGDP_{jt} + \beta_2 \ln DST_{c,j} + \beta_3 FTA_{c,j} + \beta_4 LNG_{c,j} + \beta_5 \ln EXrate_{jt} + \delta_1 \ln ITnet_{jt} + \delta_2 \ln Itelec_{jt} + \delta_3 \ln Rail_{jt} + \theta \ln Port + \varepsilon_{c,j,t} \quad (2)$$

where  $\ln$  denotes natural logarithm;  $XM_{c,j,t}$  denotes country j's export to and import from China c in year t;  $\ln PGDP_{ct}$ ,  $\ln PGDP_{jt}$  denote, respectively, China's and country j's PGDP (in current US\$) in year t;  $\ln DST_{c,j}$ ,  $LNG_{c,j}$ ,  $FTA_{c,j}$  denote, respectively, weighted bilateral distance, common language, and free trade agreement between China and country j;  $\ln Rail_{jt}$ ,  $\ln Itelec_{jt}$ ,  $\ln ITnet_{jt}$ , and  $\ln EXrate_{jt}$  denote, respectively, country j's length of rail lines in kilometers (as a proxy of capital investment stock in transportation), investment in telecommunications (in US dollars), internet users per 100 people, and exchange rates between local currency and US dollars (units of local currency per US dollar);  $\ln Port$  denotes container port traffic (TEU: 20-foot equivalent units).

Our research covers a period from 2001 to 2012 because China became a WTO member in 2001. Afterwards, its export and import with many trade partners began to increase quickly, and data for many sample countries after 2012 are not available. There are 41 sample countries (China excluded), including 6 central Asian countries, 5 south Asian countries, 7 southeast Asian countries, 8 Middle East and west Asian countries, 11 east and central European countries, 3 west European countries, and 1 African country. Data of export and import are from UN Comtrade; Data for bilateral distance, common language and border are from CEPII; Data for free trade agreement between China and its trade partner are from the official website of MOFCOM; Data for other variables are all from the indicator databank of World Bank.

From 2001 to 2014, 41 sample countries together accounted for about 21% to 32% of China's total export, and 25% to 28% of China's total import. From 2001 to 2012, all sample countries' aggregate percentage mean export to and import from China increased from less than 4% to nearly 6% and from about 5% to more than 10%, respectively, though their imports from China grew faster and more steadily. So, generally speaking, the economic tie between sample countries and China has become closer. Relatively speaking, neighboring Asian countries rely more heavily on Chinese market than countries in other regions, and distance has displayed a clear impeding effect on trade flows. Sample countries' export to and import from China are summarized in Figures 1, 2 and 3 as follows:

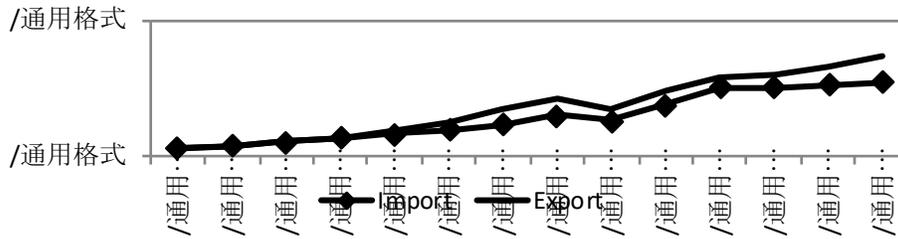


Figure 1. China's Total Import From and Export To Sample Countries (unit: US\$ billion)

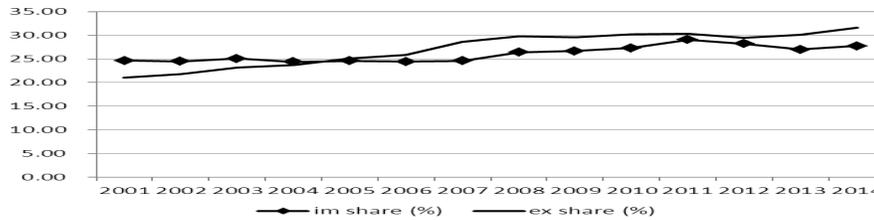


Figure 2. Sample Countries' Share in China's Total Import and Export (unit: %)

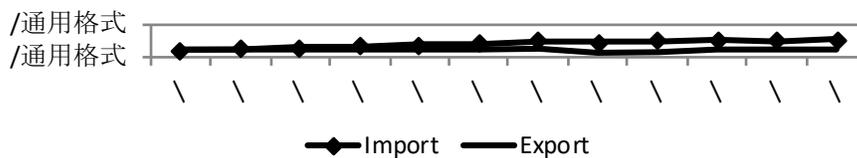


Figure 3. Sample Countries' Aggregate Mean Export To and Import From China (unit: %)

Correlation coefficients show that all explanatory variables and control variables but distance and exchange rate are positively related to sample countries' export and import, and some variables like rail, container port traffic and investment in telecommunication reveal possible multicollinearity.

### Empirical Results

Our models were estimated with Stata12.0. Before regression, we tested the stationarity of our dataset. Stata implements a variety of tests for unit roots or stationarity in panel datasets. Because our panel dataset was unbalanced, we applied Fisher-type tests and the output rejects the null hypothesis of unit root. To eliminate contamination with outliers or influential observations, the upper and lower 1% of all continuous variables were winsorized. To sift or extract the most related independent variables for our model, a backward stepwise regression method was adopted. We started the regression with all potential variables in the model and then successively removed the variable with the smallest F-to-remove statistic (t-value) or the variable less closely related to infrastructure. Detailed results from these regressions are reported separately for import and export in Tables 1 and 2.

Equations (1) to (3) in Table 1 are for all samples, and Equation (4) is for coastal countries. All equations have very good explanatory power given the relatively high values of  $R^2$  for each of them. All independent variables have signs as predicted by theories, though exchange rates are not statistically significant. For infrastructure variables which we care much about, internet users, investment in telecommunications and the length of rails are all positively correlated with import from China and all estimates are statistically significant. When container port traffic is included into the model, its effect is

significantly positive. Although estimated coefficients for free trade agreement, internet users and investment in telecommunications are smaller, the length of rails is more effective, and the overall explanatory power has been improved because of the much larger value of  $R^2$ . A possible explanation is that maritime shipment is still very important for international trade and rails are more efficient in coastal countries because of multimodal transport between maritime shipment and land cargoes.

**Table 1. Regression Estimation Results for Import from China**

Variables	Equation (1)	Equation (2)	Equation (3)	Equation (4)
lnPGDP*PGDP	0.403***	0.402***	0.386***	0.440***
lnDST	-1.506***	-1.499***	-1.554***	-1.443***
FTA	0.900***	0.890***	0.950***	0.318***
LNG	0.522*	0.537**		
lnEXrate	-0.0048			
lnITnet	0.128**	0.131**	0.166***	0.111**
lnItelec	0.473***	0.475***	0.487***	0.141***
lnRail	0.195***	0.194***	0.172***	0.285***
lnPort				0.387***
Constant	16.57***	16.47***	17.10***	16.28***
Observations	287	287	287	189
R-squared	0.7790	0.7790	0.7760	0.9010

\* Significant at 10% level; \*\* Significant at 5% level; \*\*\* Significant at 1% level.

**Table 2. Regression Estimation Results for Export to China**

Variables	Equation (1)	Equation (2)	Equation (3)	Equation (4)
lnPGDP*PGDP	0.525***	0.683***	0.716***	0.760***
lnDST	-2.589***	-2.493***	-2.753***	-1.636***
FTA	0.708**	0.742**		
LNG	2.925***	3.140***	3.441***	2.240***
lnEXrate	0.201***	0.188***	0.210***	0.233***
lnITnet	0.211*			
lnItelec	0.531***	0.526***	0.567***	0.173**
lnRail	0.799***	0.818***	0.757***	0.780***
lnPort				0.599***
Constant	15.02***	12.14***	13.56***	2.6870
Observations	287	287	287	189
R-squared	0.7490	0.7460	0.7410	0.8230

\* Significant at 10% level; \*\* Significant at 5% level; \*\*\* Significant at 1% level.

Our estimation for export meets the expectation much better. Equations (1) to (3) in Table 2 are for all samples, and Equation (4) is for coastal countries. Again, all equations have very good explanatory power. Except the less significant variable of internet users, all the other explanatory variables have the expected signs and are statistically significant. Common language contributes positively to export to China. The positive correlation between exchange rates and export to China is statistically significant, and investment in telecommunications, length of rails and container port traffic are more important in terms of their estimated coefficients.

So far, estimation results of our models have revealed and supported findings in literature about the positive contribution of infrastructure to trade flows. To further enhance the accuracy of our estimation and to test the robustness of our model estimation, we apply robust regression (RR) rather than pooled

OLS, and seemingly unrelated regression (SUR) to our equations. In all cases, we get highly consistent estimation results, which verify the robustness of our regression models.

### Conclusion

Our research in this paper was intended to enlighten quantitatively the potential impacts of China's Belt and Road Initiative on the trade relations with its partners along the Belt and Road routes. Since construction of infrastructure such as railways, ports, telecommunications and power stations, etc. is de facto the priority of the Initiative, which in turn, reduces cross-border trade impediments and transaction costs, we focus on the contribution of infrastructure facilities to the import from and export to China. The regression of an augmented gravity model shows that infrastructure facilities contribute positively and significantly to import and export, and the contribution to export is even larger than that to import. When container port facility is included, the overall contribution is generally more significant.

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# The Induction of Chinese Micro-Business

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*[Abstract] Micro-business is a new product under the mobile Internet with Chinese characteristics, which is necessary to show the world to know China better. Relying on the background of the Internet, micro-business has gradually infiltrated into all aspects of social life. This is in line with the trend of the times of “mass entrepreneurship and mass innovation”. The development of micro-business is full of ups and downs. At present, there is no derivative legislation for micro-business, so it has no exact official definition.*

*[Keywords] Chinese characteristics; micro-business development; micro-business value; micro-business definition*

## Introduction

Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Central Asia and Southeast Asia in September and October of 2013, and he raised the initiative of jointly building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, respectively (Zhao, 2016). The common construction of the Belt and Road, which conforms to the trend of world multipolarization, economic globalization and cultural diversity, is designed to promote orderly flow of economic factors, efficient allocation of resources, deep market integration and coordination of economic policies among countries, thus realizing the regional cooperation at a high and deep level. The Belt and Road initiative puts forward new requirements and higher standards for Chinese foreign propaganda work which plays an important role in rising China’s international image and improving China’s international status.

With the development of the Internet, Chinese people have come into the information age. Living in a life pace of making every second count urges people to want every aspect of life without taking much time. Gradually, many new ideas and new platforms for matching this kind of lifestyle have come into existence in all fields of society, such as the micro-blog, micro-media, micro-film, micro-fiction, micro-advertisement, micro-investment, micro-management, micro-payment, and micro-business, etc. Relying on the background of the Internet, micro-business has gradually infiltrated into all aspects of social life. This is in line with the trend of the times of “mass entrepreneurship and mass innovation”.

Some papers about micro-business can be found, but they are written in Chinese and just focus on some cases of micro-business. Micro-business is a new product under the mobile Internet with Chinese characteristics, which is necessary to show the world to know China better. Three aspects are discussed here: one is from its development; one is from its value; one is from its definition.

## The Development of Micro-Business

WeChat is a Tencent’s social software. It can achieve the perfect combination of voice chatting, video watching, photo sharing and language communication. It can support multiplayer in

chatting online at the same time. WeChat has various ways of communication to meet the needs of different groups of people. Unlike previous SMS and MMS, this chat software is completely free, and the Internet traffic cost is charged by the operator. WeChat can copy friend lists from QQ or mobile phone address lists and add friends by two-dimensional code scanning or shaking the mobile phone to identify nearby people. A similar circle of friends accumulates a large number of potential customers and this was the incubation period of micro-business.

The origin of micro-business was first in WeChat circle of friends, beginning with second-hand transactions between friends (Li, 2014). For example, someone bought a shirt from the Taobao platform and found it didn't fit and then wanted to sell it. So, the detailed information about the shirt was showed to the circle of friends. When friends browsed the circle of friends, they got the shirt information, and if they were interested in it, they contacted the seller, and finally two people reached a deal. This was the embryonic stage of micro-business.

In early 2013, overseas purchasing became a wonderful scene in the circle of friends. For example, someone travelled abroad and took the opportunity to purchase some overseas goods, and they shared the information with their circle of friends. Overseas students noticed this trend and joined in and then became the backbone of international purchasing. They mainly purchased milk powder, skin care products and electronic products for the needs of relatives and friends. People could get cheap and reliable overseas goods without going abroad, which made overseas purchasing popular in the circle of friends. The micro-business gradually took shape.

In 2014, huge business opportunities in the circle of friends were gradually excavated. People first obtained more potential consumers by constantly adding friends, and then released the processed product images and profiles to their circle of friends to attract their attention. Because WeChat friends were familiar with each other and they trusted each other, it was very easy to facilitate the completion of the transaction. This transaction mode was through the wholesale and retail sectors of micro-business and the hierarchical agency model was formed in the course of time.

During the Spring Festival in 2015, WeChat launched a refreshing event with a number of well-known e-commerce companies – shaking red envelopes. The event was a national revelry with an accumulated donation of 500 million yuan (Zhu,2016). After the Spring Festival, the commercialization of WeChat became more and more obvious, and it began to promote advertising services in the circle of friends, all of which were related to micro-business. Micro-business quickly came into the public's view and became a hot topic. 2015 could be called “the blowout year” of the micro-business. In this year, the total turnover of the year was as high as 200 billion yuan (Jiao, 2017).

In 2016, there was a rejuvenation of micro-business, focusing on the brand building of products with the trend of being professional, formal and mature. The landmark event of this stage was “the First Global Micro-business Festival-Stars of Micro-entrepreneurship Celebration Gala”, which was sponsored by the Micro-business Professional Committee of China Society of Commercial Economics. From then on, May 3 was set as the Micro-business Day. The micro-business culture continued to ferment and the development tended to be stable. In 2016, the number of micro-business practitioners reached nearly 30 million and the sales of micro-business reached 350 billion yuan (Jiao, 2017).

With the continuous development of the market, the micro-business community has been growing and has received renewed attention. A Micro-Business University and related courses have been established in China. Many brands have held micro-business summits, attracting the attention of the media. CCTV also began to justify micro-business. In 2017, the 500 billion yuan market was released and a growth rate of more than 50% was maintained (Jiao, 2017). It is estimated that the amount of micro-business transactions will reach about 750 billion yuan in 2018 and nearly 1 trillion yuan in 2019 (Jiao, 2017).

### **The Value of Micro-business**

“Government Work Report of 2015” put forward the concept of “Internet+” and clearly pointed out that work arrangements on “Internet+” should be made as soon as possible. The so-called “Internet+”, which includes the Internet itself as well as all aspects of the social economy, is a profound fusion of the Internet with the traditional industries (Xue & Li, 2015). The purpose of the concept of “Internet+” is that each network can be highly integrated with the traditional industries to rebuild and develop new formats. The “+” symbolizes combining, updating and reforming. “Internet+” is not only an innovation of ideology but also an innovation of economic development mode. The government has made new adjustments to the economy and “the new normal” has entered the public’s view as a new concept of managing state affairs. With the formation of a new pattern of economic development, “Internet+” has become an annual hot word. Mr. Ma Huateng, the CEO of Tencent, first talked about micro-business during National People’s Congress and Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference in 2015. He said, “Micro-store as well as micro-business is very interesting, and this is just the beginning and we hope that more partners can do it” (Ma, 2015). At present, micro-business, relying on the background of the Internet, has gradually infiltrated into all aspects of social life such as agriculture, tourism, finance, and beauty, etc. This is in line with the trend of the times of “mass entrepreneurship and mass innovation”.

### ***The Transmission Mode of the Micro-Business***

The initial business mode of micro-business is C2C, that is, the agency mode of the layers of distribution (Zhou, 2015). Brand marketers look for a general agent through the investment conference and new product launches while a general agent gets the product agency rights by paying a certain amount of agency fees and then develops the sub-agents at different levels. This vertical mode of agency layered with sub-levels is the most common business mode for micro-business.

From the beginning of 2015, the single-player mode of micro-business has become increasingly diminutive. The trend of working as a team and group is intensifying. B2C brand e-commerce companies accelerated the layout of the micro-business sector. B2C e-commerce mode has become the dominant mode of micro-business because it can provide users with high-quality and more accurate online shopping experience. This B2C mode tends to build a sound marketing management platform, unifying the marketing system, marketing channels and marketing plans together. Sellers get profits through commission. This relatively mature commercial operation system is the most promising development mode of micro-business.

The market expansion makes micro-business go from online to offline and from behind the scenes to the stage. This O2O mode of combining online and offline can better take advantage of

each other and give full play to its own advantages. The problem of a lack of offline customer sources can be solved online while the problem of lack of online experience can be solved offline. More importantly, this combination can increase consumers' awareness of micro-business and discourage consumers' concerns about micro-business, so as to establish a relationship of mutual trust between each other.

Micro-business development mode has been in constant change. From the initial self-employed to the subsequent team management until today's platform management, micro-business has been struggling to change all the time to find the best way of development. The emergence of a platform helps to systematically solve a lot of difficulties, such as stockpiling, product quality assurance, after-sales service issues, and big data support problems, etc.

### ***The Transmission Characteristics of the Micro-Business***

Compared to the traditional marketing channels, the speed of product information release in the micro-business is very fast and convenient (Lu, 2015). Only a few simple steps are required: to take pictures of all the details of the product, attach a simple product description, and publish it through social media such as a micro-blog, WeChat, or QQ, etc. The initial stage of product sales of the micro-business is effortlessly completed. To publish the advertisement through social media can let its connected audience receive the information at the moment of releasing the information. There is no need to spend high advertising costs and it only consumes some network traffic and results in a small amount of network traffic costs. This kind of marketing method to utilize social media for micro-business is much cheaper than other types of marketing.

Social media such as WeChat and QQ can copy friend lists from mobile phone address lists and users in the circle of friends are mostly friends in real life. So, the circle of friends develops according to the actual life circle. When the stable and reliable group relationships that have been built up in real life are transferred to online activities, the released messages are more easily accepted by others and people are more willing to share. It is this mode of communication that gives birth to a good soil for the development of micro-business. The dynamic sharing in the circle of friends can prompt the response of friends who share common interests. WeChat friends propagandize messages through praising, commenting and sharing. This achieves the maximum brand communication and interpersonal communication. As long as the product quality is good enough, the product is easy to win the favor of the majority of friends and become the good brand from mouth to mouth. On the basis of network technology, micro-business practitioners are more convenient and more interactive with consumers' information feedback.

### ***The Transmission Effectiveness of the Micro-Business***

The development of any industry will extend the relevant industry chain after the formation of the scale of agglomeration and thus, develop an industrialized operation. Through a platform entry, the micro-business, in fact, links up all aspects of upstream production and downstream consumption of related industries. Relying on the "net product" as a result of the Internet economy, network marketing, packaging and logistics will grow into a huge industry when the micro-business sector grows, and then the horizontal fields of industrial consumption will develop. In the circle of friends, micro-business practitioners are always showing the merits of certain products and gradually cultivating a huge consumer base. More and more people will buy goods through micro-business practitioners, which is due to the trust of friends and the curiosity

about micro-business. In addition, when the pace of life is now quickening, many people will make reasonable use of time and income. Shopping through micro-business practitioners is becoming a new trend. Some brands of investment will also play the theme of investment conference for the micro-business, and the presence of three or four hundred people are all micro-business practitioners. In fact, three to five hundred people's investment associations are nothing for the micro-business sector and thousands of people's investment associations will be found everywhere (Weng & Yan, 2015). In addition to a large number of people, brand marketers also invite celebrities to the platform and even make the brand advertising in the CCTV Spring Festival Gala. In order to provide consumers with more thoughtful services, micro-business practitioners integrate products, transport, logistics and distribution. All the worries of the buyers can be solved, and full services will be the ultimate.

Micro-business provides some traditional enterprises with business transformation opportunities and a new business model. Micro-business channels are different from traditional channels. The regional protection of traditional channels is very strict, and there is no breakthrough in the number of stores and resources. But micro-business is not the same. Each person is equivalent to a shop and a point of sale. In the era of mobile Internet, enterprise transformation requires more courage and trials. It is necessary to break the inertia thinking of success in the past and try to discover new ideas. In the tidal wave of "Internet +", many Chinese domestic enterprises have begun to transform, taking the route of joint operation online and offline. Micro-business provides grassroots entrepreneurs who just have weaker financial resources with a platform for entrepreneurship and prosperity and creates new avenues for realizing one's own values and ideals. Micro-business practitioners do not need to invest too much time and effort. It is very suitable for people to use the debris time to do so. They can choose their own favorite products for sale, not only to meet personal preferences and add fun to life, but also to win the economic benefits and have more revenue to buy other products, which gives impetus to the consumption of other industries.

### **The Definition of Micro-business**

Some people think that the word "micro" for micro-business is not the meaning in the word "WeChat", but refers to the fragmentation of the mobile Internet in units of minutes, which achieves a timely and effective communication within a short time. Some people think that the word "micro" is not tiny, but meticulous and pervasive, which precisely coincides with the contemporary Internet thinking. For example, the Sibiu Group Company has used "OBNO" to interpret micro-business. That is, every tiny individual using the mobile Internet to market products to numerous others.

Some people believe that micro-business practitioners are actually the persons who use acquaintances to do business on social media online, relying on the "acquaintance economy" and WeChat as the main tool. This understanding makes sense, but not comprehensive. In fact, all social applications can be used for micro-business and the battlefield for micro-business has extended to the QQ space, micro-blog, momo and other social networking platforms. However, since WeChat is an APP that is used by a larger number of people, WeChat has become the main front for micro-business transactions.

Anyhow, the micro-business units are small, which can be individuals and can also be small groups. These units use social platforms to build their social relations and then develop the required channels for transaction information. They no longer simply put the goods on the shelves for sale, but to meet the trend of the development of the Internet and show the goods in the circle of friends in social networking platforms. In this way, the limitation of time and area has been removed and the products can be marketed anytime and anywhere.

At present, there is no derivative legislation for micro-business, so it has no exact official definition. It is generally agreed in the business circle that micro-business is a people-centered new business, which is based on the mobile Internet space and with the help of social software as a tool and social interaction as a link. Micro-business practitioners refer to “consumer+disseminator+server+entrepreneur”.

### **Conclusion**

Micro-business is a new product under the mobile Internet with Chinese characteristics, which is necessary to be shown for the world to know China better. As a new marketing model, micro-business achieves a perfect integration of social platforms and business, and its business model is to carry out publicity with the popular open platforms. On the basis of the subject, the business model can be mainly divided into two kinds, one is to use the WeChat public accounts for distribution, and it is called B2C micro-business for short, which is very similar to the Tmall platform; the other is to use the “circle of friends” in the social software Wechat for distribution, and it is called C2C micro-business for short, which is very similar to the Taobao platform. The development of micro-business is full of ups and downs. At present, there is no derivative legislation for micro-business, so it has no exact official definition.

### **Acknowledgement**

This paper was funded by the Key Program of the English Language and Literature of Guangdong Province, 2016.

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# Gathering Online Customer Reviews to Improve Business Negotiations Based on a Topic Modelling Approach

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**[Abstract]** *Collecting customer concerns in online comments to enhance business negotiations has attracted worldwide attention over the past two decades. Through topic modelling and sentiment analysis of 2,076 comments on Jinri Toutiao from the major app stores in China, this study concludes three major customer negative concerns and problems with the app: massive advertisements, malicious contents, and end-user device accessibility issues. Today, users exhibit strong resistant behaviors due to numerous reasons and new media platforms empower and motivate them to seek resistance and emancipation through consumption, with the help of the efficient and anonymous Internet, which helps business owners to better understand responses of users.*

**[Keywords]** *customer concerns; business negotiation; topic modelling; Jinri Toutiao*

## Introduction

Negotiations between business owners and customers under online scenarios have grown exponentially with web-based services. This paper first reviews the literature on business negotiation, identifies and then describes customers' roles in business negotiation. Previous studies have covered numerous aspects including classification, framework, and methods, as well as differences among negotiating parties. But news applications, especially Chinese ones have few discussions, and data analysis with topic modeling and sentiment analysis are seldom applied.

Due to the availability and popularity of opinion-rich resources such as online reviews from different app stores, new opportunities and challenges arise for people to seek out customer concerns and opinions. Negotiation within electronic commerce introduces a new business paradigm (Beam, & Segev, 1997). This paper focuses on Jinri Toutiao, one of the most popular news applications in China, with an estimation of 120 million daily active users. It generally uses various means to send customized contents to its users.

Then, with the sudden eruption of activity in the area of topic modeling (Latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA)) and sentiment analysis, this study has been able to utilize these data mining techniques to analyze 2,076 collected comments from Toutiao and generate ten topics from the users' comments to sort out their general problems and concerns, by which online businesses can be conducted more effectively and efficiently, as the consumers' opinions are better understood.

Finally, it discusses the strong user resistance that the comments expose, especially with the aid of diverse new media platforms, which empower them to seek resistance and emancipation through consumption.

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## Literature Review

Business negotiation refers to numerous aspects, such as complaining, bargaining, and business-contract making. It provides a two-way channel between businesses and customers to communicate and benefit from each other. According to Shell (1991), “when skilfully executed, the bargaining exchange enables the parties to benefit from their experience with each other and helps them to achieve satisfaction with a particular outcome.” This indicates the importance of mutual understanding and satisfaction between vendors and clients in business negotiations. Ratings and reviews on a product are valuable sources to understand users’ concerns and to increase app engagement and user retention. Thus, in this article, negotiation refers to under online scenarios, customers (platform users) can express their expectations and user experience, and negotiate with business owners about their preference, needs, concerns and rights.

Literature on business negotiation has adopted theoretical perspectives varying from classification and framework of negotiation (Hobson, 1999) to methods of application (Lodder, & Zelznikow, 2005), and differences among negotiating parties. Users’ power (Denegri-Knott, Zwick, & Schroeder, 2013) and young consumers (Livingstone, 2008) have been studied, as well. New focuses are on disputes (Lodder & Zelznikow, 2005), support systems (Rule, 2003), and e-commerce and online business negotiations (Turel & Yuan, 2007).

Disputes are a fact of life in businesses (Rule, 2003). Online user comments reveal complaints, unsatisfied needs, and other dispute information. Therefore, it is necessary to have a web-based negotiation, an analysis system, and support services as well (Turel & Yuan, 2007).

User power has also been examined (Denegri-Knott, et al., 2013). Commercial, political, and cultural influences contribute to the user power during online business negotiations. Hall stated three ways of audience decoding, namely: dominant decoding, counter-decoding, and negotiated decoding, respectively (2001). In this study, attention has been drawn to the customers’ comments, which can be classified as user concerns of decoding.

Traditional studies suggest consumers as powerless dupes dominated by the market and manipulated by business parts. Yet, to further extend the study of Hall, recent scholars have considered consumers as active agents, and they have provided an autonomy concept in their cultural studies, which emphasize consumers as powerful actors with creativity and autonomy to conduct consumption as well as production (Fiske, 2010; O’Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Montgomery, & Fiske, 1994). On the other hand, scholars from the Frankfurt School suggest mass consumption and marketing as oppressive, and postmodern consumer researchers tend to theorize consumption as resistance and emancipation (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Fiske, 2010). In the cultural power model studies, scholars critique that the market plays a key role as a politically oppressive and culturally authoritarian force, and usually turns active consumers into passive users (Murray, & Ozanne, 1991). However, Fiske (2010) considered the consumers as active users and consumption as a set of resistance, gaining pleasure from counteract activities. Meanwhile, other researchers also have influential consumer studies, which describe users with consumption activities as active, creative units (Dholakia & Firat, 2003; Fuat, Firat, Dholakia, & Venkatesh, 1995).

Given the recent explosion of online user-generated contents, users take part in the consumption activities as well as production process. Some scholars suppose these phenomena as “presumption” (Ritzer, & Jurgenson, 2010) and these brought further issues at the same time. For instance, users participate in sharing information, which in turn unconsciously ignore the copyright issues.

## Methodology

### ***Data Collection***

The data are retrieved from the Tencent Faight platform (<http://fsight.qq.com/>), which contains more than a million application data. The reason for selecting this platform for data collection was due to its data volume, professionalism, and timely updates. In addition, the platform data basically covers the mainstream Bulletin Board System community, including Baidu Post forum, major app stores for Android, and the App store (Apple), etc. Thus, this article uses it for the user-comment collection.

After a preliminary observation on the data collection, we found that the information on the Baidu Post forum and other social forums under the Toutiao app was cluttered and only contained few related information. Therefore, this study only applies to the following application stores: App Store, 360 Mobile Assistant, Wandoujia, the Vivo app store, the Mi app store, and Yingyongbao. Via these platforms, we gathered 12,290 comments from Toutiao from October 10, 2017 to January 10, 2018.

Due to a copious number of repeated comments and unrelated ads, we conducted data cleaning process to narrow them down, including deleting 10214 repeated comments, and manually selecting 288 unrelated ads to delete. Finally, 2,076 comments about the Toutiao App published from October 10, 2017 to January 10, 2018 were boiled down.

### ***LDA (Latent Dirichlet allocation) Topic Modelling***

The LDA topic model could discover topics from text data, for example academic concerns (Jiang, Qiang, & Lin, 2016). It is a three-level hierarchical Bayesian model, with the basic assumption that a document is a combination of words belonging to different topics (Blei, Ng, & Jordan, 2003). And it suggests that an article can have multiple topics, and the words in that article reflect the exact set of topics it addresses. Using Gibbs Sampling can discover topics (Griffiths, & Steyvers, 2004). Widespread studies have been accomplished on a more efficient solution to parameter optimization (Hoffman, Bach, & Blei, 2010).

### ***Sentiment Analysis***

Sentiment analysis is the process of reasoning given texts to learn about certain attitude. The unexpected and sudden occurrence of activity in the area of sentiment analysis normally deals with computational treatment of sentiment, which directly copes with opinions as a first-class object (Pang, & Lee, 2008). The Tencent Wenzhi system ([nlp.qq.com](http://nlp.qq.com)) is a commercial platform for machine learning on text datasets. Due to its professional performances, this study selected the sentiment analysis API (Application Programming Interface) method to calculate its sentiment score for each comment on a scale from 0 to 1, where 0 represents the most negative, 1 represents the most positive, and 0.5 represents a neutral position.

### ***Processing***

Before applying the LDA model and sentiment analysis, the collected data needed segmentation with python package Jieba (Peng, Liou, Chang, & Lee, 2015; Zhang, Zhao, & LeCun, 2015). Based on calculation of the words' information entropy and term frequency, a new dictionary was built and with new words added, such as "Toutiao", and "Penzi". Then common stop words, which don't carry much information, were removed. Examples are "one", "of", "and", "or", and a document-term matrix (DTM), satisfying the input requirements based on Inverse Document Frequencies (TF-IDFs transformation) was built. This can help adding weights to rare terms appearing in most documents and to deduct weights for frequent terms, so as to seek terms that represent uniqueness of the documents.

## Result

With the LDA topic model and sentiment analysis, we can answer the following questions by choosing suitable parameters and proper operations:

1. What is the sentiment analysis for different data sources?
2. Are customers satisfied when leaving a comment?
3. What main topics do the texts reveal?
4. For each topic, what are the key words to represent the topic?

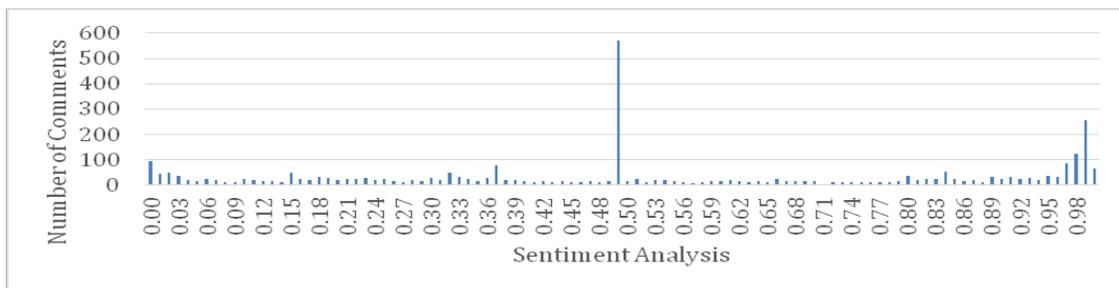
To answer the first question about the sentiment revealed, Table 1 lists the sentiment analysis score for comments in different data sources, given that a score is a constant number between zero and one, where zero represents the most negative, and one represent the most positive.

**Table 1. Comments Sentiment Analysis Score**

Data Source	Number of Comments	Average of Sentiment Score
360 Mobile Assistant	79	0.51
App Store	138	0.44
Vivo app	485	0.58
Wandoujia	683	0.57
Mi app store	538	0.53
Yingyongbao	150	0.53
Total	2076	0.55

The data sources above display a slight positive sentiment comments, indicating the app is one of the most popular, satisfying the majority of their users on an average basis. Among all, Vivo has obtained the most positive response and the app store has the most negative response.

To answer Question 2, for sentiment analysis distribution of all users in Figure 1, a general idea was formed that most users remain in an average state during their emotional release. Meanwhile, for extremely supporting and unfavorable views, the users that appeared at both ends of the graph suggest that upset users and pleasant users leave a lot of comments. Business owners should pay attention to both end users, especially the unsatisfied ones with complaints. Satisfied users affirm excellent user experience which need to maintain and continue in business negotiation. The opinions of unsatisfied users need to be resolved as soon as possible as well.



**Figure 1. Score and Number of Sentiment analysis for comments**

To answer the third and the fourth questions, we needed to set a parameter on the number of topics. Multiple studies are on the choice of the LDA topic number and the explanations of each topic (Sievert & Shirley, 2014). If we only considered the statistical measures, the result might not be interpretable by

humans (Grimmer & Stewart, 2013). Therefore, by combining both statistical measures and manual interpretation, we chose ten topics to analyze, and by programming with Python 3.6.1, we looked for ten topics and their keywords. To elaborate the topics, a topic name was generated based on the given keywords, which can be found in Table 2. The ten topics expose basic concerns of the users leaving comments, and we categorized them into four main groups as follows:

**Table 2. Topic Classification and Key Words**

Classification Groups	Topic names	Keywords	Proportion
1. Praise and support	Topic 6:High-quality content	Article, good to read, title, super, information	8.3%
	Topic 7:High user retention	Toutiao, five-star, short, video, news	13.3%
	Topic 9:Rich content	Content, version, too good, good quality, hug	7.7%
2. Massive Ads	Topic 3:Advertisement issue	Ads, more and more, platform, push	8.9%
3. Malicious content	Topic 10:Video problem	Video, download, illegal, real, concern	13.3%
	Topic 4:Malicious comments	News, comments, Malicious, all, don't want	10.1%
	Topic 5:Redundant comments	Repeat, garbage, Install, auto	9.3%
4. End-userdevice accessibility issues	Topic 10: Login issue	Login, not good, uninstall, QQ, Weibo	11.2%
	Topic 2:Content loading issue	Refresh, app, loading, platform, support	7.1%
	Topic 8:Replay issue	Update, download, Phone, Replay, disgusting	10.8%

Positive classification counts for 29.3%, praising the Toutiao app for having a high-quality content, high user retention, and rich content. The three negative-comment categories are calculated among the data for user concerns are:

1. Massive advertisements are mentioned by many users stating that there are an increasing number of ads present in the software, which seriously affect the user experience.
2. Malicious content issue is firstly about articles and video contents with plagiarism problems. For instance, some users report that there is plagiarism in short videos and news contents, infringing the intellectual property rights and leaving users an unfavorable experience. Secondly, the forum issues of Toutiao are being complained by its users to be having fewer interactions, less interesting information, and even inappropriate comments.
3. End-user device accessible problems include unstable content loading, replay after upgrading, and log-in issues.

## Discussion

With the topic model and sentiment analysis, we were able to organize, to conclude, and to offer insights to better understand user concerns. This study serves as a guide for businessmen to enhance their decision-making at online businesses. A number of studies have proven that topic modelling and other text mining techniques can be of great help to deal with large-scale textual data (Roberts, et al., 2014), and when mutual understanding is established, more desirable business negotiations can be attained.

Nowadays, users often exhibit strong resistance, which helps business owners to better understand the true response of users. They act as active participants to counteract malicious contents, advertisements, and other poor user experiences, which in turn obtains satisfaction from freedom of speech and counteract activities. Extremely unfavorable views appearing with really negative sentiment scores suggest that upset users leave a lot of comments, which should call attention to business owners. For example, a user stated, "It's a shameful news app! After upgrading, all I have been provided are endless advertisements!" complaining about the advertisement issue, and its sentiment score was 0.15.

New media platforms also enable active customers to seek resistance and emancipation through consumption which business users should pay attention to. Anonymity and emotional expressions with low cost in online user reviews encourage consumers to be more motivated while complaining about their unsatisfactory user experiences, as well as calling for support and counteract advertisements or malicious contents including infringements, vulgarization, and violent pornography.

### Conclusion

Topic modelling and sentiment analysis organize and offer insights to understand online user reviews. Ten topics were collected from 2,076 comments on the Toutiao app from major app stores in China, and the ten topics can be categorized into four major customer concerns, three of which are negative, namely: massive advertisements, malicious contents, and end-user device accessibility issues. This, in turn, provides solutions for business owners to provide greater services to their clients. Beyond the analysis of the consumer comments during online business negotiations, we have also witnessed strong user resistance, and the new media platforms allow them to seek resistance and emancipation via consumption with the aid of diverse new media platforms, where anonymity and expressions with low cost enable consumers with more motivation and support.

### Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the National Social Science Foundation of China, under Grant No. 18CXW021; and Provincial Natural Science Foundation of Guangdong China, under Grant No. 2017A030310173; and Guangzhou Philosophy and Sociology Science Foundation during the Thirteen Five-year Plan Period, under Grant No. 2017GZQN04.

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# The Trading History of the French East India Company in China: A Global Perspective

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*[Abstract] Recent studies show that China had been a member of globalization even before the Opium War and had played a very important role in global economy. In the 18th century, the trading between France East India Company and China was an important knot of the early economic global network. From the perspective of history and globalization, this article refers to the historical situations of East India Company trading in China and reflects the current conditions and future development of France-China exchange and cross-bounder trading. This may produce more knowledge related to the economic history of China's Qing Dynasty and also provide with theoretical lens of examining the China-related issues of transnational cultural exchange and trading.*

*[Keywords] global history view; France East India Company; transnational commercial trade*

## Introduction

Recent studies showed that China's economy entered globalization long before the Opium War. Guangzhou, as China's largest overseas import and export trade port in the 18th century, played a vital role in China's economic globalization. During the 18th century, hundreds of vessels came to Huangpu Port in Guangzhou each year because French East India Company was active in trading in China. The transaction was very prosperous in that time thanks to Guangzhou's excellent port conditions and Qing government policy. These promoted not only the early economic development between China and France, but also the formation of a global economic and political order in the 18th century. Research on this period of economic and trade history has important reference significance to major issues such as inter-regional economic cooperation and international seaborne competition in Guangzhou and even China is now facing. However, in this field, most Chinese scholars pay more attention to the trade of East India companies such as Britain and the Netherlands in China and ignore the role of the French East India Company in the Sino-foreign trade during that period. According to the core concepts of global history, this paper uses, for reference, the opinions of some scholars and analyzes the trade data of the French East India Company based on some undisclosed original archives, tries to present the trade relations between China and France in the 18th century, and looks into the current situation of cross-cultural commercial trade and the future development in the context of globalization under the overview of the commercial trade between China and France in this period.

## Global History View and Literature Review

Global history, as a new concept of history, is aimed at breaking the "Western centralism" formed since the 19th century, that is, with the gist of ideology or nationalism, the historical process is regarded as a one-way westernization process. One of the global turn indications of western historiography is spatial turn, which is reflected in the development of historical research across the boundaries, the trend of regional, mainland and so on. The trend inevitably affects economic history research. In recent years, some historians have turned the study of changes in economic development in the western region into the role of the eastern

countries in the history of world economic development. In *The Great Divergence*, Kenneth Pomeranz (2001) put China in the global context in the Ming and Qing dynasties. On the basis of the global paradigm against European centralism and through the comparison of Chinese and Western economies, Centralism was criticized. Kenneth Pomeranz argued that before the start of Western industrialization, the European economic situation was not that strong, and China was the economic center of the world. This view caused great controversy. Global historians Patrick Manning (2008) and Jerry Bentley (2009) pointed out that global history should be defined as a worldwide interactive study. “Interaction” has become a central concept of global history. The reason why global historians use “interaction” as the basis for building world history is because they think “interaction” is the way in which human social organizations exist. They believe that any human social organization, which are not closed and isolated, must exist in the interaction with the outside world. In this way, they will gradually form a correlative system or network in which they interact with each other (Liu, 2009; Liu, 2011). The ensuing view is that China has inevitably been involved in globalization since the late 16th or early 17th century. Some Chinese scholars hold the view that China is not isolated and not meet traditional concept “China-centered approach”. Historically, China has always been going its own way (Li, 2010). It is of great significance to study China in the wave of early globalization from a new perspective. Therefore, the analysis of the French East India Company’s trade in China in the framework of global history will help to make a comprehensive study of the history of Chinese economy in Qing Dynasty.

The research in related fields is highly valued by academics at home and abroad. With abundant literature, western scholars have been particularly concerned with them. In 1883, Henri Cordier collected trade archives of French-Indian companies in China from French National Archives, Overseas and Colonial Archives, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives, and then published “*La France en Chine au dix-huitième siècle*”, in which the file titles are “East India, China, and Cochin.” There are three volumes of documents on China, most of which are documents from the East India Company and the Guangzhou Quarter from October 1770 to September 1814; the remaining three volumes refer to the trade in Cochin, Peru and Siam. Cordier’s collection and arrangement laid a solid foundation for later researchers. In 1964, Louis Dermigny published “*La Chine et l’Occident: Le Commerce à Canton au XVIIIe siècle, 1719-1833*”. Dermigny’s book is informative, which analyzed and studied French East India Company’s trade with China in all aspects by using the original literature. In 2005, Philippe Haudrère published the “*La Compagnie Française des Indes au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*”, which also covered the trade of French East India company in China, and it allows readers to have a macroscopic background understanding of Sino-French trade in the 18th century. Other scholars like Paul Pelliot introduced the origins, history and trade of the *l’Amphitrite*, the first French merchant ship to China in 1698. From the works of the above western scholars, most studied the trade activities of French East India company in China from the perspective of “overseas expansion.” The data of the trading ships, the number of people, the trade volume and the route are certainly authority and of important reference value in above-mentioned relevant works.

Compared with western scholars’ advantages in language and foreign literature collection, Chinese scholars have made use of Chinese literature. Huang Qichen (2003) used Chinese literature to discuss the policy, development status and control system of overseas trade in the early Qing dynasty. Zhao Chunchen (2012) affirmed the historical significance of the thirteen-hong of Canton. Based on China’s position, the above-mentioned scholars focused on analyzing the general situation of Sino-foreign trade in the Qing dynasty and making up for the deficiencies of western scholars to a certain extent. In addition, some Chinese scholars who are well versed in foreign languages such as Geng Sheng (2002), Kang Bo (2009), Yan Cheng

(2012), used published literature and monographs to introduce and summarize the trade of French East India Company in Guangzhou.

### **French East India Company's Trade in China**

China and France are far apart, but there was an extremely frequent trade relationship in the nearly 100 years of the eighteenth century. In early economic globalization, since the maiden flight of the *l'Amphitrite* in 1698 to the end of the 18th century, China was involved in this historical process owing to the economic activities of the French East India Company in China (Xie, 2017).

Into the 17th century, with gradually increasing national strength, the French Bourbon rulers strongly restored peace during their reign and revitalized the trade. Later, after the bishop Richelieu and Ma Zaran's vigorously rectification, France's authoritarian monarchy reached its heyday of the Louis XIV progenitor period. Then, France began to vigorously expand overseas trade, including establishing a huge fleet and merchant fleet establishing a trading company and promoting the development of capitalist industry and commerce under the command of the king. Then the French East India Company came into being. At that time, France enjoyed strong national power and was a promoter of the globalization process. The first French company with patent rights to trade in India was founded in 1604. As the goods traded in the first two voyages were not taxed, the company got high profits and soon won a 15-year franchise for trade with India. In 1664, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, succeeding Nicolas Fouquet as Louis XIV's finance minister, founded La Compagnie des Indes orientales ou La Compagnie française pour le commerce des Indes Orientales (French East India Company). With the authorization of King Louis XIV, the company enjoyed a 50-year trade concession from Cape of Good Hope in South Africa throughout India, the whole East China Sea and the South China Sea. And its Latin aphorism "Floreboquocumqueferar" (*everywhere he went was prosperity*) was printed on the company badge. This was a commercial organization that aimed to compete with Britain and the Netherlands for the benefit of India.

Although the East India company once annexed a Chinese commercial company in French, it had not sent a vessel to China for trade for 30 years since its establishment in 1664. It was not until 1698 that the East India Company started its trial trade with China. In that year, the French businessman Jourdan struggled so hard that he got a permit from the East India Company to send merchant ships to China if the profits of 5% of the goods were to be turned over (Morellet, 1769). Paul Pelliot looked at the list of *l'Amphitrite*, the list of officers in the Royal Navy, and the letter from P. de Visdelou to Jourdan in 1699, suggested that Jourdan may have surnamed De Groucé; the author also read this letter in the French Overseas Archives. At the Overseas French National Archives of France, the author found the letter of the East India Company before its launch in China in 1697, called "Jourdan de Groucé". However, in the same year Jourdan wrote to Pontchartrain – When the governor of Great Seal put on armor to equip 400 registered tonne warships (*l'Amphitrite*) planned for China, the letter was signed "Jourdan de Groussey." (FR ANOM C1 8 Folios 75 & 81, Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer). The 400-tonnage large ship - *l'Amphitrite* (French for "The Goddess of Sea"), sailed from La Rochelle under the command of Chevalier de la Roque on March 6, 1698, and arrived in Guangzhou waters in November, 1698. It returned in January 1700, and reached Port Louis in August 1700 (Paul, 1928). In the strict sense, this was the first French merchant ship to come to China for trade. The profits made by the first flight of *l'Amphitrite* made the French government and businessmen at that time aware of tremendous business opportunities in China in the East. Rudan was greatly encouraged and then formed a new Chinese commercial company (La Compagnie de la Chine). In May 1719, John Law merged the la Compagnie d'Occident, la Compagnie d'Indes and la Compagnie de la

China into the East India Company, whose concession continued to 1770. Due to political instability in the countries with commercial trade cooperation and the rise of British foreign trade hegemony, East India company was not operating well, and the commercial capital and earnings declined every year. However, the sharp contrast is that it has benefited greatly from its commercial activities with China. Based on the accounts of East Indian companies, Abbé Morellet cited the annual profit earned by East India company in China from 1725 to 1768. According to the data of Morellet (Morellet, 1769), the author made the following table:

**Table 1. Income Statement of Trade between East India Company and China (1725-1768)**

Year	Total sales in France (Livel)	Purchase amount (Livel)	Net profit (Livel)	Profit percentage
1725-1736	18,961,488	9,272,899	9,688,549	104%
1736-1743	23,602,112	9,779,705	13,822,407	141 %
1743-1756	41,695,974	19,252,520	22,443,427	116 %
1764	5,173,666	2,796,480	2,377,186	85 %
1765	4,429,615	2,427,366	2,002,249	82 %
1766	7,130,910	4,157,696	2,973,214	71 %
1767	5,055,716	3,013,340	2,042,376	68 %
1768	5,838,379	3,481,891	2,356,488	67 %

As can be seen from the table, East India Company had a very lucrative trade with China at first, reaching 141% from 1736 to 1743. But it changed in 1756. Between 1756 and 1763, East India company's trade suffered heavy losses as France failed in the war with Britain over colonies and territories. However, the French East India Company still made some gains in trading with China until 1768. This change is closely linked with the growth or decline of the French power in overseas hegemony. In 1723, during the reign of French King Louis XV, he inherited the policy of expansion of Louis XIV and constantly launched foreign wars. During the Seven Years War (1756-1763), France suffered a fiasco so that it lost trade posts in Canada, the Ohio River basin, Louisiana and Senegal. It also lost a large colony in India. France's powerful status was severely shaken because Britain established colonial hegemony through the Seven Years War, which devastated France's overseas trade and further affected trade with China.

After the lifting of the French free trade to individual merchants in 1770, the number of French trade ships that came to China increased. Compared with other European merchant ships, the number wasn't the largest but occupied a certain share: There were 6 French ships, 19 British ships, 4 Holland ships, 1 Swedish ship and 2 Danish ships at the port of Huangpu in 1773 (Cordier, 1883). In 1776, of the 25 vessels moored in Huangpu port, four were French ships, the rest were four Dutch ships, two Swedish ships, three Danish ships, and thirteen British ships (five from Europe, eight from India). According to the data of Dermigny, the author made a table on the total number of trade ships coming to China, the number of British East India Company ships and the number of merchant ships in France (Dermigny, 1964):

**Table 2. The statistical tables of vessels from western countries to Huangpu Port (1719-1833)**

Start-stop Year	The number of French ships	The number of British ships	The total number of vessels from western countries to Guangzhou	Percentage	
				France	The United Kingdom
1719-1769	106	377	769	14%	49%
1770-1778	45	159	278	16%	57%
1779-1833	56	2,607	4,112	1.4%	63%

From the above table, we can see that before 1778, the number of vessels traded by the French East India Company to China was about one third of that of the British East India Company, accounting for about one sixth of the total number of vessels from Europe and the United States. However, as the international situation changed, the French foreign trade hegemony was challenged, which was also reflected in trade in Guangzhou. After the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War in 1774, disputes between countries in Europe and Britain in the maritime trade inevitably took place. France was waiting for revenge for many of its overseas colonies were captured by Britain in “Seven Years War”. In view of this, the French King Louis XVI ordered the country to join the war. Then the United Kingdom began to block cargo ship of France and Spain, which affected trade with China. As a result, few French merchant ship came to Huangpu Port from 1778 to 1782. In 1789, a revolution broke out in France. The Great Revolution regime and the subsequent French Empire did not support the development of French overseas commercial institutions. The number of French merchant ships to Huangpu dropped sharply to only 1.4%. But after all, before 1778, France was the most active European country that trades with China except Britain. In the memoirs of some French navigators or elders, some records of trade can be found at that time.

Joseph-François Charpentier de Cossigny wrote in his memoirs:

*All Europeans will be impressed with such a scene when they come here. A large number of boats coming and going. There are several checkpoints at the river bank entrance to defend the estuary and prevent tax evasion. ... As soon as the ship arrives at Huangpu Port, customs officers will take two Chinese ships and come to the ship for inspection. All goods have to be levied import and export duties, but some of the goods are forbidden, such as opium bringing in and silver output. Any items can not be unloaded without permission that customs officers will issue a passport (Cossigny, 1798, pp. 72&73).*

*For about a century, as China's population has increased substantially, agricultural production has also expanded and intensified. The trade with Europeans promoted the cultivation of tea, silkworm and cotton, as well as promoted the flourishing development of silk manufacturing and other related industries. The growth of the local population creates a virtuous circle with culture and manufacturing (Cossigny, 1798, pp. 143-144).*

Like other East India Companies, the French East India Company traded mostly are tea, silk, Nanjing cloth, porcelain and so on. Located at the mouth of the Pearl River, and able to accommodate amount of ships, Guangzhou became the main destination for the European ships to trade. The main commodities were tea leaves, chinaware, raw silk, silk fabrics, lacquers, paper and others (Cordier, 1883). “Trade bans were restricted to the opium import into the Empire, the import and export of glass and the export of gold, silver and rice” (Cossigny, 1798, p. 142). Cossigny also talked about another kind of trading goods – fur, “Due to the colder winter wind in Guangzhou and the lack of heating equipment like fireplace in the house, people like to wear leather, especially otter skins, but they are very rare and expensive. But since the discovery of the American continent, the fur has become quite common, and the price has dropped dramatically. Fur sold in Guangzhou, soft and white, should be some kind of ferret-like lynx fur” (Cossigny, 1798, 147-148). However, with the growing of the Chinese market, European businessmen were carrying goods in pursuit of higher commercial profits and to cater to the needs of Chinese consumers. In 1779, goods imported from Europe to China included: wool fabric, (Reims or Le Mans) fibrous yarns, minerals such as iron or lapis lazuli, glass products, lead, ebony from France Island, pepper, sanders, opium, spices, cotton, sea cucumber,

radices saussureae, rhino horn, paint, bird's nest, and tin. While exports to Europe include varied tea (oolong tea, kung fu tea, Se Chung Std, caky tea, Souchong tea, and white tea, etc.), and porcelain and silk (including raw silk from Guangdong and Suzhou) (Dermigny, 1964). In 1782, a Danish cargo ship loaded by a Dutch company bought goods in Batavia and then traded them in Guangzhou with full goods such as pepper, cloves, nutmeg, shark's fin, bird's nest, silver and gold (Cordier, 1883). After 1844, trade between China and the West became more diversified. China imported dozens of commodities from the West including gold, silver, salted areca, bezoar, sea cucumber, wood, camphor, cardamom, beeswax, cornelian, seal teeth, gum resin, ginseng, clove, clocks, fish maw, Kino, wool and other products (Montigny, 1846). Chinese exports to the West included alum, fennel, arsenic, fireworks, bamboo products (fans, etc.), jade bracelets, camphor, white lead, fish glue, corals, copper products, turmeric, tin ware, galangal, leather trunk, Gamboge and so on. Certainly, products such as tea, silk and sugar, which were traditionally welcomed by Western consumers, occupied a large share of the trade (Montigny, 1846, 86-90).

After 1778, France did not completely cut off its trade with China but sent only sporadic ships because of the gradual shrinking of France's share in the international market. Without knowing China's market demand, French encountered poor sales (Xie, 2017.) The 18<sup>th</sup> century Sino-France maritime trade gradually declined due to domestic and international situations. It took about 80 years to gain a place in trade with China since the maiden voyage of *l'Amphitrite*. With the defeat in the international war and the outbreak of the domestic revolution, changes took place. Compared to other countries, especially the United Kingdom and the United States, the French vessels that traded with China gradually declined. They almost left the stage in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The maritime hostilities between France and the United States beginning in 1797 did not disappear until an agreement was signed in about 1800. From 1802 to the fall of Napoleon's power in 1815, Britain has been competing with France for European hegemony and overseas colonies. And in 1811, Napoleon's plan of war with Russia, the French government was too busy to trade with distant China. In April 1790, French East India Company was dissolved and then reorganized into a privately-owned corporation.

### **Conclusion**

During the eighteenth century when China was involved in globalization, the trade activities of French East India company with China played an important role in the process. France, one of the leaders in the global economy, started commercial trade with China, China has not actively responded to the strong intervention of economy and trade. However, China still inevitably entered the globalized market. Jonathan Spence's point of view may be our common understanding, that is "Since 1600, China's fate as a nation has been intertwined with other countries. It has to search precious resources, exchange goods and expand knowledge with other countries" (Spence, 1999). The free trade policy pursued by Western powers in the 17th and 18th centuries was a means of expanding overseas. Through the initial trade activities of the French East India Company in China, it can be seen that the Qing government failed to fully recognize the impact of such economic expansion and actively respond. This is of positive significance to our correct understanding of the connection between China and the global economy in the 18th century. It also inspires us to recognize the history of early Sino-foreign trade relations from a more macro perspective.

### **Acknowledgements**

This paper was sponsored by Guangzhou Classics and The Research Fund of Guangzhou Historical and Cultural Studies, No. 2018GZY01.

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