

**Proceedings of the Academic Symposium on the  
Impact of COVID-19 and Technology of  
Learning and Teaching during the Pandemic  
from China, India, UK and USA**

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## Introduction

On September 25, 2020, American Scholars Press (ASP) conducted its Inaugural Academic Symposium online in the platform of its International Forum of Teaching and Studies Journal (IFOTS). A collaborative team, led by Dr. Strohschen with Dr. Wiggins and USA-based university faculty members, and the staff of the American Scholars Press – IFOTS, brought together educators and students from around the globe. The six-hour symposium engaged experts in technology-mediated instruction in a discourse on the theme, *Online Teaching & Learning: Challenges and Solutions*. The goal was to address the effects of the pandemic brought about by the Covid-19 virus and explore the consequences for educators and students to learn for future structures and practice. The symposium initially offered a platform for stakeholders in this changed education environment to discuss challenges, solutions, and ideas, and to exchange results based on their experiences in this worldwide rise of e-learning. With USA-, India-, and UK-based faculty members of universities, colleges, and private institutions, the first IFOTS Symposium constituted a ‘commons’ for considering international and trans-national perspectives and local experiences as a step toward synthesizing contextually appropriate solutions for education anywhere in our world.

The Academic Symposium (see recording <http://www.americanscholarspress.us/symposium.php>) focused us on models in the digital era; design of effective online courses; online teaching techniques; the psycho-dynamics of distance education; and it addressed the challenges in aligning education formats and technology with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century learner. ASP has a 16-year history of reaching an international audience with its publications. Hence, this symposium sought to then broaden its readership and contributor base by inviting further discourse that could advance relevant education praxes. Toward this end, the symposium recordings were posted on an internationally accessible platform and the planning team reached out to contacts, who would host and moderate viewings at their respective institution. In this way, the limitations of international virtual symposia were overcome by offering local access at convenient times to a broad global audience. This approach strengthened awareness of the benefits of ASP and its journals in terms of trans-national exchanges and knowledge dissemination wherein practitioners can learn with and from one another as much as it shared the insights gained at the Symposium. This effort connected practitioners with one another at the respective venue locality and with partners who participated in the Symposium.

ASP partnered with universities in China, and six institutions participated in reviewing the Symposium recordings and conducting discussion. Each host site was responsible for moderating live discussions after the viewing of one or all the Symposium sessions at their respective site (f2f, virtually, or in a blended format). Based on emerging themes during these discussions, Chinese practitioners contributed insights, adding to current research and practices along with calling for future solutions. The English Department of Zhejiang University was instrumental in reviewing the Symposium recordings, conducting discussions, and soliciting articles from professors and students. Zhejiang University, Shanghai Normal University, Jinan University, Nanjing University, Shenyang Aerospace University and Ningbo Tech University also invited faculty to review our Symposium recordings and contribute to this publication. Overall, more than 40 papers were submitted from our Chinese colleagues alone and 31 of the peer-reviewed articles were accepted.

This international collaboration across the academic community in USA and China captured remarkable exchanges and insights, which are presented in this publication, *Proceedings of the Academic Symposium on the Impact of COVID-19 and Technology of Learning and Teaching during the Pandemic*

*from China, India, UK and USA.* Three key themes that emerged from the Chinese constituency's conversations centered on teaching practices, post-pandemic research needs, and the transcultural relevance of literature analysis. With teaching practices being the most prevalent theme, articles focus on ESL and EFL; language learning through literature; cultural understanding and meaning making; collocations in reading; aspects of functional-cognitive linguistics; semiotics; and online learning in language instruction. The second theme of research was multifarious as well, contemplating the need for assessment of online platforms and how they align to instructional methods; the need to investigate how to improve the information technology skills of teachers; and the need for immediacy in research to develop effective combined offline and online teaching models. Thirdly, literature analysis interests emphasized models that engage foreign literature for language learning; utilize literature to extract assessment criteria for mutual understanding and building capacity for empathy; and analyzing the human conditions in general through literature.

This Symposium initiated a collaboration across the seas when we shared the session recordings and invited further discourse by groups in China who reviewed the symposium presentations. We trust this outreach and connecting will lead to further exchanges and collaborative research among students, practitioners, faculty, and administrators as we begin to define the so-called, post-pandemic "new normal." Our teaching and learning environment has changed; and it continues to change with increasingly more emphasis placed on technology-mediated instruction and communication. While the processes and formats are changing, the underlying education needs of all stakeholders in society undergo transformation as well, depending on the context of their reality. At the same time, the kind of fundamental human needs are rather consistently and universally shared among the peoples in the world. At the intersection of such needs that can be addressed with place-based, relevant, and meaningful education content and formats remains the need for people to learn to know, learn to live together, learn to be, and learn to do for our global common good. Toward such ends, American Scholars Press embraces trans-national collaboration such as our symposium and this collection of articles. We respectfully acknowledge the many contributions to continue the discourse which have been made by participants, at the IFOTS Symposium and subsequently during local gatherings in China. We are pleased to present these proceedings, and we invite our readers to continue the discourse.

***Professor Emerita Dr. Gabriele Strohschen***

DePaul University

IFOTS, Editor-in-Chief

Chicago, Illinois, USA

June 2021

## Table of Contents

A Whole New World: Bitmoji Classrooms, Novice Teachers, and Traditionally Marginalized Students' Virtually Learning During a Pandemic <i>George Ligon, IV</i> .....	13
Teacher as Social Entrepreneur: A Paradigm Shift in Indian Teacher Education <i>Karanam Pushpanadham, Shnaoli Chakraborty Acharya</i> .....	20
Graduate Level Accounting: Online observations and the age of COVID-19 <i>Dr. Elaine Gregory</i> .....	30
Transition and Migration to Online Learning Environment <i>Ronny Richardson and Max North</i> .....	35
Flexibility, Effectiveness, and Collaboration: English Writing Center in Zhejiang University during the Pandemic <i>Fang Fan</i> .....	56
How Online Education Influences Live Commerce of Agriculture Products during the COVID-19 Pandemic <i>Shiyi Chen</i> .....	61
A Discussion on Strategies of Ideological Education of College Students in Post-pandemic Times <i>Gao Yu, Yuanyuan Miao</i> .....	70
Challenges and Countermeasures of Psychological Health Education in Colleges and Universities during COVID-19 <i>Yuanyuan Miao, Yu Gao, Xiao-ou Li</i> .....	76
A Comparative Study on Online Translation and Post-editing <i>Qin Qian</i> .....	82
Online British and American Literature Teaching During Covid-19 Pandemic <i>Chen Yun-yi</i> .....	88
The Innovation and Practice of the Course Construction of Police Professional Courses under the Background of Post-epidemic Period <i>Jing Guping, Lee Rong, Wang Zhenhua</i> .....	94
Discussion on the Countermeasures of Online Education under the Pandemic of COVID-19 <i>Luo Xiaoling, Yuan Shuangzhu, Wang Zhenhua</i> .....	101
Online EFL Teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic through the Eyes of a Chinese College English Teacher: A Case Study <i>Xuan Chen, Lei Shen</i> .....	107
A Probe into the PBL Teaching Mode Based on New Media Technology during the COVID-19 Pandemic – A Case Study of English Teaching <i>Wang Bo, Zhang Yu</i> .....	115
Reform of Management Course for Secretary Major in Higher Vocational Colleges in the Post Epidemic Era – Take the Teaching Content of Live-Broadcast Assistant as an Example <i>Liu Yiyi, Yao Xintao</i> .....	121

A Study on English Binominals in Chinese EFL Learners' Essay Writing <i>Liu Jingwen</i> .....	127
The Transmutation of the Notion of Home in the Age of Mobility in Robert Stevenson's Works <i>Yaping Yu</i> .....	133
Constructing the Unnarrated: On the Narrative Gaps in Nabokov's <i>Lolita</i> from the Perspective of Theory of Mind <i>Guan Haijia</i> .....	139
An Analysis of Multimodal Discourse Characteristics and Synergy of Modes in the Lead-in Part of English Teaching by using ELAN Software <i>Jiasheng Lu, Yuhong Jiang</i> .....	145
Seeking the Foundation of Life: The Meaning of Dignity in Ian McEwan's <i>The Children Act</i> <i>Wang Jie</i> .....	152
Three Aspects of Iconicity in the Irreversibility of English Binomials <i>Jingwen Liu</i> .....	159
Linguistic Functions and Features of Hedges in <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> <i>Song Jie</i> .....	165
Narrative in Plays: A Comparison between Susan Glaspell's <i>Trifles</i> and "A Jury of Her Peers" <i>Du Lanlan</i> .....	171
Body in D. H. Lawrence's <i>Women in Love</i> <i>Wang Aisu</i> .....	177
Teachers' Cognition and Implementation of the Activity-Based Approach in the EFL Reading Class: Evidence from High Schools in China <i>Yuhong Jiang, Xiaoying Feng, Wenjuan Qi</i> .....	184
The Washback of the Summary Writing Task in the NMET Reformation on High School English Reading and Writing Teaching in Shanghai Municipality, China <i>Xinyuan Pu, Yuhong Jiang, Yiqing Wang</i> .....	192
Linguistic Philosophy and Writing Practice in Iris Murdoch's <i>Under the Net</i> <i>Zhou Chengyi, Sun Yanping</i> .....	199
The Broken Mask – A Study of Black-White Relations in Eugene O'Neill's <i>All God's Chillun Got Wings</i> <i>Chen Dawei</i> .....	205
Dilemma of Memory and Reconstruction of the Past in Kazuo Ishiguro's <i>The Buried Giant</i> <i>Hao Xiangjian</i> .....	212
A Quantitative Study on the Acquisition of Chinese Quantifiers in Early Childhood <i>Li Hui</i> .....	219
Between Imagination and Reality: Research on Medieval English Morality Plays <i>Yao Yao</i> .....	226
Exploring Strategy Use of Chinese Postgraduates' Group Peer Feedback in a Translation Class <i>Mengtong Yu, Yuhong Jiang</i> .....	234
The Influence of Association Strength, Phrasal Frequency and Contextual Predictability on the Processing of Chinese 4C Collocations <i>Hui Li</i> .....	241

A Corpus-based Stylistic Study on Subtitles of <i>Game of Thrones</i> <i>Jing Zheng, Dali Hon</i> .....	249
A Translation Analysis of “Frozen” Texts in Legal English under the Guidance of Register Theory <i>Zhang Yu, Miao Kehui</i> .....	256

## Presentation Abstracts

### Revisiting Learning in Higher Education: Indian Model in Digital Era

The National Education Policy 2020 in India has recommended a paradigm shift in Higher Education with due focus on digital learning and MOOCs. This presentation focuses on the key aspects of learning in higher education, digital readiness, and institutional mechanisms. The session discourse intends to raise issues and challenges, sharing Success stories of digital learning initiatives in India and other countries.

**Presenter:** Professor Dr. Karanam Pushpanadham, The M S University of Baroda, India

He is a member of the Research Group of Education for Rural Transformation, Department of Education, Stockholm University, Sweden and the Indo-Danish Academic exchange Program on Education for Global Citizenship with Efterschools of Denmark. He served as Visiting Professor at the Assumption University and Burapah University in Thailand. He directed International Training Programs (ITP) with Life Academy, Karlsted, Sweden sponsored by SIDA on ICT and Pedagogic Development. He directed an International Training program for the District Education Officers of Afghanistan funded by Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, SIDA.

**Moderator:** Professor Emerita Dr. Gabriele Strohschen

### How to Design Effective Online Courses

Mr. Langdon will present his learnings as a teacher and student using online platforms. The best approach is an integrated combination of approaches, combining prerecorded videos, worksheets, quizzes, online zoom sessions, zoom breakout sessions, and using Mural, Jamboard and Miro. Putting all this together can create a very effective learning experience.

**Presenter:** Mr. Morris Langdon, London School of Economics & Innovation Labs

Mr. Langdon is an award-winning innovator and world-renowned innovation consultant. He is Senior Partner at Innovation Labs LLC. He is also a founding partner of Future Lab Consulting, a strategy and technology firm that offers advanced blockchain solutions for global enterprises. He is Co-Chair of the Innovation Council at Red Team Engineering, and in 2017-2018 he served as Innovation Coordinator at SUNY's Fashion Institute of Technology in New York.

**Moderator:** Deborah McPhee, M.A.

### How to Teach Difficult Detailed Subjects in the Online Environment

This presentation addresses taking difficult, detailed subjects such as accounting or research designs into an online format. In many cases these topic areas may be difficult for students who are not well-prepared for a detailed subject that they are mostly unfamiliar with from their past education or work experiences.

These subjects often require more one-on-one instruction or clarification. Subject mastery is also difficult to assess within the online environment. Online formats vary considerably in both technical capability and time constraints adding to challenges and issues.

**Presenters:** Dr. Elaine Gregory, Grand Canyon University and Dr. Cliff Butler, Capella University

Dr. Gregory is a CPA and Certified Fraud Examiner who has been teaching online since 2017 at bachelors, masters, and doctoral levels, most recently at Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, AZ. She has also designed accounting curriculum for Thomas Edison State University and has worked with students at Capella University. Dr. Cliff Butler is the Research Chair of the School of Business and Technology at Capella University where he has taught online since 2001.

**Moderator:** Dr. Ahmed Khan

### **The Psycho-dynamics of Distance Learning: The Online Discussion Room**

The psycho-dynamics of online course discussion rooms are potent forces influencing learner engagement and success. Group-based culture development, the emergence of behavioral norms, and diverse modes of communications converge to establish discussion room cultural and learning context. While there are similarities between ground-based classroom and online discussion room learning activities, online discussion rooms often create domains-of-silence characterized by episodic and thematically fragmented communications within self-organized primary and secondary learner groups. These domains-of-silence influence learner isolation and can negatively impact academic success. Also, unlike ground-based classroom engagement, which employs group work as a learning strategy, the asynchronous format used in online education can hinder individual student course progress. Instead, the online discussion room promotes individual learning, discussion board participation readiness, and response time flexibility. Two important characteristics of group learning include relationship building and performance support. While group learning appears to be increasing in online course work, pedagogically, individual learning remains the dominant instructional modality. The confluence of conditions, episodic and thematically fragment communication, minimal emphasis on group learning, and the absence of substantive relationship building, and performance support can potentially inhibit students in the online course discussion room. Central to inhibiting learning is disconfirmation, learning anxiety, and survival anxiety and the associated remedies associated with creating psychological safety. This presentation will address the psycho-dynamics present in the online course discussion room. The presenters will present psychological factors inhibiting learning including disconfirmation, learning anxiety and survival anxiety. In addition, strategies for minimizing the effect of these factors such as establishing psychological will be evaluated and discussed.

**Presenters:** Dr. Michael Williams, Thomas Edison State University and Dr. Tami Moser, Southwestern Oklahoma State University

Dr. Michael Williams, Ph.D., MBA is the Dean of the School of Business and Management at Thomas Edison State University in Trenton, NJ. As the school's chief academic and administrative officer, he leads all aspects of the school's scholar-practitioner focused degree programming. Dr. Williams is the founder and principal consultant for Psychological Practice Services, an international consultancy specializing in

business development for mental health professionals. He is an Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), evaluation team leader, a 2018 ACBSP Dean's Symposium presenter, and an ACBSP Region 1 Best Presentation Winner. Dr. Williams's research, publishing, and presentation interests include the influence of modern psychoanalytic theory on leadership efficacy, workplace bullying, and the influence of mental illness on workplace productivity. Dr. Williams earned a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership, Policy, and Administration and an MS in Human Resource Management from Fordham University. He earned a multidisciplinary graduate degree; an MS in Labor and Employee Relations from Rutgers University, an MBA in Management from DeVry University, an MS in Mental Health Counseling from Touro College and University Systems, and an MA in Psychoanalysis from the Academy of Clinical and Applied Psychoanalysis, Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis.

Dr. Tami Moser is the Chair of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Professor of Pharmacy Administration, and the Coordinator of the Center of Excellence in Pharmacy Leadership, Innovation, and Quality Outcomes at Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Her research focuses on the improvement of quality outcomes and patient experience in healthcare settings. Tami's most recent publication is *Workflow Improvement and the Use of PDSA Cycles (Quality Management in Health Care, 2020)*. She served as the Editor-in-Chief of the *Administrations Issue Journal* for ten years. She has earned a Ph.D. in Organization and Management and a Doctorate in Behavioral Health. Tami is an ICU Master Trainer, Consultant with Dahlia Consulting group, and a Coach. Her coaching practice focuses on Ph.D. and Professional Doctorate students seeking mentorship, support, and guidance throughout their doctoral journey.

**Moderator:** Dr. Vincent Wiggins

### **Transition and Migration to Online Learning Environment**

This presentation reports gauge the possible impacts on student learning due to online conversion. A three-stage evaluation process was conducted. First, a survey of the faculty regarding their opinion of how the rest spring semester played out for those courses that were converted. Second, surveying students who had gone through the conversion. Third, compare the results from selected traditional courses with comparable online courses. Overall, while many faculty were not familiar with the online teaching format, they were satisfied with the process and learning outcomes. Students also overall showed satisfaction with transition to online.

**Presenter:** Dr. Ronny Richardson, Kennesaw State University

Dr. Ronny Richardson is a professor of Operations Management at Kennesaw State University. He has over 25 years of teaching experience. He holds a Ph.D. in Operations Management, MBA, and MS in Decision Sciences. He worked for 20 years as an analyst at Georgia Power Company. He has 25 years teaching experience at both private and public universities, with nine years as department chair at Southern Polytechnic State University.

**Moderator:** Dr. Max North

## **Challenges in Aligning the Education Format, and Technology with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner**

The presentation explores possible misalignment between the traditional structure of academic courses, the emerging trend of online instruction, and the mindset of the students who thrive in an online environment. The discussion encourages to explore if converting the traditional course format to an online format is sufficient to align with the paradigm of the 21st century learner.

**Presenter:** Dr. Ahmad Khan, Capella University

Dr. Khan completed his initial degrees in the field of network engineering and earned his terminal degree in management. He is a certified life coach. He works as a systems engineer and a data scientist in the telecom industry, and as an educator with the Capella University. Dr. Khan draws from his diverse insights to study machine and human systems and enjoys exploring efficiency improvements.

**Moderator:** Dr. Cliff Butler

**A Whole New World:  
Bitmoji Classrooms, Novice Teachers, and Traditionally Marginalized  
Students' Virtually Learning During a Pandemic**

**George Ligon, IV**  
*edCount, LLC, Alexandria, VA, USA*

*[Abstract] As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, a large local “urban” school district chose virtual learning to start the 2020-2021 school year. I decided to support a traditionally low-performing school with an entirely traditionally marginalized student population in this district. I will share my experience as a STEM Instructional Coach supporting Math and Science teachers and the challenges we faced teaching traditionally marginalized students in a completely virtual environment. I will share some of the strategies and supports we leveraged to combat many of the issues related to school district policy changes, student absenteeism, engagement, instructional quality, teacher burnout, and student outcomes.*

*[Keyword] COVID-19; traditionally low-performing; traditionally marginalized; virtual learning*

**Introduction**

During the fall of 2019 through the spring of 2020, COVID-19 (COVID) swept through the world like a raging wildfire. Many developed nations fell victim to the spread of COVID because of international travel. COVID was an airborne virus and easily transmitted between people who were within six feet of each other through respiratory droplets in the air. The United States of America, along with many other nations, enacted national lockdowns to contain the spread of the virus. As a result, every aspect of society requiring social interaction between people shut down unless it was essential for survival.

COVID forced us all to rethink how to function in society with a global pandemic. The federal government enacted social distancing guidelines, and schools across the nation made plans to educate students virtually to start the 2020-2021 school year.

**My Call to Arms**

A good friend and former colleague, Ms. Reinhardt, for the sake of anonymity, reached out to me looking for help filling an Instructional Coach (IC) position for the 2020-2021-COVID-school year. She was returning to this school in a new role as a part-time Humanities-English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies (SS)-IC. Ms. Reinhardt told me the school Principal had been there in his role for about a decade. She said he was a great leader, the school was a great school with a great staff and great students, but he struggled to produce in Math. The current Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) IC was part-time, and the math data had declined for three consecutive years. She asked me to connect her with anyone I knew that could support this endeavor. I told her I would contact anyone I knew that would be a good fit.

Over time I grew interested in how states and school districts planned to deal with schooling through the pandemic. The more I learned, the more concerned I became for marginalized communities. I decided to be a part of the solution and help where I could. I had a conversation with Ms. Reinhardt about me fulfilling the role. She was excited. She worked as a liaison between the Principal and me to discuss the

role's particulars and how we could make it work with my full-time job. The response was promising, we scheduled an interview, and the Principal offered the role to me shortly after the interview.

I was very familiar with this school district, having taught there in the past. I will use the pseudonym Anonymous School District (ASD) to refer to it. Besides my teaching experience, I facilitated several professional development workshops and worked on alignment projects for ASD since leaving my tour of duty as a classroom teacher. I was confident in my past success and my abilities to develop teacher capacity and enhance systems and practices to improve student outcomes in this space. However, the school's conflating issues, the district, the political climate, Covid-19, and virtual learning were more than I anticipated.

### **Article Overview**

This article will share my experiences as a part-time STEM Instructional Coach, supporting a traditionally low-performing Title I school in a large "urban" traditionally low-performing school district during the COVID-19 global pandemic school year 2020-2021. I will use Anonymous Elementary School (AES) as the school's pseudonym to keep all parties involved anonymous. I will outline the general problems I noticed that affected math outcomes before COVID became a factor. I will discuss some of the issues we faced with virtual learning as a response to COVID-19. I will address some of the mistakes we made with implementing an entirely virtual school program for primary education students in a traditionally marginalized community. I will share some strategies that worked well for us, as well as lessons learned.

### **Challenges Before COVID**

AES faced significant challenges before the COVID-19 pandemic. AES was an elementary school located in one of the most impoverished areas in the city. About 300 students enrolled in AES. Its student population was 99% Black and 1% Latinx. Every student was economically disadvantaged, and the special education population was about 20% of all students. The teacher retention rate declined from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019, 87% to 50%, and the highly-rated teacher retention dropped during the same timeframe, from 90% to 61%. The weekend before the first day of school, one of two fifth grade teachers resigned, and the other left within the first month of the school year. The Principal hired a new third-grade teacher, moved a fourth-grade teacher to second grade because of poor student outcomes, and moved a third-grade teacher to fourth grade with her students from the previous year. There was only one returning teacher at the same content area and grade level between the six teachers in grades three through five.

The ASD's large-scale state assessment data showed math proficiency increased by 1.5% from the previous year and by 5% over the last three years. AES's schoolwide math proficiency dropped by 8% during this timeframe. However, AES educators celebrated ASD district assessment outcomes for math. The district assessments were not predictors for the large-scale state assessment and did not correlate to those outcomes. So, there was a disconnect between teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. Teachers were under the impression that they were doing an excellent job. Yet only 11% of AES students were grade-level proficient in math, and the average score on an AES district math assessment was around 40%. The district math program used to assess 1-year growth showed a steady decline over the same 3-year period. The percentage of students that showed 1-year growth in math dropped from around 73% to about 42%. Thus, mixed messaging, celebrating mediocrity, and ignoring the steady decline in student math outcomes complicated the work to support teachers before the pandemic was an issue.

### **Accountability and Evaluations Systems**

To add to the pre-pandemic issues, systems in ASD were overly prescriptive. The evaluation systems governed every instructional decision. Most of these decisions focused on producing student outcomes that were near district averages. Teachers and ICs adhered to the suggested guidance in curriculum resources with fidelity regardless of if it was appropriate for their students or not.

For example, The STEM supervisor in my area asked me to develop and facilitate a district professional development workshop for other STEM ICs to demonstrate the programmatic changes we made in math at AES. These changes supported more purposeful and intentional planning and instruction aligned to the district's scope and sequence and testing schedule. She asked me to demonstrate how we implemented these changes through instructional coaching. Moreover, I was strongly encouraged to produce a scripted protocol that all ICs could follow while coaching their teachers. Although there was a meeting agenda template that we used to guide all AES meetings, the coaching conversations were individualized and formulated for each teacher's needs and their particular professional development needs. This concept seemed foreign to the person making the request. She told me about the importance of having a protocol for others to follow verbatim to build their best practice coaching capacity. Again, I was strongly encouraged to develop a protocol for others to follow to replicate what I was doing at AES.

### **Limited and Inexperience Instructional Support**

My instructional coaching counterpart was a product of ASD's prescriptive system. All of her coaching decisions came from ASD resources, supervision, and training. She did an outstanding job following any ASD protocol with extreme fidelity. She ensured teachers at AES adhered to the curriculum and planned their instruction as suggested by the curriculum resource down to the proposed script. Her way of supporting teachers made it difficult to make adjustments. She did not find any issues with her approach because she was confident in how well she practiced ASD procedures. She was unaware that this approach was not beneficial for their students, making the start of our working relationship challenging. She internalized my perspectives of AES as a criticism of her work. After some weeks of explaining and building her capacity, she admitted that she had not received this training level to improve her coaching acumen. She bought in, and we were able to begin doing the work we needed to do collaboratively.

### **Challenges with Virtual Instruction**

Virtual instruction brought about an extra set of challenges that made everyone's job a daily arduous exercise in planning, preparation, practice, and patience. In this section, I addressed the challenges we faced with virtual instruction. We contented with debates about virtual learning appropriateness, home disruptions, issues with devices and the internet, larger class sizes, less instructional time, and adapting in-person curriculums to virtual instruction.

### **Appropriate Ages for Online Instruction**

Elementary was a difficult age group for online learning. We were essentially asking pre-K through grade 5 students to engage in online instruction from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm with a 45-minute lunch break that started somewhere between 11:30 am and 12:00 pm. Even with brain breaks, elective classes, asynchronous learning, small groups, and daily check-ins, student attendance and participation regularly declined after lunch. According to the Illinois State Board of Education, elementary students should have 1 to 2 hours of online instruction per day (Dixon, & Kirmes, 2020). However, ASD tried to make a regular in-person school day virtual.

The younger the student, the more difficult it was to keep them engaged in an online environment. The American Heart Association and the Council on Communications and Media recommend children 8-18 years old have no more than 2-hours of high-quality screen time per day (Barnett et al., 2018; Council on Communications and Media, 2016). Additionally, children 2 to 5 years old should be limited to 1-hour screen time per day (Barnett et al., 2018; Council on Communications and Media, 2016). Therefore, 5 to 6-hours of screen time for virtual learning was unhealthy. Virtual learning made it easier for students to fall asleep during instruction because they were in their home space. It was easier for students to engage in off-task play during instruction. It was easier for students to tune teachers out and turn teachers off. Students could simply mute the volume, turn the camera off, or log out of the virtual platform when they wanted to. We could not account for or control all the disruptions we faced using a virtual meeting platform to educate students in their homes.

### **Home Disruptions**

Home disruptions were some of the more disturbing challenges we faced with virtual learning. In many homes' parents did not demonstrate consideration for their students' attempts to learn virtually. Some parents were loud and disruptive in their conversations and behaviors. Some parents played loud music and television while their students were in their virtual classes. Some parents interjected during instruction because they felt their student was not getting enough attention or support. Some parents would interrupt a lesson to have a parent-teacher conference. Some parents would interrupt a class to get a tutorial or technical support. Some parents exposed students to things in their homes that other parents would object to. Some parents let us know that this was their house, they could do what they want in their place and did not care what anyone thought about it.

Finding a quiet space was a significant challenge for most of our students. Many of our students lived in small apartments and shared rooms with a family member. I recall one student who went into the bathroom of her home to take a district math assessment because it was the only place she could go to reduce the background noise. It was usual for more than one student to be in the same room, on different devices, attending other virtual classes. In some instances, the parent worked remotely as well.

### **Devices and the Internet**

Each AES student was given a device for virtual instruction, and their parents had to come and pick it up before the start of the school year. Sometimes there were technical issues with students' devices that our tech specialist could not resolve remotely. In these cases, we needed parents to coordinate with the AES administration to schedule a device trade. In some cases, students were attending classes by cell phone because their device was not working, and the parent had not made arrangements to pick up a new one. As a result, these students did not have full access to the resources used in virtual learning experiences. Thus, students' had limited access to instruction and were relegated to their parent's phone availability.

ASD shared several options for families to obtain free internet access. As a part of this list, some cable service providers offered a couple of months of free internet access. Others offered free public hotspots to non-customers if they were within a coverage area of the service provider. ASD's Office of Technology installed hotspots throughout the city. Also, ASD reminded families that if they had Metro PCS as a cell phone service provider, they had unlimited data as a part of their data plan and could use their cell phones as a mobile hotspot for internet access.

Even with these supports, internet access was inconsistent, and internet quality was consistently an issue for some students. Some students had audio problems, camera issues, inability to use specific programs or resources during a lesson, their chat feature may not work some days, or they simply could not access the internet to use their device. These issues caused students to miss part of the instruction or lose instructional days altogether.

### **Less Instructional Time and Larger Class Sizes**

The virtual school day was structured in a way to replicate the in-person school day. Components of an in-person lesson, like small group instruction, were created as separate classes. The Principal reduced the class time for new lessons to 45 minutes at the beginning of the school day. The reduced class time created an issue because the math curriculum required, on average 60 minutes per lesson. Also, teachers generally lost 5 to 15 minutes of instructional time navigating tech issues, disruptions, participation, and engagement. Toward the end of the day, students revisited the math lesson in their scheduled small group rotation.

Class sizes were large at times. Our grade 5 classes had over 50 students between two teachers. Class sizes made our small group rotations rather large, except when students did not show up after lunch. Additionally, about seven students in this grade level missed at least 50% of class per quarter.

### **Adapting In-person Resources to Virtual Instruction**

Vendors of our curriculum resources developed them for in-person instruction. Textbook adoption committees selected the math resource for in-person learning. Doing Math and Science in elementary school, especially with students who are grade levels behind in their education, requires developing concrete conceptual understanding aided by hands-on manipulatives. Our primary instructional resources did not have built-in virtual alternatives. ASD asked teachers to use autonomy and be creative with Web 2.0 tools to substitute manipulatives for concrete learning. However, teachers struggled with this idea because of the culture of following protocols as advised.

### **Mistakes Made**

I could fill this article with a list of mistakes but attempting to replicate in-person learning virtually with elementary students encompasses them. There was no rational justification for pushing children to participate in virtual instruction 5 to 6 hours a day except to justify educator pay.

The model we used significantly reduced instructional time for math educators. It made one day a week an asynchronous day for students and reduced ten teacher-lead days of instruction per quarter. There were about 45 days in a quarter. No one in ASD accounted for this until I raised it as an issue.

ASD tried to conduct business as usual, including district accountability assessments. Policymakers in ASD did not consider how schooling adjustments because of COVID could introduce misalignment issues with the curriculum, scope and sequence, and assessment schedules. The district math assessments were scheduled weeks before the end of the quarter. The scheduling usually resulted in a loss of at least ten instructional days for elementary math teachers. The total number of days for any unit of ASD's math curriculum was between 35 and 45 days at an average of 60 minutes per day. Elementary math teachers were losing almost half a quarter of instruction. The loss of instructional days was evident in quarter two. ASD policymakers scheduled the quarter two math assessment administration to be given two weeks before the winter break. This assessment covered the content teachers were teaching during quarter two. The individuals who scheduled the quarter two math assessment's initial date did not account for the month of content in quarter two teachers still needed to teach after the winter break. At this point, it was clear ASD

did not make the necessary adjustments to address online elementary math instruction during the pandemic appropriately.

We all made the mistake of not understanding and respecting the weight of this undertaking and what it meant to do something of this magnitude that none of us had ever done. Granted, it was unprecedented, fluid, and sometimes there was a spur of moment last-minute decision made. However, I have a hard time seeing how policymakers made some decisions with students' best interests in mind. That was probably the biggest mistake, and it was most noticeable when considering if a decision or action put students in the best position for success.

### **Effective Strategies**

My alignment evaluation of ASD's elementary math program components identified structural issues with using it to improve our students' outcomes. According to English (2000), The cornerstone for student achievement success is ensuring the written, taught, and tested curricula are aligned. I discovered the ASD math assessment, curriculum, and scope and sequence were misaligned. I found using two different vendors, one for curriculum and another for district accountability assessments, led to the following issues: the curriculum content teachers taught within an instructional quarter was not guaranteed to be on the district math assessment; the scope and sequence did not introduce some content standards until after the assessment; teachers did not have enough time to teach the assessed content if they followed the district scope and sequence. I advocated for teachers to get more time to teach the content assessed in a quarter and not be held accountable for the content they were yet to introduce. I was able to get both requests granted. I also noticed teachers were not using standards-based planning to ensure they addressed the content for a given instructional window. Instead, they were simply instructing the next lesson in the curriculum sequence.

I realized I needed to help teachers be more purposeful and intentional in their planning and instruction because of the alignment evaluation results. Our virtual schedule gave us less time, and it was critical that we backward mapped our learning goals from the assessment to each daily learning target. Building teachers' content knowledge of the standards helped them better understand the objectives in the curriculum resource. It also helped them create more manageable daily learning targets since they understood what they were teaching instead of blindly following the curriculum resource's suggested steps. More robust content knowledge and more focused learning targets helped teachers develop lesson activities that were more appropriate for their students and allowed them to use Web 2.0 tools that were more appropriate for their lessons. These changes to lesson planning and instruction helped increase engagement with students. Students were able to understand better and apply what they were learning.

As a result, participation and engagement increased as teachers found ways to make their lessons more inclusive, and student disruptions decreased as this continued happening. In our coaching sessions, teachers shared that they went from feeling hopeless and defeated to feeling rejuvenated and better equipped to succeed with virtual learning. Their efforts were evident as our quarter two district math assessments improved by 12% from quarter one.

### **Lessons Learned**

The welfare and wellbeing of marginalized groups continue to give way to political agendas. Consequently, it was vital for me to redefine my perspective of success. I always want students to do well, but they need good high-quality learning opportunities to do so. Even with being a results-oriented individual, I

understood we needed appropriate structures and systems in place that would produce results. I do not think many people in policymaking positions or those making decisions affecting schools and their communities took the time to consider the challenges students who attend schools like an AES were facing and how COVID exacerbated them. The students were the real heroes because we asked a lot of them. When we made learning accessible, engaging, and worthwhile to them, they were willing to step-up to learn and show us what they learned. During this COVID school year, virtual learning exposed our weaknesses and showed the lack of consideration for protecting some of our most vulnerable populations.

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# **Teacher as Social Entrepreneur: A Paradigm Shift in Indian Teacher Education**

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*[Abstract] Teachers are the torch bearers and ambassadors of national missions for human development. However noble, sophisticated, and well-designed public education policies are, they all come to nothing if teachers do not understand them. The current challenges of the education system in India extend to embracing the concept of 'social responsibility' and 'social entrepreneurship' to educators, who have the power to create social value through access to education for educationally deprived members of society. Teacher Entrepreneurs can develop innovative practices that are customized and tailored to local situations and can effectively address challenges like low awareness on educational opportunities; social-cultural barriers to enrolment, particularly of girls, social issues that spill into the educational domain; lack of resources for schooling environments and poor social capital. A new breed of teachers is required to address these challenges. This recounting of practices provides insights into the measures and practices envisioned and implemented by the Indian education policies to improve access to and quality of education in India.*

*[Keywords] education reform in India; social entrepreneurship; democratic education; 21<sup>st</sup> century education; millennium development goals; education for all*

## **The International Perspective of Education**

The UNESCO Report of the International Commission on Education in the 21st century strongly believes that the rethinking of teacher education is necessary in order to develop future teachers with those human and intellectual qualities that will facilitate a fresh approach to teaching. (UNESCO, 1999). The National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) also emphasized innovation and good practices in teacher education. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council Report on Quality Indicators for Teacher Education (NAAC, 2007) has highlighted that the quality of teacher educators is an important factor that decides the quality of teacher education. The content and pedagogical inputs of teacher education require teacher educators who are qualified and competent to provide them. Their professional development should be of concern for an institution that seeks to provide quality teacher education.

A NCFTE (2009) Report observed that the education and training of prospective teachers will be effective to the extent that it has been delivered by educators, who are competent and professionally equipped for the job. According to Singh (2011), one way to improve the situation is to modernize teacher education. There clearly is a need to revamp teacher education to be in tune with the needs of society and particularly with the changing the needs of the schools.

## **The Challenges for the Education System in India**

Internationally, education has been recognized as a fundamental right and it is viewed as a process of human development where the knowledge, skills, and capabilities are sharpened to achieve a wide range of objectives. The Indian system of education has experienced several accomplishments in the post-independent era in terms of educational access, enrollment, and reducing drop-outs even in rural areas. Significant efforts have been invested through various policies and programs to invigorate the quality of education in India. Enrollment rates across the school education have been increased in India. Educational access has been widened over the years and now schools are accessible in almost all villages in the country.

These success stories, at the same time, have pushed the system of education into new challenges. The dropout-rates and school transition issues still pose challenges. Improving learning outcomes require special attention to many things, including increasing teacher accountability. Raising the amount of time teachers spend on-task and increasing their responsibility for student learning also needs improvement.

Along with these issues, there are many social challenges in India that could be tackled through the education system. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals and Education for All Goals need specific attention and require effective interventions. Gender disparity, poverty, inequity, intolerance, ecological imbalance, immorality, and high mortality rates are still troubling the country, and education can certainly aid in addressing these issues in a more efficient manner. Teachers are the best hope to bring transformational change in any education system and help in realizing the development goals.

## **The Indian Government Response**

The Indian Education Commission of 1966 chaired by D.S. Kothari had opined that the different factors which influence the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the quality, and the competence and character of teachers are undoubtedly most significant. According to the Commission report that no system of education, no syllabus, no methodology, no textbook can rise above the level of its teachers. If a country wants to have quality education, it must have quality teachers. There is no substitute to a quality teacher. A quality teacher is effective in realizing the goals of education. So, the effectiveness of teaching undoubtedly correlates with the competence of teachers. Competence in entrepreneurship can lead to more productive, self-enhancing, and fulfilling outcomes for all stakeholders.

The National Policy on Education recognizes a substantial improvement in the quality of education. It further believes that improvement in education, whether qualitative or quantitative, can be secured through the efforts of teachers who are the direct agents in the process of education. Children with good character, right tastes, sound knowledge, research and inquiry, creativity and innovation, techno-friendly, entrepreneurship, courage and moral leadership are essentially the products of the teaching by able and competent teachers. The education commission has rightly concluded that the future of India is being molded in her classrooms. It is in this context of effective teaching that the importance of Teacher Entrepreneurship becomes evident.

## **The Need for Teacher Education Reform**

Teacher education as a whole needs urgent and comprehensive reform. There is a need to bring about a greater convergence between professional preparation and continuing professional development of teachers at all stages of schooling in terms of level, duration, and structure. Reform of teacher education has been one of the abiding concerns in the reports of major Education Commissions and Committees on Education

in India. The Education Commission (1964-66) discussed various issues related to teacher education. It recommended professionalization of teacher education, development of integrated programs, comprehensive colleges of education, and internships. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) recommended the overhaul of teacher education to impart the professional orientation and referred to the same concerns voiced by the earlier committees. Later on, a committee known as the Yashpal Committee (1993), was appointed to analyze the academic burden on students and unsatisfactory quality of learning. The committee expressed concern over the poor quality of teacher preparation programs in the country, which leads to unsatisfactory quality of learning in schools. This committee also suggested restructuring of the course content of teacher education programs to ensure relevance to the changing needs of schools, longer duration of training, emphasis on self-learning and independent thinking, and making teacher education programs more practicum-oriented.

### **The Search for Excellence in Education**

The system for teacher education has been experiencing several changes in both academic and administrative dimensions. Preparation of teachers has been repeatedly emphasized in the National Policies on Education in 1968 and 1986, and it was revised in 1992. The National Policy on Education (1986) stated that improvement in status and professional competence of teachers is the cornerstone of educational reconstruction. It emphasized the significance and need for a decentralized system for the professional preparation of teachers.

Teacher Education Curriculum – A Framework (1978 and 2006) provided a comprehensive view of the existing realities and perceived futuristic scenario for quality teacher education. Establishment of the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) in 1993 as a statutory body of the Government of India has been exploring possibilities and designing strategies for monitoring quality in pre-service teacher education programs by imposing regulations and identifying quality indicators for the teacher education program in India. Moreover, centrally sponsored programs by the Indian government resulted in strengthening teacher education institutions as Institutes of Advanced Study in Education (IASEs) and Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs). Their intent was that these institutions would act as resource centers to conduct research and provide in-service programming along with pre-service teacher education. This is certainly a strong boost to the system of teacher education to search for excellence.

### ***Teacher Training and Development***

In teacher development, pre-service is the first step in the ladder of developing professionalism in teachers that is, in turn, dependent on the professional preparation of teachers through well designed teacher education courses suited to the needs of the contemporary educational system. Teacher education has a symbiotic relationship with the school education. Developments and changes in both the sectors mutually reinforce the concerns necessary for the quality improvement of the entire system of education. Therefore, any reform in the educational system should ideally be accompanied by reforms in teacher preparation courses also (Pandey, 2011). The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) has observed that it is obvious that the education and training of a prospective teacher will be effective to the extent that it has been delivered by teacher educators who are competent and professionally equipped for the job. NCFTE (2009) promises to translate the vision into reality and prepare humanistic and reflective teachers that has the potential to develop more professional teachers and improve the quality of education.

This vision can be realized through entrepreneurship development for teachers. Teachers need to be recognized as change agents and social entrepreneurs. The quality of pedagogical inputs in teacher

education programs and the manner in which they are transacted determine and ensure the professional competencies of the teachers. Training in leadership skills and entrepreneurship qualities are important aspects of teacher professional development. The effective management of an educational system is needed for such quality development. Effectiveness to a large extent does depend on the teacher entrepreneurship.

Teachers are the most potent factors for preparing children not only to fit into the democratic, secular, and socialistic pattern of the country but also to meet the various challenges posed in society. Teacher Entrepreneurship enables the teacher to facilitate the learner more clearly, about his attitudes, aptitudes, averages, strengths and weaknesses. Father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi defined education as the drawing out of the best. In order to attain this aim a thorough of pupil is a must. Only a competent person can bring the possibilities of the pupil to actualities, from the seed to a fruitful plant.

### **Teaching as a Social Entrepreneurship: A Paradigm Shift in Teacher Education**

There are several key issues in the teacher education programs in India. One of the challenges that need to be addressed is the shortage of teachers. Most of the teacher education institutions in the country are managed by the private sector and are functioning on the market models for profit making. There is a great need for professional standards and regulation of pre-service teacher training institutes. Even the state-run institutes suffer from multiple deficiencies and most of them are far from being effective. Thus, developing institutional mechanisms for periodic monitoring of teacher training institutes and strict adherence to quality parameters is vital.

The National Policy on Education (2020) highlighted that teachers need to be viewed as professionals who require multiple skills to do their job, and accordingly professional standards need to be built into all teacher education programs. These programs must focus both on building an essential knowledge base, as well as skill sets required for making a difference in the classroom. Importantly, they must locate the professional development of teachers within the larger socio-cultural, economic, and political context of contemporary India.

Teachers need to be made more accountable through enhanced involvement of the school management committees; teacher professional, development programs need to provide supportive supervision and incentives to ensure teacher performance and accountability, and administrative staffers need to become more knowledgeable in the use of technology to monitor teacher attendance and curb absenteeism.

More than ever, the future of our country lies in the hands of those who teach our children in the classrooms and therefore teachers should be the best minds in the country and that a guru is someone who teaches specific types of knowledge and skills, but also helps mold values and offers real life experiences to 'book learning.' Therefore, we need a new breed of teachers who are highly skilled, committed, and have grit and resilience.

There is a need to re-conceptualize teacher education programs and empower novice teachers with entrepreneurship skills. The key elements of which are personal resourcefulness, achievement orientation, strategic vision, opportunity seeking and innovativeness.

### **Teachers: Social Entrepreneurs and Change Agents**

Entrepreneurship is an art which makes one successful in whichever enterprise one chooses and pursues to reach one's goals. It seems George Bernard Shaw was talking about entrepreneurs because this is what entrepreneurs do - they create their own future. The entrepreneur envisions possible futures and creates the futures of his or her choice. Everybody is entrepreneurial in some aspect of his or her life; entrepreneurial

in terms of creativity, self-development, and self-decision making. Different scholars have defined the terms in different ways.

- Economist defines an entrepreneur as one who brings resources, labor, raw material and other assets into combination that increases their value from before and also one who introduces changes, innovations and a new order.
- Psychologists define an entrepreneur as a person who is typically driven by some forces, which create a desire to obtain or attain something.
- Sociologists define an entrepreneur as a person whose action would determine his asocial status and who contributes to the development of society.
- Management experts define an entrepreneur as a person who has a vision and generate action plan to achieve it.

According to these authors, entrepreneurship is more an attitude than a skill of a profession. It is an attitude towards excellence. People choose an entrepreneurial opportunity that “feels right”. So, it is an affective part of life. Entrepreneurship is the process of creating value by bringing together a unique package of resources to exploit an opportunity. Entrepreneurship is, above all, about change. Entrepreneurs see change, as the norm and something healthy.

Entrepreneurs have many of the same character traits as leaders, similar to the early main theories of leadership; however, trait-based theories of entrepreneurship are increasingly being called into question. Entrepreneurs are often contrasted with managers and administrators, who are said to be more methodical and less prone to risk-taking. Such person-centric models of entrepreneurship have shown to be of questionable validity, not least as many real-life entrepreneurs operate in teams rather than as single individuals.

### ***Characteristics of an Entrepreneur***

Still, a vast, but now clearly dated literature, studying the entrepreneurial personality found that certain traits seem to be associated with entrepreneurs. Being the contributors to the society, their personality traits and skills are being analyzed. According to McClelland (1961), the entrepreneur is primarily motivated by an overwhelming need for achievement, a psychological need to achieve and a strong urge to build. Beglley and Boyd, identified five dimensions unique to entrepreneurs (Lall, & Sahai, 2006).

- Entrepreneurs are high need-achievement
- Entrepreneurs like to think that they are pulling their own string (They control their own lives, not luck or fate)
- Entrepreneurs are willing to take moderate risks; this enables them to earn higher returns on assets
- Entrepreneurs have the ability to tolerate ambiguity. They also face more ambiguity since they may be doing certain things for the first time.
- Entrepreneurs have the drive to get more done in less time and, if necessary, despite the objection of others.

Contemporary writers in management and business have presented a wide range of theories of entrepreneurship. Peter Drucker (1985) argues that entrepreneurs do not require them to cause change but sees them as exploiting the opportunities that change (in technology, consumer preferences, social norms, etc.) creates. He says, “this defines entrepreneur and entrepreneurship – the entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity. The notion of opportunity has come to be central to many current definitions of entrepreneurship. It is the way today's management theorists capture the notion of shifting resources to areas of higher yield. An opportunity, presumably, means an opportunity to

create value in this way. Entrepreneurs have a mind-set that sees the possibilities rather than the problems created by change. The entrepreneur is on the lookout for,

- ‘The unexpected’: an unexpected success, failure, or event (see below).
- Incongruities: between things as they ought or are said to be – and how they actually are.
- Problems with an existing process for which no one has provided a solution.
- Changes in how an industry or market operates that takes everyone by surprise.
- Demographic (population) changes; and
- Changes in ‘perception, mood or meaning.’

### **Teacher as Social Entrepreneur: Desirable Traits and Characteristics**

The investment in education in terms of physical and human resources has grown tremendously. Everyone now wants that education, as a part of social system, should be accountable for many reasons. On the basis of the Principle of cost effectiveness, investment must be productive. Teacher entrepreneurship would enhance accountability. So, it is a necessary aspect of educational system. There is growing realization that all education progress depends ultimately on the quality of teachers. Without good teachers even the best system of education is bound to fail. The teacher is a key link in the educational process, whether it is in school or out of school. He has to instill leadership qualities in pupils. He has to inspire the pupils and help to choose their future careers. He has to shape the character and personality of students.

On the other hand, the spatial and numerical expansion of schooling facilities at primary and secondary levels over the last decade has resulted in corresponding increase in the demand for teachers. As a result, large number of teacher education institutions is created throughout the country and the maximum number of these institutions is managed by private organizations. This has posed exceptional challenges for the management of Teacher Education to ensure quality in programs.

India has made considerable progress in the areas of education, since the 1990 with a significant overall literacy, school enrolment, infrastructure and political priority of Universal Elementary education. Regional, educational and gender disparities however continue to prove new challenge. Large investment on reaching remote habitation and the marginalized have had little impact in the teaching learning environment and children learning. School curriculum and text in many states remain disconnected from the lives of the learner and burden on children continues to grow. More importantly, teachers across the country, continue to remain disempowered with increasing normalization of their career (Curriculum framework of teacher education, 2006, NCTE).

For teachers as social entrepreneurs, the social mission is explicit and central. This obviously affects how social entrepreneurs perceive and assess opportunities. Mission-related impact becomes the central criterion, not wealth creation. Wealth is just a means to an end for social entrepreneurs.

Teachers as Social entrepreneurs play the role of change agents in the social sector, by:

- Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value),
- Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission,
- Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning,
- Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand, and
- Exhibiting a heightened sense of accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created.

Each element in this brief definition deserves some further elaboration as follows.

**Change agents in the social sector:** Teachers as social entrepreneurs are the reformers and revolutionaries with a social mission. They make fundamental changes in the way things are done in the social sector. Their visions are bold. They attack the underlying causes of problems, rather than simply treating symptoms. Though they may act locally, their actions have the potential to stimulate global improvements in their chosen arenas, whether that is education, health care, economic development, the environment, the arts, or any other social sector field.

**Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value:** Making a profit, creating wealth, or serving the desires of customers may be part of the model, but these are means to a social end, not the end in itself. Profit is not the gauge of value creation; nor is customer satisfaction. Social impact is the gauge. Social entrepreneurs look for a long-term social return on investment. Social entrepreneurs want more than a quick hit; they want to create lasting improvements. They think about sustaining the impact.

**Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities:** Where others see problems, entrepreneurs see opportunity. Social entrepreneurs are not simply driven by the perception of a social need or by their compassion, rather they have a vision of how to achieve improvement and they are determined to make their vision work. They are persistent. The key element is persistence combined with a willingness to make adjustments as one goes.

**Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning:** Social Entrepreneurs are innovative. They break new ground, develop new models, and pioneer new approaches. They simply need to be creative in applying what others have invented. It is not just a one-time burst of creativity. It is a continuous process of exploring, learning, and improving. Of course, with innovation comes uncertainty and risk of failure. Entrepreneurs tend to have a high tolerance for ambiguity and learn how to manage risks for themselves and others. They treat failure of a project as a learning experience, not a personal tragedy.

**Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand:** Social entrepreneurs do not let their own limited resources keep them from pursuing their visions. They are skilled at doing more with less and at attracting resources from others. They use scarce resources efficiently, and they leverage their limited resources by drawing in partners and collaborating with others. They develop resource strategies that are likely to support and reinforce their social missions. They take calculated risks and manage the downside, so as to reduce the harm that will result from failure. They understand the risk tolerances of their stakeholders and use this to spread the risk to those who are better prepared to accept it.

**Exhibiting a heightened sense of accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created:** Social entrepreneurs work with commitment and passion to create a social value. This means that they seek a sound understanding of the constituencies they are serving. They make sure they have correctly assessed the needs and values of the people they intend to serve and the communities in which they operate. In some cases, this requires close connections with those communities.

**Personal resourcefulness:** The root of the entrepreneurial process can be traced to the initiative taken by individuals to go beyond the existing way of life. The emphasis is on initiative rather than reaction, although events in the environment may have provided the trigger for the person to express initiative. 'Personal resourcefulness' is the belief in one's own capability for initiating actions directed towards creation and growth of enterprises. Teachers need to select their profession with such an understanding.

**Achievement-orientation:** While personal initiative and purposeful behavior can be viewed as a good starting point of an entrepreneurial effort, many such initiatives fail. The archetype successful entrepreneur is supposed to epitomize achievement motivation, which facilitates the creation and development of

enterprises in competitive environments. Toward such ends, entrepreneurial teachers need to build relationships with the stakeholders in the education process.

**Opportunity-seeking:** The context in which an individual brings to bear their initiative, achievement orientation, and visioning has a strong bearing on what is produced. When these forces are directed towards realizing surplus or value in a market environment, over a period of time, we see the creation of enterprises. Hence 'opportunity seeking' would include one's ability to see situations in terms of unmet needs, identifying markets or gaps for which a product or concept is to be evolved, and the search for creating and maintaining a competitive advantage to derive benefits on a sustained basis. This means that teachers can become change agents in that they collaborate with stakeholders and still participate in creating a less competitive environment among colleagues in their institutions.

**Innovativeness:** Entrepreneurs as persons who are not necessarily capitalists or those having command over resources, but as ones who create new combinations of the factors of production and the market to derive profit. Innovativeness refers to creation of new products, markets, product-market combinations, methods of production and organization, and the like that enable the enterprise to gain competitive advantage in the market. This can hold true also in educational institutions. Here, program and curriculum design and appropriate facilities and equipment are crucial along with teachers' skills to provide sound instruction to meet the tasks at hand and their students' learning preferences to improve the quality of life for students by means of education.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher education programs need to focus more these components of entrepreneurship and social agency in an integrated fashion to develop entrepreneurial approaches among teachers for serving students. Teacher entrepreneurship can effectively handle many challenges that being faced in a system of education and can transform this system into a socially responsive one. Fostering innovation requires changes in education. The idea that everyone can be a change maker should be integrated in school level so that students can become comfortable with the ideas and skills necessary to effect change early on. When students are encouraged to test out their own ideas in a safe and non-judgmental environment, they learn to value their own ideas, and valuing one's own ideas is crucial for a social entrepreneur. Therefore, teacher education programs need to take the initiative. This is important because social entrepreneurs are action researchers, learning through experimentation.

Also, the most valuable step a teacher can take to prepare him/herself to participate in the field of social entrepreneurship is to deepen his or her self-knowledge. In order to be successful and make an impact, an educator must first understand what he/she cares about and has always cared about, what his/her strengths and weaknesses are, what his/her value set is, what environments he/she works best in, and what his/her motivations are. Without knowing these things about oneself, one may inadvertently add to the already ample store of negative leadership in the world. It is more to understand the workings of the system s/he want to change and the history of the problem with which s/he are concerned, to be a successful social entrepreneur. Most of all, one needs to be prepared to listen to face challenges and work for the betterment of the area dealt with.

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# **Graduate Level Accounting: Online Observations and the Age of COVID-19**

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Prior to COVID, we had the luxury of moving as if time was not a consideration. This proved especially fitting in the world of accounting. Changes in accounting standards or regulations took years of negotiations between standard-setting bodies and practitioners. Textbooks had to be written that included these changes and then courses could be developed or revised. With the advent of COVID, we were no longer afforded the luxury of time. Courses needed to be modified for a virtual environment immediately. Faculty had little notice, and in many cases, minimal guidance on how to navigate Zoom classes. Teachers were faced with empty classrooms, students scattered, and it is largely unknown how long this would last. As I stated, as an online educator, my ‘world’ remained the same. But as I observed my traditional colleagues, I had to ask myself, ‘are we doing all that we can’?

This article is about how online education is changing how we view students and courses in accounting studies, but also how the recent events surrounding COVID-19 affect changing curriculum needs. In the early 1990’s I was attending Washington State University for my undergraduate degree in Accounting. However, with one year remaining, I relocated to northwest Washington due to family obligations. In those days, we did not have what was known as online education, with the exception of the University of Phoenix. Instead, my classes consisted of mailing assignments to my instructor in Pullman and waiting to receive a grade. I managed to take a couple of courses at the nearby Western Washington University with WSU’s permission. The process was time-consuming, arduous and confusing. If I had a question, it wasn’t so easy to send an email...there wasn’t email yet! Nonetheless, it was not going to be my first exposure to non-traditional education.

In 2010 I returned to learning using the virtual/online environment for both my MBA and my Doctorate degrees and decided to complete my career in teaching business and accounting courses. My focus in this article is only on the challenges of online accounting education. Before we address those concerns, we need to get an idea of ‘who’ our students/learners are in the online environment. When I pursued my undergraduate degree, I was an anomaly on campus. I was 31 years old which made me an outlier in terms of traditional students. Sometimes, I was nearly the same age as some professors which made conversations at times interesting. Recruiters were both fascinated and perplexed at how I would ‘fit’ into their vision of a new hire in their organization. Today however, we see all ages in students, especially in online education!

## **Changing Concepts of Students**

Traditional institutions (brick and mortar) still rely heavily on established concepts of ‘who’ the student is. The undergraduate population often represents those students who have no prior education other than perhaps taking some general bookkeeping courses in high school. Many undergraduates progress directly into masters programs, especially in the accounting environment. This is due to the change in the semester hours required to sit for the Certified Public Accountant license. Currently, students must complete 150 semester hours of education. Normally, the undergraduate degree represents about 128 hours so to reach

150, some additional graduate courses need to be taken. This is reflective of an expectation of increased knowledge in regulations and laws surrounding the various areas of accounting study. To achieve this, students enroll in either a master's in a specific field of accounting or may be able to meet the additional hour requirements through an MBA. Further, many colleges and universities offer specific master programs emphasizing the focus on pre-licensure requirements for CPA candidates. Finally, students wishing to earn their doctorate often apply soon after their masters programs are completed, meaning that in traditional institutions, a student might apply for their degrees when they are about 25 or 26 years old, completing them by their early 30's.

As universities shifted to include older students, many would offer evening courses or weekend courses to allow for balancing between career and education. In my experience, students were older, maybe mid-career looking to either enhance current skills or learn new ones. Students who left after their undergraduate degrees were now looking at career requirements such as earning their CPA or developing skills for promotion to mid to senior leadership positions. In the online environment, the expectation was that students had some background either in education or experience in 'business' within industries. In today's online environment, such characteristics couldn't be further from the truth.

There is an expectation that graduate students have had some general business courses or experience in business within industry. Finally, doctoral learners are those career professionals seeking senior/executive roles or advancing their skills. Instead, we often find students who are older and re-entering education after a lengthy period of time. Most students have little to no experience in their majors or specializations and may often be what we call 'lane changers'. A lane changer is an individual who is shifting the focus or direction of their current career path. Lane changers may also be looking towards entrepreneurship after graduation. However, often these individuals have little experience or knowledge in the field they are pursuing. These are the most challenging of students due to their 'expectations' of what the learning environment should be versus what it actually is.

### **How Did We End Up with Such a Mis-Match?**

At the undergraduate level, it is essential that students work on hands-on practice problems in order to grasp introductory concepts of the course; it is imperative that students understand basic concepts of debits and credits as well as how events/transactions flow through the financial systems to their respective reports. While in retrospect these may seem rather simplistic, the reality is that students who cannot master the basic skills in introductory accounting courses will ultimately not succeed in the program. As a tutor in undergraduate accounting courses, I see students struggle with understanding how transactions affect account categories and classifications as well as when one needs to 'debit' versus 'credit' the transaction. This takes daily practice and reinforcement through repeating these concepts over and over with examples. As such, it is my opinion that these types of courses are not well-suited for online education.

Students are often advised by the registrar/advising staff that the MBA is a solid general business degree. I concur with that. The curriculum touches on several areas including leadership, operations, as well as one or two accounting courses. I have taught Masters' in Business Administration accounting courses for several universities and the course outcomes vary little between institutions. However, while these courses are scaffolded into the MBA program, the program itself still uses an outdated expectation that students have some education/experience in business. Reflecting on my experiences, I would guess that of the MBA students I have taught from 2013 to present day, only five percent have some knowledge of basic accounting functions and/or working experience in a business environment. Students enter the MBA

program with undergraduate degrees in English, Psychology, Criminal Justice, Communication, Nursing, Addiction Counseling, General Biology, etc. Do you see the missing element? This causes a misalignment with the curriculum developed for the MBA and the ability of the student to be successful.

Graduate accounting courses are designed with the built-in rigor that would be achieved through some level of accounting knowledge or education. At the minimum, students should have completed a prerequisite course or demonstrated knowledge of basic accounting functions. Without that, simply put they are lost. For example, in one accounting course I taught, the very first week students were expected to prepare financial ratios *and* interpret the results for publicly traded companies using that company's US SEC Form 10-K Report. While I agree that at the graduate level students are expected a higher academic rigor, without the fundamental skills in what debits and credits are or what a particular financial statement represents, the course often devolves into student misplaced anger and frustration as well as high early withdrawal from the course. Between weeks 2 and 3 of a course I see the number of students drop often dramatically. Unfortunately, accounting is a core required course, so they still have to attempt it at some time in the program.

This is not an isolated issue with one university. It is driven by the outdated assumptions that we place on undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students. Unlike courses on leadership or marketing, accounting has specific concepts that cannot be learned watching some *Youtube* videos. Without the fundamentals clearly understood, students get lost quickly! However, it is not only the core technical skills learners struggle with, basic grammar and writing issues are pervasive and complicate how assignments are articulated.

Where do learners get 'stuck'? Based on my experience there are two main causes: student expectations of the course and lack of study habits. First, let's cover student expectations. In my graduate accounting course for the MBA, this may be the second or third course they take in the program. The first is usually an introductory course and perhaps a leadership or an organization course. These are basically fairly light courses that one can work themselves through with basic effort. However, the next course is the accounting course and the student's dreams of a 4.0 GPA. I hear this at least once each term. "I'm going to have to drop this class if I don't get an 'A'", "This is too hard and I have never studied accounting before", "Why are you 'failing me'" are some of my recurring comments.

This usually is a result of their world view and course reality. What I have realized is that most students in graduate online programs have been working for several years. That has resulted in them becoming 'experts' in their fields. However, they take this 'expert' position and try to force it into a class where they may not be an expert. The result is often anger at the fact that they 'don't know what they don't know' and trying to adapt to a learning environment. Blame is often laid at my feet instead of reflecting on what their goals are.

Not being prepared as a student contributes to frustration. Not knowing how to complete assignments on time, a lack of understanding on how to present submissions of work using proper essay style of writing or correctly formatted Excel spreadsheets is confusing at first. Skills in research are lacking and students rely on the faculty to 'teach them' how to perform these skills. Unfortunately, this is not the responsibility of the instructor. As I have been reminded by my department chairs, students need to understand the rigor of the course and be able to take the initiative to perform the research, skill-learning needed to be prepared. But it isn't always the student's fault.

## **What Can We Do?**

Online courses need more than static readings and assignments. Giving them an article to read does not make them critical thinkers. Without demonstrating how to read an article, how to compose an articulated essay, how to properly format an Excel spreadsheet sets the student up for failure. As faculty, we can help by providing examples, developing Zoom webinars, or even providing them with templates. After all, we need to help them to learn these new skills. It isn't difficult, and while I have heard from my peers a resistance to these assists, I know that if I show them how to properly format an Excel spreadsheet, that the majority of the students can follow it for the most part. It helps me to ease my time in reviewing their work instead of spending literally hours trying to interpret gibberish.

Additionally, there needs to be the element of interaction of the students and the faculty. This can be challenging with work commitments, time zone differences but an effort needs to be made. This does land squarely on the shoulders of the faculty. Discussions need to be engaging and substantive. Students often get away with one or two sentence answers in their undergraduate courses. But at the graduate level, think of these discussions as you would in the traditional classroom. The instructor poses a question and someone responds. Do you just move on to something else? No, you engage the learner further, getting them to draw out more knowledge through examples and illustrations. Students do the same with each other in agreeing and expanding the conversation or 'respectfully' disagreeing and supporting their position. This can be accomplished through Zoom live sessions that can be recorded for reviewing by those who cannot attend. Or, you set up multiple zoom sessions in the week to cover the same material.

Finally, a word about cultural issues. We need to admit that the challenges of ESL and accommodations is present in the online class. There is often a reluctance to reach out to Writing Tutors or Advisors by some ethnicities so you need to employ your resources at your institutions for help.

## **But Wait...Back To Covid!**

Classroom education has evolved from chalkboards to whiteboards, from mimeographed handouts and tests to computer software platforms. In each change, we as educators have adapted to new norms. However these changes have usually come slowly over time, and were supported through our administration. Faculty were often extensively trained in new technologies, mastering how we present and provide education to our students. COVID-19 changed all that...overnight. Without warning, schools were shuttered, students remained at home, and educators now needed a new skill set: innovation.

We traded our classrooms for Zoom sessions, white boards for PowerPoint presentations, and created new ways to track and ensure that our students understood the work. As a longtime online educator, my job flowed seamlessly between pre-COVID and present-day COVID restrictions. However, what I observed was that while students could move from traditional classroom to virtual experiences, not all courses could move in the same manner without significant revision. What might appear to be modifications, that on the surface appeared simplistic, anyone who has undertaken curriculum and course revisions in higher education would understand the real, and often-times draconian process.

It isn't as simple one would think. I started writing curriculum for online courses in 2014. I thought 'how hard can this be'? I had 30 plus years in the accounting industry, and I was an expert in several specializations including auditing, corporate accounting, government, and nonprofits. I knew with intricacy how to develop substantial tests of company financial records, what the processes involved with developing and defending budget appropriations before legislatures and the nuances in balancing financial needs with donor expectations. What I did not know was how the educational system moves at a snail's pace. Courses

are developed over months, sometimes several quarters. Curriculum program change can take years from conception to deployment.

This was exacerbated when COVID came into play. Now, curriculum had to be reworked and quickly to move from the traditional class to virtual. Presentations, discussions, assignments along with instructors having to learn the technology needed to be shifted as students were sent home. There was little time for developing and executing a 'normal' plan for changing curriculum. While students were packing and trying to get back home (or told not to return after a term/holiday break), faculty were dealing with moving in-class discussions into forums and at times educating themselves in Zoom or other communication tools. Navigating space at home and creating a classroom set up added stress and pressure to already overworked staff.

### **What Can We Do?**

Some areas of consideration include developing courses with pre-requisites. If there is a certain level of knowledge expected, it needs to be addressed in the course information. Institutions need to either ensure that students are ready or offer pre-requisite courses to help them to succeed. This should be part of the 'sales pitch' given by the college or university. Understand that traditional courses may not work in an online environment and be prepared to adjust them accordingly. Develop courses and rubrics that make sense to the outcomes of the program.

We need to allow more flexibility with faculty to help develop and augment courses to fit the needs of these 'new' student environments. Instead of going through the layers of process to request course curriculum updates, allow faculty to insert updated appropriate reading materials. Identify basic *Youtube* video links or create tailored presentations on how to format an Excel spreadsheet, or how to format the hanging indent for your references. These can be used over and over saving you time from multiple phone calls from students asking the same question. Institutions should be able to turn around course updates much quicker and ensure that courses and grading rubrics are aligned. There is nothing more frustrating than to have the wrong grading rubric attached to an assignment. Finally, faculty should set up a regular office hour time that students can call you and stick to it. Don't have an open Zoom time...it is a waste of your time. Have clear expectations of when you will be available for calls. I learned the hard way and would get calls all day long and on weekends. Respect your time and set boundaries for your students.

COVID is not going away any time soon. We have learned much through stumbling in the darkness. Now is the time to reflect on lessons learned and move forward towards student success, not only in accounting, but in all other disciplines too.

# **Transition and Migration to Online Learning Environment**

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**[Abstract]** *Due to the unforeseen pandemic, many educational institutions were forced to migrate from traditional teaching/learning methods to an online environment in a short period. This article measures the possible impacts on student learning via a three-stage evaluation process. The first stage surveyed faculty perspective on the success of the online part of the Spring semester and the second part focused on student perception of that same transition. The third stage compared results from selected traditional courses with comparable online counterparts. Overall, while many faculty were not familiar with the online teaching format, they were satisfied with the process and learning outcomes. Students also showed satisfaction with the online transition overall.*

**[Keywords]** *traditional teaching; hybrid delivery; online learning environment; learning management systems*

## **Introduction**

While many colleges and universities are offering some of their courses in either hybrid or fully online formats for many varieties of disciplines, the traditional (face-to-face) course deliveries are still popular and demanded by a good portion of faculty and students. Online course offerings are one of the most effective and efficient methods of delivering of contents and skills globally. There are many common sense advantages to the online course approach, such as flavor of degree programs and classes offered, flexible study times, balancing between the job and classwork, among others (Richardson & North, 2013). Consequently, the traditional formats are strongly staying alive along with the online formats of deliveries. As the current pandemic urged educational institutions to make a sudden transition and migration from traditional classroom settings to all online delivery environment, many considerations and issues needed to be quickly sorted out. It must be clearly stated that the course learning objectives remain the same regardless of the delivery mode employed. The main purpose of this research article is to investigate the possible impacts on student learning.

## **Concise Literature Review**

Since the pandemic suddenly emerged during the majority of active educational period this year, there are extremely limited published articles addressing the issues and challenges of transitioning from traditional to hybrid or online delivery formats. However, there are several concepts that are common to all the teaching/learning delivery formats; introduction of those assist in comprehension of this urged transition. Thus, those are briefly introduced in the following section.

### ***Delivery-Method***

Generally, course delivery format is defined by the level of technology integration and quantity of synchronous interaction between teachers and learners (Oranburg, 2020). Basically, there are three broad delivery formats. (i) Traditional: Teaching/learning is accomplished in a physical educational environment; (ii) Hybrid (Blended): Learning occurs by combining traditional and online formats; and (iii) Online: Teachers and students meet either synchronously or asynchronously online (e.g., via a Learning Management System).

### ***Presence***

By sudden transition and migration from traditional classroom to online delivery environment, the concept of “*Presence*” is becoming more essential (Salmons, 2020; North, & North, 2019a; North, & North, 2019b; North, & North, 2016). Many models have been developed by many researchers in the last couple of decades (Garrison, 2017). Presence in context of teaching/learning simply refers to three kinds of presence: Teaching, Cognitive, and Social (Daspit, Mims, & Zavattaro, 2015). Furthermore, it must be emphasized that *Presence* in online environment is established differently than in traditional classroom.

### ***Engagement***

All the tools and techniques that make topics interactive and engaging also work for hybrid and online formats, such as discussions, active participation, group/partner assignments and research projects, etc. These tools and more are available on many learning management systems that can be used to maintain student interaction online. Furthermore, explore third-party tools and social media to increase gamification and enthusiasm. Lynsey Duncan (2018) posted an article on Brightspace Community reporting, “Tools such as Wikis, Quizlet, Sporcle, Powtoon, Google Docs and the rest of its suite, and social media are quick to set up and can provide infinite possibilities for integrating engagement into your content pages.”

### ***Resources***

Teaching materials (a generic term used to describe the resources) that are used to deliver content and instruction are resources that support students learning and increase students success. Availability of resources in online courses aids that proves of learning and allowing the students to explore the contents independently while providing repetition (The Importance of Learning Materials in Teaching, n.d.).

### ***Support***

As the traditional teaching method depends on support, according to Coomey, & Stephenson (2001) and other researchers (Kampov-Polevoi, 2010; Carey, 2020) the need for support is the most frequently mentioned feature of online learning. Support includes periodic contact, online tutorial supervision, peer support, advice from experts, feedback on performance, support services and software tools. Almost all students report that effective processes for instructor, tutor, and peer feedbacks are the most important features of a successful online course.

### ***Trust***

Although commonly the trust in online courses appears to be improving, the online course offering is growing and is the most popular effective and efficient methods of delivery. Several technical approaches certainly improve and in some cases eliminate dishonestly in online activities; specially the quizzes and exams. For instance, proper use of lockdown browser software and webcam monitoring drastically improves the trust in online delivery (Richardson, & North, 2013).

## Methodology

Similar to many other colleges and universities, on March 12, 2020, Kennesaw State University made the decision to convert all face-to-face (traditional) courses to fully online courses due to the COVID-19 virus. Many of the faculty teaching face-to-face had no experience with teaching fully online prior to this unforeseen event. To gauge the possible impacts on student learning, a three-stage evaluation process was conducted in the Coles College of Business. The Coles College of Business has about 160 full-time faculty members and about 6,100 undergraduate students. The first stage was a survey of the Coles faculty regarding their opinion of how the rest of the spring semester played out for those courses that were converted. The second stage was to survey students who had gone through the conversion. And, the third stage was to compare the results from selected face-to-face courses with comparable online courses.

## Results of the Online Conversion for Business Classes

### Demographics

Once spring semester was over and grades were turned in, a survey email was sent to all full-time faculty at Coles.<sup>1</sup> That resulted in 58 (36 percent) usable responses. The average time teaching for the respondents was 11.8 years (standard deviation of 6.2) with a maximum of 18 years and a minimum of one year.<sup>2</sup> There were 24 faculty (41 percent of respondents) who had never taught online before. Among the faculty who had taught online before, the average was 7.2 years (standard deviation of 4.4) with a minimum of one and a maximum of 12. This is not unexpected as Coles has a history of offering a lot of online courses. The correlation between years teaching and years teaching online was 0.155 ( $p=0.245$ ) so length of time teaching was not a determinant of time teaching online; although, the time teaching online cannot not exceed the total time teaching. Even among the 34 professors with online teaching experience, the correlation was only marginally higher at 0.159 ( $p=0.234$ ) and was not significant.

Of the faculty surveyed, 35 had designed at least one online course before. The average number of courses designed was 2.6 (standard deviation of 1.2) with a minimum of one and a maximum of four. Moreover, 42, had redesigned an existing online course. The average number redesigned was 2.4 (standard deviation of 1.4) with a minimum of one and a maximum of four. This was not significant with length of time teaching ( $r=0.076$ ) and the correlation was insignificant ( $p=0.572$ ). The correlation between number of online courses designed and number of online courses redesigned was higher ( $p=0.520$ ) and significant ( $p=0.000$ ). However, this correlation was this high because 13 faculty members had neither designed nor redesigned an online course. When those observations were dropped, the correlation dropped ( $r=0.300$ ) but was still significant ( $p=0.022$ ).

The breakdown of the respondents was as follows:

Respondent's Rank	#
Lecturer	8
Senior lecturer	5
Assistant professor	9
Associate professor	10
Professor	21
Other or not provided	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>

<sup>1</sup> This research was approved by the KSU institutional review board.

<sup>2</sup> This is total teaching time, *not* time teaching at Kennesaw State University.

The educational breakdown was as follows:

<b>Educational Breakdown</b>	<b>#</b>
Doctoral degree	44
Master's degree	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>

The age breakdown was as follows:

<b>Age Breakdown</b>	<b>#</b>
Under 30	1
30 to 40	6
41 to 50	18
51 to 60	13
61 to 70	16
Over 70	3
No response	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>

The gender breakdown was as follows:

<b>Gender Breakdown</b>	<b>#</b>
Male	36
Female	20
Other	1
No response	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>

***Experience with D2L***

D2L Brightspace (formerly Desire2Learn) is the learning management system (LMS) used by Kennesaw State University and all face-to-face courses are automatically given a D2L section even if the professor does not request it. When asked prior to this semester, how comfortable were you teaching online using D2L; the results were as follows:

<b>Teaching Online Comfort Level</b>	<b>#</b>
Very uncomfortable	6
Uncomfortable	3
No experience	10
Comfortable	19
Very comfortable	19
No response	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>

Therefore, 65.5 percent were comfortable or very comfortable using D2L and only 17.2 percent had no experience with D2L. Based on informal conversations, this high level of comfort with so many professors having not taught online before is from professors posting grades and course material in D2L for face-to-face courses.

The faculty were experienced or very experienced with most of the D2L features:

	Discussion	Quizzes	Respondus <sup>3</sup>	Posting Grades	Drop Box	Groups
Not aware of	2	1	5	1	3	9
Aware of but never used	16	7	20	3	5	14
Minor experience	7	2	6	1	5	7
Experienced	12	18	12	7	9	8
Very experienced	20	29	13	45	35	18
No response	1	1	2	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>

	Posting PowerPoint	Posting Videos	Video Chats	Intelligent Agents <sup>4</sup>	Collaborate Ultra <sup>5</sup>
Not aware of	2	2	10	24	8
Aware of but never used	4	10	17	14	18
Minor experience	1	11	11	16	7
Experienced	7	8	10	2	17
Very experienced	43	26	9	1	7
No response	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>

D2L Feature Experience	#
Intelligent Agents	5.2%
Holding Video Chats	32.8%
Collaborate Ultra	41.4%
Respondus	43.1%
Groups	44.8%
Discussion	55.2%
Posting Videos	58.6%
Assignment Drop Box	75.9%
Quizzes	81.0%
Posting PowerPoint Slides	86.2%
Posting Grades in D2L	89.7%

### ***The Conversion***

The faculty in the survey converted a total of 97 courses from face-to-face to online. The average number converted by each professor was 1.7 (standard deviation of 1.0) with a minimum of zero<sup>6</sup> and a maximum of four. An important consideration in converting a face-to-face course is if there is already an existing online version of the same course. Naturally, this can only happen when there are multiple sections of a course being taught. For the faculty in this survey, Of the 97 face-to-face courses being converted, only 22 did not have an online counterpart. The average faculty in the survey converted 0.9 courses (standard deviation of 1.0) with a minimum of zero and a maximum of four. For those courses without an online counterpoint, the average number converted by a faculty member was 1.5 (standard deviation of 0.9) with a minimum of one and a maximum of four.

<sup>3</sup> A “lock down” browser that can be required for quizzes and exams. It keeps the student from using any other program on the computer during the exam.

<sup>4</sup> A way of automating the sending of emails to students based on one or more established criteria.

<sup>5</sup> A video conferencing tool built into D2L that also allows you to share files and your screen.

<sup>6</sup> A faculty member already teaching fully online would not need to convert any courses. There was only one of these in the survey.

Next, we looked at the components of the face-to-face courses being converted.

	<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Role Playing</b>	<b>Hands On</b>
Average	42.0%	25.2%	8.4%	34.5%
Maximum	87.5%	87.5%	87.5%	87.5%
Minimum	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Standard deviation	34.9%	27.5%	21.1%	30.6%

Perhaps due to the large number of face-to-face courses with online counterparts, the conversion of the face-to-face courses took less time than expected. The average per faculty member<sup>7</sup> was 38.6 hours (standard deviation of 25.5) with a minimum of ten hours and a maximum of ninety hours.

### ***Changes to Courses Due to Conversion***

Next, we looked at what components of the face-to-face courses were changed when they were converted to online:

	<b>Course Assignments</b>	<b>Lectures</b>	<b>Topics Covered</b>	<b>Attendance Policy</b>	<b>Grading Policies</b>
No change	12	17	29	27	26
Very few changes	19	11	17	9	20
Moderate changes	16	11	8	6	11
Quite a few changes	10	17	2	4	0
Eliminated	0	1	1	11	0
No response	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>

With regards to course assignments, the results were widely varied; although, it was encouraging to see that no assignments were completely eliminated. The results were similar for lectures. We know from casual conversations that many of the courses without face-to-face counterparts were converted to synchronous online delivery using either Microsoft Teams or Collaborate Ultra to deliver lectures at the regularly scheduled times. Unfortunately, we did not anticipate this so no additional survey questions regarding lectures were used.

Most of the faculty made relatively few changes to the topics being covered. In other words, there was not a push to “dumb down” the courses. Many of the faculty maintained their existing attendance policies only applying them to the virtual synchronous meetings. As with topics covered, only minimal changes were made to the grading policies.

	<b>Grade Component Weights</b>	<b>Participation</b>	<b>Exams</b>
No change	33	26	30
Very few changes	12	14	13
Moderate changes	11	10	7
Quite a few changes	1	3	7
Eliminated	0	4	0
No response	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>

As with grades, only minimal changes were made to the weights for the various components used to compute those grades. Likewise, only minimal changes were made to the participation requirements. Exams

<sup>7</sup> The data is per faculty member, regardless of how many courses they converted.

also saw minimal changes. This is due, in part, to some of the face-to-face classes already administering the exams online.

### ***Overall Satisfaction***

Overall, the faculty were satisfied with the process.

<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	<b>#</b>
Very unsatisfied	1
Unsatisfied	3
Neutral	12
Satisfied	26
Very satisfied	15
No response	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>

Hence, 70.7 percent reported being either satisfied or very satisfied.

### ***Student Learning***

Overall, faculty were not impressed with the resulting student learning.

<b>Student Learning Rated by Faculty</b>	<b>#</b>
Much lower	2
Lower	16
About the same	34
Higher	3
Much higher	1
No response	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>

Fifty-two faculty (89.7 percent) reported that learning either stayed the same or decreased as a result of the conversion.

### ***Grades***

At first glance, it appeared that grades had improved:

<b>Grades</b>	<b>#</b>
Much lower	0
Lower	3
About the same	33
Higher	19
Much higher	2
No response	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>

Faculty reported that in 56.9 percent of the time, the grades were about the same. They also reported that 36.2 percent of the time the grades were higher. Given the other responses to this survey, this is more likely to be the result of the converted courses being easier than the result of student learning improving as a result of the conversion. This is especially borne out by the results below that 81.0 percent of the student engagements were lower or about the same. Additionally, the single biggest concern raised in the comment part of the survey was student cheating on the online exams. This is not surprising given that 31 of the 58 respondents (53.5 percent) had little to no experience with Respondus, the primary tool D2L offers to help reduce cheating.

### Other Miscellaneous Results

	Student Engagement	Student Interactions	Time in Course
Much lower	9	9	4
Lower	21	25	15
About the same	17	19	30
Higher	8	3	5
Much higher	1	0	0
No response	2	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>

A major of faculty members felt that student engagement and student interactions in their courses were lower or much lower after the conversion. Surprisingly, faculty reported that student time spent in the course either declined or stayed the same. Given the format conversion, this would either be due to the courses becoming easier or high levels of prior student experience with online courses.

#### ***Student Satisfaction***

No student evaluations were conducted by the University so faculty were asked to estimate student satisfaction. The results show that in 77.6 percent of the cases, it either stayed the same or declined.

Student Satisfaction	#
Much lower	2
Lower	12
About the same	31
Higher	9
Much higher	0
No response	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>

#### ***Student Survey***

A survey of Coles College of Business students was sent out at the end of spring semester. Respondents were limited to students who had at least one face-to-face course converted to online during the semester due to COVID-19. A total of 70 students responded. Of those, 64 responses were usable. The survey asked the students for some basic demographic information. The breakdown by class was as follows:

Classification Breakdown	#
Freshman	8
Sophomore	4
Junior	16
Senior	37

The respondents are heavily weighted towards juniors and seniors because fairly few freshman and sophomore students take business administration courses. The gender breakdown was:

Gender Breakdown	#
Male	33
Female	28
Other or prefer not to answer	3

This is fairly representative of the student body in the Coles College of Business. With regards to age, the breakdown was as follows:

<b>Age Breakdown</b>	<b>#</b>
18-21	32
22-25	19
25-30	9
Over 30	4

The average age was about 22.7 with a standard deviation of about 3.9. Kennesaw State University and the Coles College of Business mainly cater to students directly from high school so this is fairly representative of the student body. With regards to the number of online courses taken, not counting the courses converted from face-to-face, the results are as follows:

<b>Online Courses Taken</b>	<b>#</b>
None	13
1-2	15
3-4	15
5-6	14
More than 6	7

This is an average of about 3.1 with a standard deviation of about 2.3. The Coles College of Business has always offered a large number of online courses so these results are not surprising. With regards to how many face-to-face courses these students had converted, the results are as follows:

<b>Number of Face-to-Face Courses Had Converted</b>	<b>#</b>
1	6
2	15
3	9
4	17
5 or more	17

This has an average of about 3.4 with a standard deviation of about 1.4.

### **Converted Courses**

Each student was asked about the first three of their converted face-to-face courses. Since not all students had three courses converted, that gave us 172 data points. For each of the three courses surveyed, the students were asked five questions:

1. After the conversion to online, this course was easier, about the same, harder.
2. After the conversion to online, was your learning in this converted course lower, higher, about the same.
3. After the conversion to online, how much time did you spend with the course?
4. How satisfied are you with the conversion to online?
5. How prepared was your instructor to teach online relative to teaching in the classroom?

### *Was the Course Easier?*

The results for this question were:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Easier</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>Harder</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Freshman	2	6	16	24
Sophomore	1	4	7	12
Junior	7	16	18	41
Senior	5	54	35	94
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Easier</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>Harder</b>
Freshman	8.3%	25.0%	66.7%
Sophomore	8.3%	33.3%	58.3%
Junior	17.1%	39.0%	43.9%
Senior	5.3%	57.4%	37.2%

Freshmen and sophomores thought the courses got harder by a wide percentage while juniors had the highest percentage of responses that the courses got easier.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Easier</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>Harder</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Female	5	33	31	69
Male	9	47	37	93
Other or prefer not to answer	1		8	9
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Easier</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>Harder</b>
Female	7.25%	47.83%	44.93%
Male	9.68%	50.54%	39.78%
Other or prefer not to answer	11.11%	0.00%	88.89%

Therefore, there was not a lot of difference by gender.

<b>Age</b>	<b>Easier</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>Harder</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
18-21	8	38	43	89
22-25	4	25	23	52
25-30	2	14	6	22
Over 30	1	3	4	8
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

<b>Age</b>	<b>Easier</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>Harder</b>
18-21	9.0%	42.7%	48.3%
22-25	7.7%	48.1%	44.2%
25-30	9.1%	63.6%	27.3%
Over 30	12.5%	37.5%	50.0%

The 25-30 year old students were the least likely to say that the resulting course was harder. Interestingly, the over 30 students were most likely to find the converted courses harder but also most likely to find them easier.

Number of Online Courses Taken	Easier	Same	Harder	Grand Total
0	4	5	30	39
1-2	2	27	14	43
3-4	4	23	13	40
5-6	5	16	13	34
More than 6		9	6	15
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Number of Online Courses Taken	Easier	Same	Harder
0	10.3%	12.8%	76.9%
1-2	4.7%	62.8%	32.6%
3-4	10.0%	57.5%	32.5%
5-6	14.7%	47.1%	38.2%
More than 6	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%

Students who had never taken an online course before found the conversion to be much more difficult. Interestingly, having taken more than one prior online course did not appear to have much of an impact on the difficulty rating.

### Learning after the Conversion

Class	Lower	Same	Higher	Grand Total
Freshman	15	9		24
Sophomore	7	5		12
Junior	16	18	7	41
Senior	44	43	7	94
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Class	Lower	Same	Higher
Freshman	62.5%	37.5%	
Sophomore	58.3%	41.7%	
Junior	39.0%	43.9%	17.1%
Senior	46.8%	45.7%	7.4%

Therefore, no freshmen or sophomores thought learning was higher in the converted courses and only juniors thought the learning was higher after the conversion.

Gender	Lower	Same	Higher	Grand Total
Female	38	25	6	69
Male	35	50	8	93
Other or prefer not to answer	9			9
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Gender	Lower	Higher	Same
Female	55.1%	8.7%	36.2%
Male	37.6%	8.6%	53.8%
Other or prefer not to answer	100.0%		

Males were more likely to say that learning was the same while females were more likely to say that learning was lower.

Age	Lower	Same	Higher	Grand Total
18-21	48	37	4	89
22-25	22	23	7	52
25-30	9	11	2	22
Over 30	3	4	1	8
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Age	Lower	Same	Higher
18-21	53.9%	41.6%	4.5%
22-25	42.3%	44.2%	13.5%
25-30	40.9%	50.0%	9.1%
Over 30	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%

Number of Online Courses Taken	Lower	Same	Higher	Grand Total
0	30	9		39
1-2	13	24	6	43
3-4	14	21	5	40
5-6	16	17	1	34
More than 6	9	4	2	15
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Number of Online Courses Taken	Lower	Higher	Same
0	76.9%		23.1%
1-2	30.2%	14.0%	55.8%
3-4	35.0%	12.5%	52.5%
5-6	47.1%	2.9%	50.0%
More than 6	60.0%	13.3%	26.7%

Students who had taken no prior online courses or more than six prior online courses were far more likely to say learning was lower than any other students were. The results for zero courses was not at all surprising since those students would have been learning how to take an online course while also trying to learn the material. However, the more than six had the second highest belief that learning was lower and this was very surprising. Perhaps, their large experience with online courses gave them specific expectations regarding online courses that these hastily converted courses just did not meet.

### Effort in Course after Conversion from Face-to-Face to Online

Class	Much Less	Less	Same	More	Much More	Grand Total
Freshman	1	5	8	5	5	24
Sophomore	1		6	4	1	12
Junior	3	12	15	6	5	41
Senior	19	18	34	17	6	94
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Class	Much Less	Less	Same	More	Much More
Freshman	4.2%	20.8%	33.3%	20.8%	20.8%
Sophomore	8.3%		50.0%	33.3%	8.3%
Junior	7.3%	29.3%	36.6%	14.6%	12.2%
Senior	20.2%	19.1%	36.2%	18.1%	6.4%

Seen another way:

Class	Less or Much Less	More or Much More
Freshman	25.0%	41.7%
Sophomore	8.3%	41.7%
Junior	36.6%	26.8%
Senior	39.4%	24.5%

So, the majority of freshmen and sophomores put in more or much more effort while the majority of juniors and seniors put in less or much less effort.

Gender	Much Less	Less	Same	More	Much More	Grand Total
Female	11	16	26	14	2	69
Male	9	19	34	17	14	93
Other or prefer not to answer	4		3	1	1	9
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Gender	Much Less	Less	Same	More	Much More
Female	15.9%	23.2%	37.7%	20.3%	2.9%
Male	9.7%	20.4%	36.6%	18.3%	15.1%
Other or prefer not to answer	44.4%	0.0%	33.3%	11.1%	11.1%

Seen another way:

Gender	Less or Much Less	More or Much More
Female	39.1%	23.2%
Male	30.1%	33.3%
Other or prefer not to answer	44.4%	22.2%

So, females tended to put in less or much less effort while males tended to put in more or much more effort; although, the difference between the two was much less for males than for females.

Number of Online	Much Less	Less	Same	More	Much More	Grand Total
0	5	9	12	7	6	39
1-2	7	8	20	7	1	43
3-4	5	4	16	10	5	40
5-6	6	10	11	4	3	34
More than 6	1	4	4	4	2	15
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Number of Online Courses Taken	Much Less	Less	Same	More	Much More
0	12.8%	23.1%	30.8%	17.9%	15.4%
1-2	16.3%	18.6%	46.5%	16.3%	2.3%
3-4	12.5%	10.0%	40.0%	25.0%	12.5%
5-6	17.6%	29.4%	32.4%	11.8%	8.8%
More than 6	6.7%	26.7%	26.7%	26.7%	13.3%

Number of Courses Converted	Much Less	Less	Same	More	Much More	Grand Total
1		2	1	1	2	6
2	2	10	11	10	3	36
3	5	5	9	5	3	27
4	4	10	24	7	6	51
5 or more	13	8	18	9	3	51
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Number of Courses Converted	Much Less	Less	Same	More	Much More
1		33.3%	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%
2	5.6%	27.8%	30.6%	27.8%	8.3%
3	18.5%	18.5%	33.3%	18.5%	11.1%
4	7.8%	19.6%	47.1%	13.7%	11.8%
5 or more	25.5%	15.7%	35.3%	17.6%	5.9%

Seen another way:

Number of Courses Converted	Less or Much Less	More or Much More
1	33.3%	50.0%
2	33.3%	36.1%
3	37.0%	29.6%
4	27.5%	25.5%
5 or more	41.2%	23.5%

Generally speaking, the more courses a student had converted, the less likely they were to put in more or much more effort into those courses. Mostly, as the number of courses converted increased, the more likely they were to put in the same level of effort. This could be due to the effort of learning to deal with online courses was spread over more courses.

### Satisfaction

We will now look at how satisfied the students were with the conversion from face-to-face to online. The students were dealing with the same COVID-19 concerns as the faculty so that most likely tempered their view of the resulting courses.

Class	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Grand Total
Freshman	8	5	4	7		24
Sophomore	3	3	1	2	3	12
Junior	2	12	8	14	5	41
Senior	17	21	21	21	14	94
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Class	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Freshman	33.3%	20.8%	16.7%	29.2%	
Sophomore	25.0%	25.0%	8.3%	16.7%	25.0%
Junior	4.9%	29.3%	19.5%	34.1%	12.2%
Senior	18.1%	22.3%	22.3%	22.3%	14.9%

Seen another way:

Class	Unsatisfied or Very Unsatisfied	Satisfied or Very Satisfied
Freshman	54.2%	29.2%
Sophomore	50.0%	41.7%
Junior	34.1%	46.3%
Senior	40.4%	37.2%

Therefore, freshmen and sophomores less satisfied than satisfied while juniors and seniors were mixed with juniors more satisfied and seniors somewhat less satisfied.

Gender	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Grand Total
Female	12	15	16	11	15	69
Male	15	25	15	31	7	93
Other or prefer not to answer	3	1	3	2		9
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Gender	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Female	17.4%	21.7%	23.2%	15.9%	21.7%
Male	16.1%	26.9%	16.1%	33.3%	7.5%
Other or prefer not to answer	33.3%	11.1%	33.3%	22.2%	

Seen another way:

Gender	Unsatisfied or Very Unsatisfied	Satisfied or Very Satisfied
Female	39.1%	37.7%
Male	43.0%	40.9%
Other or prefer not to answer	44.4%	22.2%

Or, see another way, both females and males were equally unsatisfied and satisfied with females having a higher indifference level.

Number of online courses taken	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Grand Total
0	16	12	3	8		39
1-2	6	10	10	8	9	43
3-4	5	10	8	12	5	40
5-6	2	5	11	16		34
More than 6	1	4	2		8	15
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Number of online courses take	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	41.0%	30.8%	7.7%	20.5%	0.0%
1-2	14.0%	23.3%	23.3%	18.6%	20.9%
3-4	12.5%	25.0%	20.0%	30.0%	12.5%
5-6	5.9%	14.7%	32.4%	47.1%	0.0%
More than 6	6.7%	26.7%	13.3%	0.0%	53.3%

Seen another way:

Number of online courses take	Unsatisfied or Very Unsatisfied	Satisfied or Very Satisfied
0	71.8%	20.5%
1-2	37.2%	39.5%
3-4	37.5%	42.5%
5-6	20.6%	47.1%
More than 6	33.3%	53.3%

Therefore, generally speaking, the more courses the student has taken online in the past, the more satisfied they were with the conversion.

Number of courses converted	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Grand Total
1		2	1	2	1	6
2	2	7	10	13	4	36
3	3	7	6	6	5	27
4	6	15	8	17	5	51
5 or more	19	10	9	6	7	51
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Number of courses converted	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
1		33.3%	16.7%	33.3%	16.7%
2	5.6%	19.4%	27.8%	36.1%	11.1%
3	11.1%	25.9%	22.2%	22.2%	18.5%
4	11.8%	29.4%	15.7%	33.3%	9.8%
5 or more	37.3%	19.6%	17.6%	11.8%	13.7%

Seen another way:

Number of courses converted	Unsatisfied or Very Unsatisfied	Satisfied or Very Satisfied
1	33.3%	50.0%
2	25.0%	47.2%
3	37.0%	40.7%
4	41.2%	43.1%
5 or more	56.9%	25.5%

Therefore, in general, students were more satisfied the fewer the number of courses they had converted from face-to-face to online. Most student are fully time students. This could either be because they were taking fewer courses than most students or because they had selected specific courses that they wanted to take face-to-face.

### Student Opinion of How Prepared the Instructor was to Teach Online

Normally, KSU administers a course evaluation for every course at the end of the semester. However, these were all cancelled for spring semester so these could not be used to compare how professors performed during the conversion. Therefore, we asked students how well their professors seemed to be prepared for the conversion.

Class	Very Unprepared	Unprepared	About the Same	Prepared	Very Prepared	Grand Total
Freshman	3	9	2	8	2	24
Sophomore		4	3	1	4	12
Junior	2	6	10	13	10	41
Senior	18	12	22	20	22	94
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Class	Very Unprepared	Unprepared	About the Same	Prepared	Very Prepared
Freshman	12.5%	37.5%	8.3%	33.3%	8.3%
Sophomore		33.3%	25.0%	8.3%	33.3%
Junior	4.9%	14.6%	24.4%	31.7%	24.4%
Senior	19.1%	12.8%	23.4%	21.3%	23.4%

Seen another way:

Class	Unprepared or Very Unprepared	Prepared or Very Prepared
Freshman	50.0%	41.7%
Sophomore	33.3%	41.7%
Junior	19.5%	56.1%
Senior	31.9%	44.7%

In general, there was not a lot of variation in how students evaluated the preparedness of the professor based on class level; although, juniors were higher.

Gender	Very Unprepared	Unprepared	About the Same	Prepared	Very Prepared	Grand Total
Female	10	9	13	17	20	69
Male	10	19	23	24	17	93
Other or prefer not to answer	3	3	1	1	1	9
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Gender	Very Unprepared	Unprepared	About the Same	Prepared	Very Prepared
Female	14.5%	13.0%	18.8%	24.6%	29.0%
Male	10.8%	20.4%	24.7%	25.8%	18.3%
Other or prefer not to answer	33.3%	33.3%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%

Seen another way:

Gender	Unprepared or Very Unprepared	Prepared or Very Prepared
Female	27.5%	53.6%
Male	31.2%	44.1%
Other or prefer not to answer	66.7%	22.2%

Therefore, in general, females ranked the professors more prepared than males.

Number of online courses taken	Very Unprepared	Unprepared	About the Same	Prepared	Very Prepared	Grand Total
0	7	13	5	11	3	39
1-2	6	8	10	8	11	43
3-4	3	3	11	13	10	40
5-6	6	5	8	9	6	34
More than 6	1	2	3	1	8	15
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Number of online courses taken	Very Unprepared	Unprepared	About the Same	Prepared	Very Prepared
0	17.9%	33.3%	12.8%	28.2%	7.7%
1-2	14.0%	18.6%	23.3%	18.6%	25.6%
3-4	7.5%	7.5%	27.5%	32.5%	25.0%
5-6	17.6%	14.7%	23.5%	26.5%	17.6%
More than 6	6.7%	13.3%	20.0%	6.7%	53.3%

Seen another way:

Number of online courses taken	Unprepared	Prepared
0	51.3%	35.9%
1-2	32.6%	44.2%
3-4	15.0%	57.5%
5-6	32.4%	44.1%
More than 6	20.0%	60.0%

Therefore, students who have taken 3-4 or more than six online course were the most satisfied.

Number of courses converted	Very Unprepared	Unprepared	About the Same	Prepared	Very Prepared	Grand Total
1	1	1	1	1	2	6
2	3	6	10	10	7	36
3	2	2	8	6	9	27
4	1	14	10	17	9	51
5 or more	16	8	8	8	11	51
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>171</b>

This converts to the following percentages:

Number of courses converted	Very Unprepared	Unprepared	About the Same	Prepared	Very Prepared
1	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%
2	8.3%	16.7%	27.8%	27.8%	19.4%
3	7.4%	7.4%	29.6%	22.2%	33.3%
4	2.0%	27.5%	19.6%	33.3%	17.6%
5 or more	31.4%	15.7%	15.7%	15.7%	21.6%

Seen another way:

Number of courses converted	Unprepared	Prepared
1	33.3%	50.0%
2	25.0%	47.2%
3	14.8%	55.6%
4	29.4%	51.0%
5 or more	47.1%	37.3%

### Student Performance

To test how well students performed after the conversion, we compared two courses with a very specific criterion, those were there was a face-to-face and online version being taught by the same professor. That way, the professor was already versed in teaching the course online and any differences between the two sections could be attributed to student performance. In the Management, Entrepreneurship and Hospitality School within the Coles College of Business, only two courses fit this criterion, one section of a junior level operations management course and one section of a senior level project management course. Both were evaluated.

#### Operations Management

In the operations management course, eight assignments were completed after the conversion. They were:

- Two homework problem sets using the McGraw-Hill learning management platform Connect.
- Three chapter quizzes in Connect.
- Two practice exams in the college's learning management platform D2L Brightspace.
- One chapter exam covering three chapters. This was in D2L.

Our hypothesis is that students in the originally online course would do better than those in the converted face-to-face course and that proved to be correct. On all eight assignments, the originally online students scored higher. However, only five of the eight differences were significant. Those results are summarized below:

	Ch 11 Quiz	Ch 12 HW	Ch 12 Quiz	Ch 13 Quiz	Ch 13 HW	Practice Exam 3 Concepts	Practice Exam 3 Problems	Exam 3
<b>Face-to-Face</b>								
<i>N</i>	18	16	19	20	16	20	19	19
<i>Average</i>	96.4	88.5	94.5	95.8	89.1	86.1	40.9	67.9
<i>St. Dev.</i>	5.1	12.6	6.0	6.7	9.3	11.9	22.9	9.7
<b>Online</b>								
<i>N</i>	29	27	30	30	30	29	30	31
<i>Average</i>	98.4	91.6	98.3	98.5	92.2	92.3	52.7	68.6
<i>St. Dev.</i>	3.0	10.2	3.3	3.6	6.8	5.6	19.6	10.3
<i>t-value</i>	-1.746	-0.896	-2.911	-1.845	-1.275	-2.482	-2.351	-0.216
<i>p-value</i>	0.044	0.188	0.003	0.036	0.104	0.008	0.012	0.415
<b>Significant</b>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>

#### Project Management

With project management, the test was performed on six chapter quizzes, all given in D2L Brightspace. The hypothesis was the same, namely that the originally online students would perform better than the face-to-face converted students. However, that proved not to be the case. On two of the quizzes, the average

scores were the same and on one other one, the face-to-face students performed slightly better. Only one of the differences was statistically significant. Those results are summarized below.

	Quiz 11	Quiz 12	Quiz 13	Quiz 14	Quiz 15	Quiz 16
<b>Face-to-Face</b>						
<i>n</i>	11	12	12	12	12	12
<i>Average</i>	17.6	18.6	17.5	17.0	17.8	16.0
<i>St. Dev.</i>	1.1	1.6	1.4	2.0	2.1	1.9
<b>Online</b>						
<i>n</i>	60	59	57	56	55	57
<i>Average</i>	17.6	18.6	18.1	16.9	18.0	17.2
<i>St. Dev.</i>	2.0	1.2	1.3	2.6	1.6	2.4
<i>t-value</i>	0.060	0.061	-1.446	0.067	-0.277	-1.677
<i>p-value</i>	0.476	0.476	0.076	0.473	0.292	0.040
<b>Significant</b>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>

### Concise Conclusion and Recommendation

The Coles College of Business was able to transition to fully online courses in a way that both faculty and students found acceptable while maintaining student learning. This was due in large part to much of the faculty and many of the students having already had online experience. For this reason, colleges and faculty are advised to offer at least some online comments going forward to maintain the core of experience just in case COVID-19 should flair up again or some other event forces them to go online again.

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# **Flexibility, Effectiveness, and Collaboration: English Writing Center in Zhejiang University during the Pandemic**

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*[Abstract] The COVID-19 pandemic forced English Writing Centers (EWC) in Chinese universities to make effective decisions about how to implement routine lectures, appointments, and other activities on campuses. With quick reaction and good facilities in Chinese universities, EWCs quickly adapted to face tis challenge. This paper takes Zhejiang University EWC as an example to show the way it adapted itself to the new situation. Experiences for solutions to challenges in developing the flexibility of online lectures and workshops and the effectiveness of online tutoring are presented to highlight the potential collaboration with digital technology for future EWC.*

*[Keywords] pandemic; English Writing Center; flexibility; effectiveness; collaboration*

## **Introduction**

In May 2018, Qinghua University announced the start of an undergraduate course, “Writing and Communication.” Two months later, the “Writing and Communication Teaching Center, Qinghua University” was established (Li, 2020). This immediately aroused great attention from scholars, teachers, administrators, and college students in Chinese Universities. Though the center is much more focused on logical and expository writing regardless of language itself, English writing centers in Chinese universities saw the light of more support from university administration. The first English writing center in China was formally started in Xi’an International Studies University in 2006 (Song, 2018). From then on, more and more English writing centers emerged in Chinese universities. Among them, the Zhejiang University English Writing Center (EWC) has been making contributions to the combination of writing classes, writing lectures, face-to-face writing instructions, international writing symposiums, and a national contest in writing, which establishes its special status in Chinese universities with its broad vision (Fang, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, EWCs in Chinese universities faced sudden challenges for all routine classes and regular instructions. Some EWCs paused or reduced their services for some time; however, with quick reactions and good technological support, the Zhejiang University EWC quickly adapted itself to face challenges and take effective measures to help adapt itself to the new situation. Tutors are recommended to be trained “through the online medium with (they) will ultimately interact whether that be email, synchronous chat, listserv discussions, or reference materials” (Hewett, & Powers, 2008). In this paper, we would like to present our experience for solutions to challenges in developing flexible online lectures and online workshops, and, especially, effective online tutoring to highlight the potential collaborative prospects of digital technology for future EWC.

## **Online Lectures and Workshops: More Flexible Interactions**

Lectures and workshops are often made in classrooms or halls, expecting speakers to have more eye contact and other interactive activities with audiences. People usually prefer these short-distance lectures and workshops. In universities, we often invite good speakers and organize small or large lectures or workshops.

For audiences (usually those students inside universities) who receive knowledge and enjoy speakers' presentations on the spot, classrooms or hall lectures and workshops provide great opportunity to learn and enjoy; for organizers and service providers who spend lots of time treating visiting speakers and making preparations for lectures or workshops, that means great efforts on time and energy. During the pandemic year, we shifted the offline writing lectures and workshops online, and to our great surprise, we found the online writing lectures and workshops were so popular that we received more and more audiences of different backgrounds; we also found more flexible interactions among speakers, organizers, and audiences. Zhejiang University adopted Ding talk as the key technological support for the online teaching, which proved to be a great success and ensured the whole teaching work in 2020. Ding talk followed the Chinese way of routine teaching and administration, making students and faculty and staff in the university adapt themselves to online routine quickly. Thus, when an online lecture or workshop is made through Ding talk, audiences may include students of different academic backgrounds. Those outside-university audiences may also join the Ding talk by attending lectures and workshops. Usually, the maximum number of a Ding group is 1,000, and we can imagine the number and variety of attendees when a lecture or workshop is given through Ding talk. In 2020, the Zhejiang University EWC has already given approximately 20 lectures, attracting more than 4,000 attendees both inside and outside of the university, including undergraduates, graduates, teachers, company employers and employees, administrators, and journal editors, etc. Three full Ding groups have been set up, and 5 smaller Ding groups with different focuses have been established.

In the traditional classroom or hall lectures, PPT presentations are often applied to show audiences the speakers' key ideas. However, due to different positions or angles in the rooms or halls, audiences may not see the PPT information clearly when the lecture is given. Speakers are asked to leave their PPT materials on the computers for the audience to copy. When Ding group lectures or workshops start, the audiences find it clear and easy to have speakers' PPT information shared on the screen with speakers' voice and an image in the upper right screen. Thus, for every audience, it is very convenient for them to see every word on the PPT presentation. Besides, a Ding group can store the video of lectures automatically. Those students who didn't attend lectures or workshops can review the video anytime (Ding group organizers can delete the video when necessary). In this way, Ding group lectures and workshops have become very popular among students, teachers, and others. The convenience and flexibility of Ding group lectures and workshops are the main factors in attracting more audiences and making the interaction between speakers and audiences flexible. Even after lectures and workshops, Ding groups become places for students to discuss topics related to writing, sharing information about writing, and seeking for help whenever they have difficulty writing. These flexible and sustainable interactions among audiences of different backgrounds are greatly appreciated both by speakers and audiences. In 2020's lectures and workshops, the Zhejiang University EWC become much more active and popular in the Ding group.

### **Online Tutoring: More Effective Appointments**

Face-to-face tutoring provides featured and helpful instruction for students in need of English writing help. Through appointments or drop-by visits, tutees may get writing instruction effectively and properly. As to writing, especially English writing, face-to-face tutoring is so popular that it attracts students and teachers to come and discuss with tutors. Usually, tutors are peer students and experienced teachers, mostly of academic English background. English writing centers need physical spaces to hold face-to-face tutoring.

Sometimes, due to distance and time arrangement, students may have to wait for some time for appointments with experienced professors who have the academic background that students need. During the pandemic, Ding groups also play important and initiative roles in appointments and tutoring, surprisingly making long-distance instructors and various appointments successful. As Laura Feibush said, “synchronous online tutoring facilitated via video-conferencing software holds a distinctive appeal: it has the potential to retain elements of a “high-touch” educational experience, the intense, one-on-one mentorship” (Feibush, 2021). From the Zhejiang University EWC experience, we would like to continue to adopt this online tutoring as a regular tutoring choice for students in the future.

Long-distance instructors may refer to those instructors who cannot come to the physical instruction room for various reasons, such as pandemic quarantine or lockdown, outside trips, being in different countries with time differences, or even just because of being late to the appointment room. In our experience, Ding talk is so easy to handle those situations that no matter where you are, once you have a mobile phone, you may have the Ding instruction immediately. As we used to have instructors in the appointed room, whenever students have questions or difficulties in their special academic fields, it is difficult to invite the proper instructors to come and give face-to-face instruction. Online consultation helps us practice “creating an inviting online persona” and “keeping the student involved” in online consultations (Carpenter, 2008, pp. 3-4). With Ding talk, it’s much easier for us to find solutions to the difficulties like these. Those experienced professors or instructors would like to have a look at the related questions through Ding talk and then offer their suggestions over the questions. In our experience, those instructors prefer online tutoring much more than on-spot instruction. This attracts more students to make appointments and benefits those in need of help. What’s more, it makes English natives staying in their own countries able to join the tutoring process. In fact, in 2020, we succeeded in connecting instructors inside or outside of campus with students, inviting instructors in the USA, UK, and Hungary to make contact with our students.

Having face-to-face instruction features in interactive communication between tutors and tutees is the most popular role for EWCs. Usually, one student may have face-to-face instruction within 40 or 45 minutes. If tutees want to have more discussion, they have to make new appointments. However, during the pandemic, we found Ding talk tutoring makes it much easier for tutee to have further appointments. That is, when a tutee finishes the first appointment online, he may leave a message for the tutor about some continued minor points of the writing. This allows the tutor and tutee to have continuous discussion or contact after the 40 or 45 minutes of face-to-face instruction. The continued minor message discussion saves the appointment time for both tutors and tutees and makes tutors and tutees know each other. In fact, in our experience, some tutees developed very good relationships with tutors. With more message contact, some tutors came to know more about the tutees and modified their regular instruction. In other words, it changed the former one-stop communication and makes the interaction more effective. In 2020, more and more students preferred online tutoring not just because of the pandemic inconvenience, but also because of the connection with tutors online afterward. On the other hand, tutors get to know more directly the difficulties students have in English writing. It’s also convenient for tutors to form groups for tutees who have similar questions or difficulties and offer them related information. The record of messages are very vivid examples for us to see the effective interactions between them.

### **International and Multidisciplinary Collaboration**

During the pandemic, in addition to the above-mentioned online lectures, workshops, and online tutoring, the Zhejiang University EWC also experienced online-offline symposiums. At first, we thought those online

parts would not be very satisfactory; however, they proved to be so interesting and successful that both organizers and participants had wonderful experiences. Because of the pandemic, participants in the international symposium had to choose online participation through Zoom. The facilities for video-conference were so wonderful and the online parts so acceptable that the communication among online and offline participants were quite wonderful. The connection made participants so happy that they even suggested that those online conferences could be regularly made as a choice for future international symposiums. Though we do hope the pandemic will disappear soon, we find it really acceptable to have online parts for the symposium just for its convenience, especially for those who cannot travel due to distance. This shows the prospect for future development. Based on 2020 experience, we see the prospect for a higher trend in English Writing Centers in Chinese universities, i.e., more international and multidisciplinary collaboration.

As discussed before, English Writing Centers in Chinese universities may have their Chinese featured difficulties, among which are the lack of proper instructors with various academic backgrounds being one of the most concerning. Though expectations from the administration and students always make English teachers or English natives the main instructors because of their better grasp of English language, practically, we can make English Writing Centers a university platform that coordinates inside and outside the campus for people of different academic backgrounds and focuses on writing in English itself. During the pandemic, we found a very good chance for international cooperation through Zoom, Ding talk, and other platforms. More and more English natives, especially those who excel in various English writing, English writing center directors, journal editors, etc., cooperated with us because of the online convenience. Online communication makes the physical distance disappear. In fact, “it also creates an exciting opportunity for US writing centers for international collaboration” (Song, 2018). In 2020, we had cooperation with English writing center directors, scholars, professors, and editors from the US, UK, Hungary, and others. During our international symposium, we also established cooperation with writing centers from other non-English speaking countries. Actually, we believe more and more that online writing instruction and collaboration is “not a one-time event, and it should be treated as ongoing professional development for tutors and (writing centers)” (Martinez, & Olson, 2015, p. 200). The fast speed and convenience of Zoom and Ding Talk bring people all over the world together quickly and easily; it is clear that, in the future, international cooperation will be furthered and stimulated with more development of the digital technology.

Multidisciplinary collaboration is a long-discussed topic in English Writing Centers in Chinese universities. Recently, a few universities either require or encourage departments and schools to open courses of academic English writing, aiming at improving students’ English writing in their own academic fields. However, though those courses helped students to know more about academic English writing, students found it not enough to further their skills for practical English writing in academic logic or language style. Besides, proper teachers for those courses are not easy to find. In this context, the English Writing Center, as a writing platform for students of different academic backgrounds, is very helpful for students in need of help. Except those common English writing genres, such as CV, personal statement, and covering letters, English writing centers can provide lectures and workshops of different academic topics in scientific writing. When peer tutors and teachers consist of those of different academic backgrounds, it will be of great interest to those tutees. In 2020, with Zoom and Ding talk, we tried the multidisciplinary collaboration which proved to be successful.

## Conclusion

Chinese education in the year of 2020 faced great challenges and started an unprecedented, large-scale online practice. Because of Covid-19, we had an unprecedented migration to online education, isolated from face-to-face teaching for months (Wang, 2020, p. 16). As Wu Yan, the director general of higher education in the Ministry of Education in China, stated, “(large-scale online teaching) succeeded in promoting the reform of teaching and studying in Chinese universities. It changed ‘teaching’ by teachers, ‘studying’ by students, ‘administration’ by universities and ‘modes’ of education” (Wu, 2021). The pandemic of 2020 brought us both challenges and prospects for the English Writing Centers. Actually, online lectures and tutoring are not newly developed because of the pandemic, but they were greatly stimulated by the pandemic challenges. When we are sticking to the traditional face-to-face instruction, we can definitely add online lectures and tutoring into its regular activities, making it more colorful and convenient. On the other hand, international and multidisciplinary collaboration can be fastened due to those technologies. Crisis breeds opportunity. Actually, we have been adapting to meet needs of students and teachers, and in this adaption, we found the expansion of our roles in teaching and research programs. We found EWC is much more “spacious” and the distance between our EWC and those in other countries is much “shorter” than we expected. The pandemic forces us to reconsider the running and development of EWCs, which definitely is a chance to find out new ways in the new context and make full use of the technology.

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# How Online Education Influences Live Commerce of Agriculture Products during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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*[Abstract] Under the influence of epidemic prevention and control factors, the education system is facing great challenges. To respond to this challenges, Lishui Live Streaming College has been established. The purpose of this college is to teach students how to make live commerce of agricultural products through online education. The purpose of this study is to find the relationship between online education and live commerce. First, a literature review of online education and live commerce is given. Second, a case study in Lishui Live Streaming College is presented. Finally, the paper discuss the problems between theoretical research and practical applications, then gives some recommendations. The result of this study shows that online education has a positive effect on live commerce, but it still has some problems in teaching and studying of live commerce online.*

*[Keywords] pandemic; online education; live commerce; Lishui Live Streaming College*

## Introduction

With the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic, the education systems of all countries have been challenged and influenced; this has impacted school education and teaching modes. Therefore, educational systems in all countries need to strengthen cooperation and exchange. In order to better support countries to make reasonable education decisions and implement effective education response measures, on April 1, 2020, the OECD's Department of Education and Skills, together with the Harvard graduate school, issued the "Guide to Coping with Covid-19 Education in 2020" (Reimers, & Schleicher, 2020). This guide can provide valuable reference information for education policy-makers and, also, specific and effective action strategies for teachers and students that can minimize the negative impact of the epidemic on education. Meanwhile, Lishui Radio and TV University responded to this report by establishing a Lishui Live Streaming College. The purpose of this college is to teach students how to learn the commerce of agricultural products through online education. This paper will analyze the problems in online education and live commerce of agricultural products; it will discover the relationship between them, bring forward ideas and make suggestions to teachers and students.

## Literature Review

### *Online Education*

Online education is a form of education using electronically supported learning, which is also known as MOOCs, E-learning, and distance education, etc. (India Education, 2020). It refers to the combination of traditional learning theories and the use of modern education ideas in the Internet environment to give full play to the advantages of the Internet (India Education, 2020). It makes use of the rich educational resources and unique educational functions of the Internet to create network teaching and a learning environment for learners and educators, transmits digital content, and carries out non-face-to-face teaching activities (India Education, 2020). There are many types of online education, mainly divided into basic online education,

higher online education, enterprise E-learning, online vocational education, etc. In this paper, online vocational education has been focused upon.

According to Basilaia and Kvavadze (2020), closing schools during the COVID-19 pandemic season and limiting students' access to schools prevented the possible spread (before a vaccine was developed) and created opportunity for distance learning. In the studies by Alshamrani (2019) and Dumford and Miller (2018), online education generally has the following four characteristics: First, it breaks the limitations of space and time in traditional education, so that every learner can get what he needs from the Internet anytime and anywhere. Second, it fully respects the personality of the student; this new teaching model has truly realized the dominance of students in learning. Teachers can formulate teaching content and education methods according to the actual situation of students, which can avoid the training of programmed students. Third, it is conducive to the sharing of educational resources and reasonable configuration, which has brought high-quality resources to students in the education stage. Fourth, the online classroom atmosphere is relaxed and pleasant. Online teachers respect students' opinions and give students the opportunity to express themselves fully, which can enhance students' classroom interaction and real-time participation and make students' learning activities active.

### ***Live Commerce***

Live commerce, also named live streaming E-commerce, is a term to describe the combination of streaming video and e-commerce, which is the most typical feature of the live streaming economy, and it refers to a new type of service method; sellers use live streaming technology to display products online, ask and answer questions, and sell shopping guides through Internet platforms. This fusion of shopping and live streaming is transforming the retail industry (Traci, 2021). Live streaming commerce is a subset of e-commerce embedded with real-time social interaction, which includes real-time video and text-based chat channels (Cai, & Wohn, 2019).

By studying of Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut (2020) and Kang, et al. (2021), there are three aspects to explain why people are willing to choose live commerce. First, the live-streaming platform provides the authenticity that customers desire. There is no video editing or image processing, so buyers can trust that what they see is exactly what they will get. Second, TV or traditional e-commerce sites cannot provide a highly interactive two-way dialogue, which means live commerce is more interactive, and consumers can communicate with sellers and, even, bargain. Finally, live commerce can often achieve the lowest price on the entire network; it bypasses traditional intermediate channels, such as distributors, and directly delivers the goods to the consumer. In addition, there will also be a limited time to offer large discounts for limited-time purchases, prompting buyers to make impulse purchases. Therefore, live commerce is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon, leading a succession of brands to adopt this marketing method. More and more people want to learn live commerce to make their businesses better. During the Covid-19 epidemic, E-learning is becoming the mainstream. Online education should seize the opportunity to set the course of live commerce; after all, the essence of online education and live commerce is online.

## Case Study

### ***Establishing Lishui Live Streaming College and Devoting It to Online Education during the Covid-19 Epidemic***

As an open university based on distance education, Lishui Radio and TV University has changed the content of teaching during the COVID-19 epidemic. The changes in content have been teaching students how to make the live commerce of agricultural products (LOSL, 2020). Under this trend, Lishui Live Streaming College has been established; it is composed of Lishui Radio and TV University, Eco-Economy Digital Engineering (Lishui) Research Institute, Hangzhou Yunchuang Live Streaming Town, and Lishui E-commerce Promotion Association (LOSL, 2020). With the purpose of implementing the “two mountains” theory of Xi Jinping, the aim is to serve the regional economy and the digital construction of Lishui; this college established a training mechanism that is market-oriented and academic in operation, and it aims benefit students and the building of Lishui into a national, influential celebrated Internet live streaming city.

### ***Why Online Education Focus on Live Commerce of Agricultural Products***

The live commerce is a fresh way to show a product’s capability to user in real time (Su, 2019). In Lishui, agricultural products take a large proportion of marketing share. Since the outbreak of the epidemic, enterprises and businesses relying on offline customers have suffered a negative impact because of limited markets and channels, which leads to many local agricultural products that cannot be listed. In order to increase profit, many regions and platforms have launched a new mode of “Live streaming + E-commerce” to help agriculture, which is combined with helping enterprises and brand promotion, effectively promoting the sales of agricultural products (Su, 2019). In the future, brand promotion of agricultural products and live sales will become the mainstream. With the rise of live streaming, numerous businesses want to enter the live streaming industry. In the first half of 2020, the number of live streaming e-commerce projects exceeded 10 million and attracted more than 50 billion views, promoted more than 20 million products, and held more than 50,000 live broadcasts every day that received 260 million views (China Daily, 2020). Thus, more and more people are becoming live streaming e-commerce hosts and wanting to learn online sales.

### ***The Content of Online Education***

The purpose of students’ drive to learning this course is that they want to be live streaming hosts and want to increase their own profits of agricultural products. In order to achieve this purpose, this college set up some new courses: beauty courses and Mandarin lessons to enhance anchors’ professionalism; brand marketing and e-commerce courses to help students building their brand image; and service marketing and consumer buying behaviors to help students better understand customer online. The following will indicate the content and how to apply their practice.

### ***Enhance Anchors’ Professionalism***

Increasing the professionalism of anchors has a positive impact on product promotion. From the students’ point of view, if students want to be leaders in the live streaming room, students should improve their professionalism to be a good live streaming host; this means they should have good attitudes when facing network violence; showing affinity for customers who ask for help; and having a strong learning ability. According to Wolffhechel, et al. (2014), people assess competence, affinity, trustworthiness, and likability in just a tenth of a second, only based on personal appearance. In this way, hosts should consider the

customers' feelings when explaining products, answer their doubts in time, and appropriately increase humor.

In addition, one of the influencing factors of consumer buying behavior is the psychological factor. When people buy goods, they will pay attention and purchase selectively, and their purchase behavior will be influenced by four main psychological factors: motivation, cognition, learning, and attitude (Park & Kim, 2003). The psychological activity of consumers is more complex, influenced by different factors. The psychological activity may dominate the purchase behavior (ibid). If the anchor has a positive attitude, it may have a positive effect on consumer buying behavior. In this way, the attraction of agricultural products can be enhanced, the live commerce of agricultural products can be promoted, and the income of farmers can be increased. From the teachers' point of view, the way to enhance the professionalism of live streaming hosts is to improve the course system. For example, personal image is very important in live streaming, so this college teaches students how to speak, how to use makeup, and how to match clothes. The curriculum needs to adapt to the needs of the times.

### ***Build a Positive Brand Image***

Enhancing brand image has a positive impact on product promotion. To enhance the cultural connotation of live marketing content is not only to improve the overall quality of live streaming, but also to make the content of live streaming closer to the corporate image. It is precisely because live streaming can bring users a strong intuitive feeling, so users can see the corporate image and brand image through the content of live broadcast marketing. By study of Biel brand image model (Biel, 1993), the corporate image, product image, and user image all have positive effects on brand image and an effect on one another. According to Bian and Moutinho (2011), brand image has a positive and significant impact on consumer purchasing behavior. Furthermore, Wu et al. (2011) believe that the higher the brand image of the product, the higher the consumer rating, thus the product quality is perceived as more positive. It is proved that a good brand image can reduce the perceived risk of consumers and allows consumers to purchase the brand repeatedly. Therefore, it is important for sellers to build a positive brand image.

A positive brand image can be built by live streaming marketing. Students should find the unique selling points of their agricultural products and make content differentiation in live commerce; the enterprise's live marketing must create a unique cultural atmosphere for users, and let users feel the profound cultural connotation of the enterprise. According to Qazzafi (2019), most consumers will choose high-end products as far as possible within their own consumption ability when they purchase. For high-consumption groups, the attractiveness of brand and cultural values are far greater than the use value of the product itself. Unique agricultural products are more competitive. On the one hand, the basic level of agricultural product competition is quality competition, and the sales of agricultural products with high-quality taste and appearance will be better. On the other hand, the deep-level competition of agricultural products is the building of product brand and cultural connotation, formulating high-quality marketing plans, establishing brand awareness, giving agricultural products special cultural significance, establishing unique high-quality brands, and allowing buyers to consume more than agricultural products itself; what is consumed is a feeling and a story, which can not only improve the grade of the product, but also increase the visibility of agricultural products, thereby broadening the sales channels of agricultural products and promoting farmers' incomes.

### ***Improve Service***

Teacher should help students select a comprehensive e-commerce platform to create high-quality service. In addition, this service should avoid only focusing on sales and not ignoring the after-sales. For example, the goods should be delivered as soon as possible within the delivery period and ensure the correspondence between the delivered goods and orders. In addition, it should avoid that the phenomenon of shoddy goods, wrong delivery, and missed delivery, which can damage the interests of consumers. Furthermore, it is necessary to strictly require the service attitude of after-sales customer service, timely response to the confusion and queries of consumers, and timely make up or compensation for the missed or wrong delivery accidents after verification; doing so can establish a stable market for agricultural products sales and improve the quality of supporting services. Service is abstract; students should learn it online and find it out for themselves.

## **Discussion**

The analysis of the current situation related to online education applied to live commerce of agriculture products in Lishui Live Streaming College shows a positive effect when online education is applied to live commerce, but the COVID-19 epidemic has brought significant challenges to higher education. The way to address this issue is to continuously improve online education, providing high-quality learning resources and technical support services, which can help teachers and students solve online learning and teaching problems in terms of minimizing the negative impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on higher education. For example, establishing effective communication channels between teachers and students is a necessity. Colleges should push notification, distance teaching guidance, course content information, and health information to students in order to maintain effective communication between them. By actively establishing effective communication channels, the school can not only promote the cooperation between teachers and students in teaching, but also help them reduce the sense of isolation due to distance during the epidemic, thereby reducing the physical and mental stress of teachers and students. However, there still are some issues when online education is applied in live commerce teaching and learning. The following will discuss the problems of live commerce teaching and the problems of live commerce learning.

## **The Problems of Live Commerce Teaching**

### ***Limitation of Equipment***

Online teaching and learning of live commerce has high requirements for network signals and hardware equipment. For online teaching, it is difficult for teachers to live broadcast the class due to an unstable platform; they remedy this by uploading resources after recording. For example, in the process of online teaching, feedback from students may indicate not being able to open the teaching video due to the platform's current limit. In addition, students' engagement may decrease due to limitations of equipment (Asilkan & Domnori, 2020). For instance, in some families without computers, students who only use mobile phones for online learning may encounter small mobile phone screen problems, and the blue light released may damage students' eyesight (Adnan, & Anwar, 2020). Therefore, the experience of interactive deviation caused by current limitation shows that online education is still unstable due to certain factors. If it cannot be figured out, a better learning experience cannot be obtained, which restricts the effectiveness of online education.

### ***Lack of Interaction***

Teachers may not meet students' needs in a timely manner due to lack of emotional communication, which can cause them to not address the students' feedback effectively. In addition, because digital equipment is not emotional, students may not be interested in computers or mobile phones without affective interaction, which is lack of communication between teachers and students. Furthermore, the network transmits only simple information. It does not recognize that attitudes, emotions, and feelings of teachers and students in the transmission. Although the students who learn live commerce are adults mainly, they can analyze right and wrong issues by their self-control and ability. However, the flow of information is fast and may far exceed the ability of the students to accept; this may cause negative effects that lead to psychological pressure and low motivation of learning. The studies by Deci and Ryan (2016), showed that motivation was related to thriving in situations in which people feel satisfaction of their three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers and students to interact during online education.

### ***Lack of Experience***

Online education may not truly achieve high quality and deep extension, even if the content of the course is depth to consider. Online teaching can display standard operating gestures, such as how to use a platform to live stream and how to use light to prefer an exhibitor. However, it still cannot replace the process of students' personal operation, which can direct learning by teachers. In reality, teachers can only use experience to estimate which step students will have problems with; in this way, they can emphasize and demonstrate standard actions when teaching. However, there are individual differences among students, and the error-prone points made by each student are inconsistent (Rovers, et al., 2018). Therefore, teachers not only focus on paper but also practice; this creates high requirements for teachers and requires rich online teaching experience in terms of how to make live commerce in real time. The live commerce course is based on practical situations, and teachers may not have enough experience in live streaming due to its being an emerging industry. Teachers' lack of live commerce experience may result in a negative classroom atmosphere and cause students to be unable to engage in online learning.

## **The Problems of Live Commerce**

### ***Lack of Brand Image***

In the live streaming of agricultural products, live streaming hosts are local farmers. The reason is that the live streaming host should be familiar with the growth environment and growth process of agricultural products in order to sell products better. However, farmers may not be clear about the direction of a team operation and the product development planning in terms of the lack of education and the low awareness of building agricultural product brands. In addition, building its brand image is quite difficult due to the seasonal production and sales of agricultural products, which are mainly seasonal, and means it is a short-team marketing activity. If it is short-team market economy, it will be difficult to build brand image. According to Song, et al., (2019), short-term business leads to low customer loyalty, which will bring low satisfaction in brand image. However, some agricultural products have opened the market with the help of regional brands, such as Turpan Grape, West Lake Longjing, and Yantai Apple, etc., because regional brands are sought after by the public. Therefore, it is difficult for agricultural products without regional brands to maintain good sales for a long time without establishing their own brands.

### ***Limitation of Infrastructure and Services***

The development of infrastructure and services for the live commerce of agricultural products is not complete. For example, due to the characteristics of perishable agricultural products, there is difficulty in maintaining freshness, and because of insufficient biochemical performance, the technical requirements for the logistics supply chain are relatively high. However, there are some problems in logistics in terms of the logistics choices on live streaming platforms that are not aimed at specialized e-commerce of agricultural products. Because there are no clear and unified regulations and implementable standards in cold chain logistics in China, such as efficiency in the cold chain, equipment standards, food hygiene and safety temperature control, there may be restrictions in the development of China's cold chain logistics industry. Therefore, the increasing demand for logistics and relatively low development of cold chain logistics cannot be balanced, which has led to restrictions on the live-streaming sales of agricultural products and development of agricultural products. If these infrastructures are not perfected, the development of live commerce of agricultural products will be more difficult.

### ***The Content of Live Streaming Lacks Innovation and Connotation***

During teaching, the live-streaming of agricultural products is relatively similar and the live broadcast format is single. The reason is that most of the live content is carried out in accordance with a certain process, which results in the lack of novelty in the live content and the visual fatigue of consumers. It suggests that students can find unique style of live streaming in terms of presenting the traditional and authentic lifestyle of the Chinese people, allowing modern citizens to find a kind of spiritual belonging. Students also can share their own lifestyle and create their own brand, which is a very good reference for live-streaming of agricultural products. With the growth of agricultural products in live broadcast platforms, the pressure of competition is increasing. If the content of live-streaming is not innovated and expanded, it will be difficult for agricultural live-streaming to achieve good results.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, during the COVID-19 pandemic, triggered by the rising live commerce and online education, this study attempts to better understand the relationship between them. It has found that online education has a positive effect on live commerce when Lishui Live Streaming College applied online education to live commerce. This college put into practice the setting up of some new courses in beauty and Mandarin to enhance anchors' professionalism; brand marketing and e-commerce to help students building their brand image; and service marketing and consumer buying behavior to help students better understand customer online. However, there are still some problems in applying online education to live commerce teaching and learning. The problems of online education are related to three aspects: limitation of equipment, lack of interaction, and lack of experience. The problems of live commerce of agriculture products include lack of brand image and limitation of infrastructure and services, which is due to lack of innovation and connotation. Furthermore, the ultimate purpose of learning live commerce for students is product promotion; although it introduces the application for study of theory, the problems are still obvious. Therefore, it should pay more attention to the practice through theoretical analysis and empirical research; it provides a certain basis for follow-up research and, also, provides references for the implementation of online education and further development of live commerce.

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# A Discussion on Strategies of Ideological Education of College Students in Post-pandemic Times

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**[Abstract]** *With occasional COVID-19 cases in post-pandemic times, the epidemic prevention should be shifted from emergency relief to regular response. There are three principal contradictions in the ideological education of college students: the contradiction between reduced entertainment and demand for entertainment; the contradiction between increased uncertainty in the future and stepping into society; the contradiction between personality development and epidemic prevention requirements. With presence of these challenges, in order to regulate the ideological fluctuation of college students, safeguard their healthy growth, and maintain normal running of schools, it is required to take proactive preventive measures to effectively cut off the source of infection; impose rigid discipline to keep normal order of schools; establish a robust and reasonably structured psychological health mechanism; implement classified management to precisely track students' situation and demand; and provide moral guidance and communicate Chinese stories in fighting against the COVID-19.*

**[Keywords]** *Post-pandemic times; college students; ideological education; strategies*

## Introduction

“Post-pandemic times” means a period during which people are stepping into regular epidemic prevention. During this period, although the epidemic is under effective control as the local transmission route is basically cut off, there is still epidemic rebound with occasional cases in limited areas. For a considerably long period in the future, epidemic prevention will be with us and become a part of our work and living. At this stage, college students have been back to school and lived together on campus. Compared with the time without COVID-19 and the peak of the epidemic, life is different in this period. Since schools have adopted a semi-closed management approach, there are new changes in students' ideological trend.

Currently, with regard to research on ideological education, some have carried out research from the angle of change of overseas education services (Liu, 2020), some have carried out research from the macro perspective of education system construction (Wang, 2020), some have explored the issue from the angle of new characteristics of ideological education in post-pandemic times (Li, & Ni, 2020), some have discussed transformation of education (Wang, 2020); some have discussed strategies of the ideological education of college students during the outbreak of COVID-19 (Chen, & Xiang, 2020). Although these researches are of great significance to the discussion of the ideological education of students in post-pandemic times, they are still not adequate concerning strategies of the ideological education of college students in post-pandemic times.

Based on the concept of “Three Integrity Education”, this paper first analyzes the three new challenges of ideological and political education in universities in the post-epidemic era. Second, it discusses the ideological education strategies of college students in the post-epidemic era from five aspects. Finally, the ideological education of students in the post-epidemic era should be centered on the development of students, with full participation, whole-process cooperation, and all-around coordination, to mobilize the enthusiasm of schools, teachers, and students, take joint actions, and jointly improve the ability to resist risks and promote the healthy development of students.

## **New Challenges Faced in Ideological and Political Education in Colleges in Post-pandemic Times**

### ***Contradiction between Reduced Entertainment and Demand for Entertainment***

There are significant changes in the means of campus management in post-pandemic times. Most schools adopt a semi-closed management approach, requiring students to make registration of their entry to and exit from school and not to leave school unless they must. In this way, most college students only have to spend much of their time in the campus, thus lowering the risks of infection through less frequency of leaving school. The places that are accessible to college students are mostly dormitories, classrooms, playgrounds, and libraries, etc. For the purpose of epidemic prevention and reduction of risks of infection, most schools do not advise students to hold large campus events that draw more than a hundred participants; part-time teachers in most schools who used to teach off-line have turned to online teaching. As today's college students enjoy a relatively rich material life, they have higher demand on cultural life and like to combine learning with entertainment. However, due to the regular epidemic prevention, they only have to shift their entertainment to campus learning and limit such activities within limited venues within school, being forced to change previous living habits. Thus, contradiction arises between reduced entertainment and demand for entertainment. Students easily suffer ideological fluctuation, which demonstrates some new characteristics, such as increased cases of fights on campus and climbing out of school. These abnormal behaviors increase the instabilities in schools.

### ***Contradiction between Increased Uncertainty in the Future and Stepping into Society***

Due to COVID-19, the national economic and employment situation undergoes dramatic changes. In 2020, the past year, many people have found that the Chinese economy experienced a curve of “decline-recovery-rebound-stabilization”. College students, especially those who face admission to higher schools or employment are developing a deep feeling of such situations, and their mood fluctuates with the economic up and downs. The uncertainty of life in the future also adds anxiety and panic. Some students subscribe to many online tutorial courses but are distracted by the thought of the changing employment situation in the future; some students witness the lowered global economic development and lose confidence in social development. As international exchanges are impeded because of COVID-19, many students' original overseas study plans are disrupted, resulting in higher levels of depression than in the same period of time in the past. Take students who take the same major in the author's school, for example; the number of students who are diagnosed with moderate or major depressive disorder at hospitals increased by 4% in the first semester of 2020-2021-1 and most causes are related to study in the future.

### ***Contradiction between Personality Development and Epidemic Prevention Requirements***

In post-pandemic times, college students still cannot unleash themselves: their social communication is still limited, and they still must make registration of their entry to and exit from school, present health codes, and wear face masks when entering into large public areas, etc. These restrictions bring anxiety to students who cannot comprehend the complexity of the epidemic. Anxiety refers to a kind of tension in an adverse situation and will cause obvious symptoms, such as insomnia, school-weary psychology, and constipation. Some students are tired of troubles caused by high requirements on hygiene due to the complexity of the epidemic. With regard to personal hygiene, they have to wash hands before eating and after using the toilet, wear a face mask when going out, and make timely report when leaving school. Regarding collective hygiene, dormitories are disinfected on a regular basis and one-meter distancing is required. Some students

feel that these rules are troublesome. At school, they neglect the daily report of personal health; outside school, some of them prepare two mobile phones to shun the school's requirements in order to travel to other places: one is left at home to disguise their travelling, and the other is used for communication during traveling. These behaviors add pressure to schools in epidemic prevention.

## **Strategies of Ideological Education of College Students in Post-pandemic Times**

### ***Take Proactive Preventive Measures to Effectively Cut Off Transmission Route***

Adopt quarantine measures in schools against external environment for epidemic prevention. Track, in a timely manner, the epidemic situation outside school. In the case of outbreak of COVID-19 cases, schools should adopt quarantine measures and carry out disinfection. Based on the severity of the epidemic, schools should impose corresponding levels of closed management. If the local epidemic has reached a medium or high level, schools may adopt fully closed management, prohibit outsiders from entering, and prevent students from leaving school. If the epidemic is severe, online teaching may be adopted to prevent gatherings of students. In case anyone at school suffers fever and cough, etc., the person should be sent to the hospital for diagnosis and close persons be quarantined in a timely way to relieve the panic of other persons and protect the health of other students.

Strengthen management of persons within the campus. Improve awareness of epidemic prevention for all persons on campus, including teachers, students, logistics personnel, staff of dining halls, supermarkets, and property management personnel, etc. Health records should be kept for teachers and staff on an individual basis. Furthermore, lectures on epidemic prevention and other fundamental tips should be given to all persons on campus. Medical staff members of the school infirmary should be on duty to deal with common illnesses of persons on campus; the staff of dining halls should be subject to regular health checks, and those who fail physical examination should not engage in relevant work at the dining hall. The logistics personnel of the school should carry out disinfection of classrooms, elevators, offices, etc.; in addition to carrying out routine disinfection, property management personnel should also distribute body temperature measuring devices to dormitories.

Maintain good environment and hygiene of campus. Schools should broadcast knowledge on epidemic prevention regularly to improve awareness of teachers and students in self-protection and to help them establish good habits of personal hygiene. Schools may also add hoses of running water to facilitate hand washing at any time. Meanwhile, teachers and students should wash their hands, change clothes often, and eat more green vegetables. Furthermore, schools should increase sports time of teachers and students, helping them improve immunity.

### ***Impose Rigid Discipline to Maintain Normal Order of Schools***

Organize publicity to broadcast knowledge on epidemic prevention. Carry out various forms of publicity on epidemic prevention and answer students' questions. Schools may prepare brochures and distribute leaflets so that students will learn the general knowledge on epidemic prevention in a relaxed environment at odd moments; send the latest information of epidemic prevention through WeChat and Weibo to impart the latest knowledge of epidemic prevention to students; utilize the celebrity effect and invite authoritative medical experts to give science lectures to help students build confidence in scientific epidemic prevention and reduce their fear of the epidemic.

Impose rigid discipline. Impose rigid discipline and establish a reward and punishment mechanism during prevention and control of the COVID-19 emergency. First, schools should try to maintain the normal

order of teaching without disruption of classes and learning, pending the severity of epidemic, thus relieving students' panic. Second, schools should establish an emergency plan for prevention and control of the epidemic within the school. There should be explicit and detailed countermeasures against different circumstances to ensure the orderly running of the school in case of a COVID-19 emergency.

Establish a reward and punishment mechanism during prevention and control of COVID-19. Schools should praise the teachers and students who make outstanding contributions in fighting against the epidemic in a timely way and also deal quickly with and report those who commit violations in epidemic prevention in accordance with the disciplines. These timely and explicit reward and punishment measures will safeguard unity of teachers and students in fighting against the epidemic.

### ***Establish a Robust and Reasonably Structured Psychological Health Mechanism***

Establish a system of psychological health education. First, schools should prepare a psychological crisis interference plan and emergency treatment plan for the epidemic, establish a psychological assistance system and clarify its work objectives, flows, methods, and the moral principles of psychological counseling. Second, all departments of the school, including the office of student affairs, office of academic affairs, Chinese Communist Youth League committee, and the logistics department, etc. should unify under the unified leadership of the school's Party Committee to give full play to each department in psychological counseling.

Strengthen construction of a psychological health education team. First, schools should establish a full-time team that has received systematic and specific training on psychological knowledge for engagement in psychological health education, keep timely track of psychological conditions of teachers and students and preparation of response schemes. Second, schools should establish a part-time team consisting of teachers on the front line for engagement in psychological health education. As these teachers are working on the front line, they are able to timely master the psychological conditions of teachers and students and carry out targeted work based on specific circumstances. Finally, as the epidemic may come unexpectedly with complex situations, a mutual peer aid team may be established among students. These members may assist teachers in carrying out psychological counseling due to their intimacy with students.

Enrich the content of psychological health education. First, in addition to routine psychological health education courses, schools may offer extra courses on epidemic prevention despite psychological education and integrate the knowledge on epidemic prevention into courses. Second, schools may carry out the campaigns of epidemic prevention to get college students engaged, thus strengthening their capacity in distinguishing of information. Finally, schools may carry out education through convergence media and conduct online exchange with students by making network short videos; repost relevant online articles and songs to help relieve students' psychological stress.

### ***Implement Classified Management to Precisely Track Students' Situations and Demands***

In post-pandemic times, there is a heavier workload in ideological education due to uncertainty of COVID-19 abroad. Precisely track the situation of every student. Schools should establish a daily "zero case oriented" health report system to ensure no students is infected with COVID-19 either at school during the semester or outside school during holidays. Furthermore, schools may, based on the latest information technology, suggest students make a daily report after they leave school during holidays. In addition to mastering students' daily health status, schools should also obtain the information about their families and make sure

their emergency contacts are recorded to ensure timely communication and treatment in case of any emergency.

Precisely track students' demands. Schools should, based on the extent to which individual students are affected by the epidemic and their response, precisely track their demands and offer corresponding help. For students who are planning to study abroad, instructors and class teachers may help students contact overseas teachers to obtain relevant overseas education information and help them adjust study plans and clarify the direction; for students who are preparing for employment, teachers may hold "cloud employer meetings" and provide students with the gathered information to reduce students' trifles in seeking jobs and help them approach to successful employment; for students who academically challenged, teachers should, based on their academic accomplishment, implement classified and targeted management.

Precisely improve student organizations. Generally, students are the first to know their peers. Schools should give play to student organizations, such as student unions and student societies, etc.; and advise students help and encourage each other to give full play to students' roles in self-education and management. Furthermore, schools may hold short video creation competitions, cartoon competitions, singing and chorus and other activities with the theme of epidemic prevention, thus eliciting their patriotism and sense of responsibility.

### ***Provide Moral Guidance and Communicate Chinese Stories in Fighting against tCOVID-19***

During the fight against tCOVID-19 and the post-pandemic prevention, there were so many moving stories. These stories demonstrate the advantages of a people-oriented socialism system in a real and efficient manner (Gao, 2020).

Communicate the story of Wuhan in fighting against COVID-19. Due to this fight, being a focus of the whole country, Wuhan was recognized as a heroic city. After 76 days of lockdown, Wuhan was "restarted" after a "pause." Takeaway deliverymen, community volunteers, scientific and technical workers, and medical staff delivered the power of China with their sincerity, bravery, and selfless dedication.

Communicate the stories of mutual help nationwide. After the outbreak of COVID-19, the CPC and the State adopted the most rigid, most comprehensive, and most decisive measures for prevention and control of the epidemic and strongly cut off its spread. Huoshenshan Hospital and Leishenshan Hospital were built in just 10 days and 15 days, respectively. When the epidemic struck, help came from all sides. People felt the power and warmth of the whole nation as money, vegetables, and fruits were donated to Wuhan.

Communicate the story of fighting against COVID-19 through the network. Due to COVID-19, online education was fast popularized nationwide. Viewed from the trend of social development, online education will be a trend of future education. Educators who engage in ideological education should seize this favorable advantage to carry out ideological education both online and offline. Furthermore, they should utilize the tools of social networking i.e. WeChat, Weibo and QQ for ideological education and sharing of cases; and carry out online activities with the theme of "epidemic prevention," i.e. short videos, cartoon exhibitions, and recitations of poems, ensuring ideological education is truly implanted into minds.

### **Implications and Conclusion**

Ideological education is the due meaning of cultivating people by virtue in colleges and universities and is related to the success or failure of the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics. In the post-epidemic era, in the face of complex changes of the epidemic, the "all-staff, whole-process and all-around"

education path is a beneficial attempt. The ideological education of students is a systematic project. All parties should form joint efforts to continuously promote the ideological education of students in the post-epidemic era to achieve practical results.

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# Challenges and Countermeasures of Psychological Health Education in Colleges and Universities during COVID-19

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*[Abstract] COVID-19 has caused a great impact on the Chinese economy and social activities, and it has also made psychological health education in colleges and universities suffer great difficulties and challenges. The article analyzes challenges (e.g., lack of response experience, change of living and learning styles, psychological stress response, and challenges of traditional education and teaching) of psychological health education in the severe epidemic situation. As we know, challenge also means opportunity. Accordingly, a series of countermeasures are proposed from various angles to strengthen psychological health education and psychological intervention, which will help ensure the orderly advancement of the resumption of psychological health education and teaching in colleges and universities.*

*[Keywords] COVID-19; psychological health education; challenges; countermeasures*

## Introduction

COVID-19 not only hits the Chinese society and economy hard but also seriously influences people's working and learning; nationwide, this finally leads to social contradictions, particularly social mentality and psychological problems. As indicted by the existing researches, college students generally have a lower mental health status than that of the national normal population (Guo, Yang, & Sun, 2020) and are a high-risk special population who are apt to suffer from psychological disorder. Their psychological health problems become more prominent under the influence of COVID-19, an urgent public health event. It is of great importance to offer them psychological health education in this serious epidemic. Therefore, how colleges and universities carry out students' psychological counseling services selectively and discriminatively, explore multiple education paths based on the realities, and implement college students' psychological health education effectively while ensuring the normalized epidemic prevention and control has become an important topic of higher education teaching. According to relevant requirements of the Ministry of Education about "never stopping teaching/learning after class suspension," implementing a brand-new educational practice mode is extremely urgent; a variety of challenges have been proposed for psychological health education and teaching at colleges and universities.

By summarizing the existing researches, the challenges of psychological health education and teaching of colleges and universities during the outbreak of COVID-19 were analyzed based on multiple psychological health investigations for college students and education and teaching reforms and explorations in the research, where timely and effective response strategies were also proposed to maintain students' healthy growth and provide theoretical and practical references for the psychological health education work of colleges and universities.

## **Challenges in Psychological Health Education of Colleges and Universities**

### ***Lack of Response Experience***

Upon the outbreak of COVID-19, the public health event, the masses generally lacked the corresponding highly matched epidemic prevention and control experience and, therefore, were stuck in the unknown risks due to the lack of correct guidance (Chen, 2020). “Ripple Effect” and “Psychological Typhoon Eye Effect” of risk perception and anxiety characteristics of people in different COVID-19 severity regions arise (Wen, Ma, Ye, Qi & Zuo, 2020), the psychological changes of people in different regions and different stages of the epidemic are complex and changeable (Su, et al., 2020); as a result, difficulties in psychological crisis intervention are unprecedented. In addition, in consideration of the unprecedented fast outbreak speed, broad range of influence, and significant influence, there is also a little experience that could be referred to for the management and education and teaching of colleges and universities.

### ***Change of Living and Learning Styles***

COVID-19 has changed people’s living and learning styles. During its outbreak, fewer times of travels outside and quarantine were quite common; people could not be found on roads and streets, enterprises prolonged workers’ holidays, and schools postponed their opening times. People stayed at home, browsing the latest dynamics of the epidemic over and over again every day. False statements confused the public in succession, and explosive online news soared. With limited home learning resources, social activities, and a monotonous lifestyle, college students could do nothing but chat with others, play computer or mobile games, watch TV series, or sleep, leading to aimless learning and poor initiative.

### ***Psychological Stress Response***

The risk perception ability was relatively weak upon the outbreak of the epidemic. College students started to appear with the mentality of worry and fear under the influence of actions and words from the people surrounding them (Chen, 2020). The uncertainty and instability of the epidemic is characterized by complexity and changeability, which are likely to be the inducing factors of the imbalance of public mentality (Chou, 2020). Moreover, with an immature outlook on life and values, mentality, and poor understanding of the necessary knowledge about psychological health and epidemic prevention and control, college students did suffer psychological health impacts to a different degree, which easily led to psychological and emotional problems (e.g. tension, panic, irritability, anxiety, and depression).

Researches show that college students had more serious anxiety and depression and obvious somatic stress responses (e.g. insomnia, debilitation, appetite decrease, chest distress and headache) (Yu, Fang, & Luo, 2020; Yuan, et al., 2021; Chang, Yuan, & Wang, 2020). All harmed their physical and psychological health development.

### ***Challenge of Traditional Education and Teaching***

To achieve the objective of “never stopping teaching/learning after class suspension,” it is a MUST to break through the traditional face-to-face teaching mode, explore the new “Internet +” education mode, and carry out online education and teaching activities. Nevertheless, the normal operation of online teaching of colleges and universities is directly influenced by the following series of factors (Zhou, 2020): Could teachers be competent for the online teaching requirements after role transformation? Are they familiar with online teaching platform and teaching tools? Are students willing to accept the online teaching mode? Could online platforms bear large-scale online teaching? How do colleges and universities organize online

teaching? How are online teaching tasks finished? How about the online teaching effect? Is the teaching quality affected? How is the teaching quality monitored? How will the quality of online teaching be improved? These are also the difficulties and challenges that colleges and universities have to face.

To address psychological health education, online network platform-based psychological assistance became the main working style, which inevitably brought a series of problems: higher difficulties in psychological problem screening and tracking, updating of psychological health teaching contents, less efficiency than traditional face-to-face psychological consultation, etc.

### **Countermeasure: Build A New Psychological Health Service System**

Epidemic prevention and control mean both challenge and opportunity. We can realize the sharing of all kinds of high-quality psychological education resources because all kinds of high-quality psychological education resources are pushed free online in the epidemic situation, which reduces the cost and transcends the space distance limit. Students can also learn and think repeatedly due to the online playback function, which breaks through the time limit. Thus, if the threat comes, we need to take real countermeasures. A brand-new “Internet+” psychological health service system was born to ensure normal psychological health education and teaching. The comprehensive online psychological health education and teaching work and accurate psychological crisis network intervention are urgently required.

#### ***Improve the Top Management Design of Colleges and Universities***

Colleges and universities should lay emphasis on top design, establish a psychological crisis lead group during the outbreak of the epidemic and improve their psychological crisis intervention mechanism during the epidemic; ensure unified leadership, clear division of labor and overall coordination of joint prevention and control, and formulate and implement specific rules for psychological crisis intervention after the epidemic; finish online psychological defense training for part-time and full-time psychological teachers and students during the outbreak of the epidemic, establish a “full-involvement” intervention system, determine the psychological crisis intervention working mechanism based on the coordination of different departments, and improve the psychological crisis intervention work plan during the epidemic under the “four-level” campus early warning and prevention and control system of universities, colleges (schools), classes, and dormitories (Liu, D., 2020). Understand students’ psychological health status and psychological needs during the epidemic comprehensively through psychological health surveys, check of their psychological health status in a timely manner to ensure early discovery, intervention, and troubleshooting, and to provide the basis for the universities’ accurate psychological health service work; meanwhile, highlight the follow-up and service for the original key students and the new students found with high psychological risk through real-time screening. Pay attention to overall psychological crisis prevention and intervention.

#### ***Innovate Psychological Consultation and Assistance Services***

The Psychological Health Center builds a diversified interactive online platform for psychological assistance by WeChat or QQ service group, official account, or APP and innovates psychological consultation assistance services; provides online remote psychological consultation and supervision, crisis support, and science popularization services through a psychological assistance platform; provides psychological consultation and assistance for students through multiple channels, such as a psychological assistance network service group (via QQ or WeChat) and an online service platform; supports school platform construction, expands psychological channels further, improves psychological crisis identification

efficiency through network information and big data platforms, and realizes the personalized guidance of psychological rehabilitation skills.

Establish a 24-hr psychological hotline, arrange personnel to work on duty in turn and organize internal and external full-time and part-time psychological counselors to provide epidemic-related psychological assistance services for college students for free.

### ***Develop Psychological Health “Internet + Smart Education” Mode***

Integrate network resources and optimize education services. Colleges and universities implement the online teaching and guidance mainly through the mode of “network teaching + online guidance” and by utilizing various teaching platforms (China University MOOC, Tencent Classroom, etc.), smart teaching tools (Rain Classroom, chaoxing.com, etc.), social communication tools (e.g., WeChat, QQ, DingTalk, etc.), and live streaming tools (e.g., Tik Tok, ZOOM, Tencent Meeting, etc.). Course teacher teaches, assigns work, interacts with students, and answers questions online. Network platform and smart teaching tools are diversified and coordinated. This “online Mocc + live interaction” diversifies a mixed teaching mode, which not only provides convenience for students but also makes teachers finish teaching tasks by ensuring both quality and quantity in the face of the epidemic so that the teaching objectives of psychological health are realized smoothly.

Innovate the psychological online training mode. Organize training via different modes (e.g., mixed training, network training, and case research and discussion), so that teachers could enhance information teaching ability in the actual experience and boost professional development and improve online teaching skills (Zhou, 2020).

Make planning elaborately and optimize course content settings. Include the contents (e.g., traumatic stress prevention, career planning, emotion management, interpersonal communication, frustration countermeasures, gratitude, perceived social support, meditation and relaxation, and life education) into the course according to current students’ psychological focuses and psychological needs based on the characteristics of clinical work. Launch psychological micro-videos and a psychological health guidebook for epidemic prevention and control through network platforms and publicize and popularize the knowledge about hygiene and epidemic prevention and psychological health; improve psychological adjustment skills and strengthen psychological health protection by multiple means (e.g. offering special psychology courses, psychological class meetings or series of psychological health education special lectures) and blend the psychological health education into all types of education of colleges and universities. In addition, enhance students’ interest in online learning and experience through online psychological activities with colorful contents and multiple forms, such as psychological theme poster design, psychological comics and psychological knowledge competitions, so as to expand students’ participation effectively, and enhance their participation enthusiasm; cultivate students’ positive qualities and improve their comprehensive quality.

Establish and improve quality supervision and feedback mechanism. After finishing teaching design of theoretical courses of psychological health education and applying it in practical teaching, check the effectiveness of teaching design by such ways as online scale measurement, questionnaire surveys and individual interviews and make multiple iterations, improvements, and revisions on the basis of students’ feedback and teachers’ reflection (Liu, F., 2020); give full play to cloud classroom’s main function, optimize teaching, and improve teaching quality, so as to develop a feasible and continuously effective psychological health “Internet + smart education” mode during the outbreak of the epidemic.

### ***Build a Diversified Support System***

Social support system is the most stable factor with a significant protective effect, which can connect individuals to constructive resources for effective personal adaptation, buffer the impact of stress events to individuals, reduce the stress response, and significantly reduce the stress level (Luo, 2020). Establish a multi-aspect, multi-level, all-dimensional and full-process professional support system, through which colleges and universities ensure overall management, departments' responsibilities are clear, and multiple parties (family, society, teacher, and student) are involved, under the support of teachers in colleges and universities (including full and part-time psychological counselors, psychological instructors and class teachers), peer psychological services, medical institutions, and family-school psychological education alliance and through the linkage of schools' internal departments, and the linkage and assistance of external public security organs. Form the resultant force of joint construction and governance by technical means (e.g., new media) and through the grassroots organizations (e.g., hospital, school, and community) and duly solve the psychological disease for the crisis of colleges and universities and prevent social problems.

### **Implications and Conclusion**

With so much influence on the psychological health education work of Chinese colleges and universities, COVID-19 and the special battle by human beings brings both opportunities and challenges for colleges and universities; colleges and universities should, therefore, seize these opportunities and accelerate psychological education reform by considering the experience and lessons summarized in the epidemic, the measures and inspirations of epidemic prevention and control so as to promote the development of psychological health education of colleges and universities. In the meantime, utilize increasingly optimized modern information technology, explore multiple education and teaching modes according to the realities, develop "Internet + smart education" new approaches of colleges and universities and provide references for the new explorations and practices of psychological health education in the post-epidemic era.

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# A Comparative Study on Online Translation and Post-editing

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**[Abstract]** *With the development and wide use of the internet, online translation is becoming more frequently used than before. Google Translate is internationally used as a popular online translation tool, while Baidu Fanyi (translate) is mostly used by Chinese users. This article gives a comparative study on these two popular online translation tools, exploring four typical classes of errors before post-editing in their translated versions for the sake of improving translation efficiency and quality.*

**[Keywords]** *online translation; post-editing; Google Translate; Baidu Fanyi*

## **Introduction**

Since the notion of machine translation was brought forward by Weaver in 1949, machine translation has undergone 70 years of development; machine translation still plays the role as an assistant tool in translation. Machine translation and post-editing have attracted some attention in the field of translation studies. Some international representative works have made great contributions, including Hans P. Krings's *Repairing Texts: Empirical Investigations of Machine Translation Post-Editing Processes* (2001), Ana Nino's *Translation versus Machine Translation Post-editing* (2010), and Sharon O' Brien's *Proceedings Post-editing of Machine Translation: Process and Applications* (2014). However, study of machine translation and post-editing is still relatively weak in China. There are only a few articles paying attention to this perspective. Cui and Li (2015) analyzed eleven error types of post-editing. Feng and Cui (2016) gave an overview regarding the present study of machine translation and post-editing both at home and abroad. Yang (2020) shed light on neural machine translation and post-editing. Meng and Tang (2020) delved into the technologies of post-editing of machine translation. Zhu, Zhao & Zhu (2020) explored online Google Translate and post-editing principles at the textual, referential, cohesive and natural level in the C/E translation. Of course, these studies have shed some light on machine translation and post-editing. But few researchers have shown interest in online translation, which is becoming more useful in helping translators' work except Zhu, Zhao, & Zhu (2020). Among those popular online translation tools, Baidu Fanyi (translate) enjoys more popularity in China, while Google Translate is more popularly used internationally. Compared with Google Translate, Baidu Translate is relatively new in this field. This article will do a comparative study on online translation and post-editing of Google Translate and Baidu Fanyi (translate).

## **Online Translate as a Tool Facilitating Translation Process**

Compared with machine translation, online translation is still a young thing, which arose in the process of globalization and fast development of the internet. In fact, online translation includes many tools, such as, Google Translate, Baidu Fanyi, Bing Microsoft Translator, and some other internet communication software. Such online translators are becoming indispensable for those people who need to communicate with foreign friends who are not equipped with foreign languages. For many foreign language learners and translators, good online tools for translation are convenient for them to do their work in a more productive way. In the field of translation studies, many scholars have contributed a lot in machine translation. There is a growing acceptance that machine translation enjoys better acceptance and has improved in recent

decades, but it still has many limitations. When it comes to online translation, it is completely a different situation. Most people only look on it as a tool like an online dictionary. Few researchers have paid attention to its practicability and would not accept it as useful. Given that online translation has become a useful tool both for amateur and professional foreign language users, this article will do a tentative study on online translation and post-editing. In this study, two online tools, Google Translate and Baidu Fanyi, will be compared in terms of their advantages and disadvantages. Before unfolding the work, the author thinks it is necessary to differentiate two basic terms in this article, i.e., online translation and online translate. Online translation refers to the translation activity which is conducted by the translator by using online tools; online translate refers to an online tool which can be used by translators to help them accomplish translation work. The reason the author chooses Google Translate and Baidu Fanyi rests upon their popularity. In this article all the examples are chosen from the same English text *The Doom that Came to Sarnath*, a fantasy short story written by H. P. Lovecraft in 1920.

### A General Description of Google Translate and Baidu Fanyi

Of course, both Google Translate and Baidu Fanyi boast of many users around the world. Google Translate is more internationally used, while Baidu Fanyi enjoys a bigger market in China. Last year because of the pandemic, Covid-19, these two online translation tools were used by more people. Based on my experience in using these translates, I hold the view that both of them have different advantages and disadvantages. From the perspective of user-friendliness, Google Translate and Baidu Fanyi have different degrees of convenience. Comparatively, the latter enjoys better readability and user-friendliness for post-editing by providing a selection of bilingual versions plus Chinese Pinyin in the translated version column. Details are demonstrated as follows:



Figure 1. Baidu Fanyi



Figure 2. Google Translate

From the above screenshot of these two translations, we can see that the version provided by Baidu Fanyi boasts higher quality in contrast to the Google version. At the same time, Baidu Fanyi provides users

with bilingual versions in the output column on the right, which is easier for users to do detailed analysis between the original and target versions in the stage of post-editing.

### Common Errors and Post-editing Analysis

As to the errors of machine translation, Cui and Li (2015) listed eleven types, i.e., over translation, under translation, errors in proper nouns, errors in signal form, errors in format, addition and deletion, redundancy, word class error, clause translation errors, errors in clause order, and errors governed by the original language. This list includes most error types appearing in machine translation. In this article, the author will also include improper meaning of translated versions into consideration instead of focusing on grammar. Based on the examples found in the online translations of *The Doom that Came to Sarnath*, this article classifies errors into four types: improper translation of proper nouns, wrong meaning choice, translationese, and wrong grammatical cognition.

#### *Improper Translation of Proper Nouns*

In this fiction story, there are some apparent strange proper nouns, which are not like those traditional English proper nouns. There are big differences between versions of Google Translate and Baidu Fanyi. Please look at the following examples.

##### *Example 1*

*ST: There is in the land of Mnar a vast still lake that is fed by no stream and out of which no stream flows. Ten thousand years ago there stood by its shore the mighty city of Sarnath, but Sarnath stands there no more.*

*TT1 (Google Translate): 蒙纳 (Mnar) 土地上有一个广阔的静 lake 湖, 没有小溪流进, 没有小溪流出来。一万年, 这座强大的城市 鹿野苑 (Sarnath) 站在岸边, 但 鹿野苑 (Sarnath) 站在那里了。*

*TT2 (Baidu Fanyi): 在 姆纳尔 的土地上有一个巨大的平静的湖泊, 没有溪流流过, 也没有溪流流出。一万年, 强大的 萨尔纳城 矗立在海岸边, 但 萨尔纳城 已不复存在。*

##### *Example 2*

*ST: It is told that in the immemorial years when the world was young, before ever the men of Sarnath came to the land of Mnar, another city stood beside the lake;*

*TT1 (Google Translate): 据说, 在世界还很年轻的远古时代, 鹿野苑 的人们还没来 蒙纳尔 的土地, 那座城市就站在湖边。*

*TT2 (Baidu Fanyi): 据说, 在远古时代, 当世界还年轻的时候, 撒拿人 还没有来到 姆纳尔地, 另一座城市就站在湖边;*

**Post-editing analysis:** In Example 1, we can see the Google version is more like a rough draft, which cannot be regarded as a common literary text. Two proper nouns, Mnar and Sarnath, are strangely handled by Google Translate. They were turned into 蒙纳 (Mnar) and 鹿野苑 (Sarnath), respectively. The first one is translated by transliteration, and the second one by its meaning. Beside this incoherent translation strategy, the Google version attached the original version in a bracket after the translated versions. In post-editing the translator should put the second one into Chinese according to its English pronunciation and delete the original versions and brackets. Compared with Google Translate, the Baidu translation rendered them into Chinese by transliteration. In Example 2, the proper noun Sarnath is translated into “撒拿人”,

which is “萨纳” in the former sentence. In the Google version, the proper noun Mnar is put into “蒙纳尔” while in the former case the version is “蒙纳”. In Example 2, both versions present incoherence within the same paragraph because the same proper noun is put into different versions, which is in need of post-editing. Otherwise, the version cannot be well accepted.

### ***Wrong Meaning Choice***

There are many words that are wrongly translated into Chinese by choosing a meaning that cannot be well explained in the context.

#### *Example 3*

*ST: The grey stone city of Ib, which was old as the lake itself, and peopled with beings not pleasing to behold.*

*TT1 (Google Translate): 灰色的石头城市伊卜 (Ib), 其历史与湖泊本身一样古老, 与众生相望。*

*TT2 (Baidu Fanyi): 伊布的灰石城, 它和湖水一样古老, 居住着不好看的生物。*

#### *Example 4*

*ST: However this may be, it is certain that they worshipped a seagreen stone idol chiselled in the likeness of Bokrug, the great water-lizard; before which they danced horribly when the moon was gibbous.*

*TT1 (Google Translate): 但是, 可以肯定的是, 他们崇拜了像巨大的水蜥蜴博格鲁格一样凿成的海绿色石偶像。在此之前, 月亮隆隆起跳时, 他们跳得可怕。*

*TT2 (Baidu Fanyi): 然而, 可以肯定的是, 他们崇拜的是一个刻着大水蜥博克鲁格肖像的海绿石雕偶像; 在那之前, 当月亮高耸时, 他们可怕地跳舞。*

**Post-editing analysis:** In Example 3, the clause “and peopled with beings not pleasing to behold” is translated into “与众生相望” in the Google version, while the Baidu version translates it as “居住着不好看的生物”。Semantically, the Google version presents a ridiculous result, and the Baidu version bears better logic. In the process of post-editing, the translator needs to do a lot when working on the Google version. In this example, the Baidu version shows better acceptability in meaning.

In Example 4, the two versions have different errors in translating the same clause “when the moon was gibbous.” Google translates it into “月亮隆隆起跳时” and Baidu puts into “当月亮高耸时”. According to the context, the Google version cannot be logically explained. The word “gibbous” means “more than half but less than fully illuminated” when it is used to describe the moon. Apparently, both versions are wrong in meaning. In post-editing, this clause needs to be corrected into “满月将至的时候”.

### ***Translationese***

Translationese is commonly seen in translated versions, especially when the version is rendered by a native SL translator. However, when it is written “by a native TL translator it sounds absurd” (Newmark, 1988, p.:190). In online translation, translationese is also an unavoidable phenomenon awaiting post-editing to erase.

#### *Example 5*

*ST: As the men of Sarnath beheld more of the beings of Ib their hate grew.....*

*TT1 (Google Translate): 当萨纳特人看到更多的伊卜人时, 他们的仇恨就增加了.....*

*TT2 (Baidu Fanyi): 撒拿人看见伊布的人多了, 恨意就越发大.....*

### Example 6

*ST: ...wondering from the greatness of the labour however the stones were brought from afar, as they must have been, since there is naught like them in all the land of Mnar or in the lands adjacent.*

*TT1 (Google Translate): 从劳动的巨大意义上想知道, 石头是怎么从远方被带走的, 因为它们在那儿的所有土地上或邻近的土地上都没有像它们那样被远古带走。*

*TT2 (Baidu Fanyi): 他们因劳碌的劳碌而纳闷, 这些石头是怎么从远方运来的, 因为在玛拿尔的全地和邻近的地上, 没有一块像它们一样。*

In Example 5, the clause “their hate grew” is translated into “恨意就越发大” and “他们的仇恨就增加了” by Baidu and Google, respectively. The version of Baidu shows the strong flavor of translationese. Conversely, the Google version conforms to standard Chinese wording habit much better. In Example 6, the phrase “the greatness of the labour” is translated into “从劳动的巨大意义上” and “劳碌的劳碌” by Google and Baidu. Both versions carry a strong sense of translationese, which poses great difficulty for readers to understand. In post-editing, the translator has to polish these two versions in accordance with idiomatic Chinese.

### **Wrong Grammatical Cognition**

In the online versions, there are also some grammatical errors, which are easier to identify in those long sentences. They seem to be a nightmare in online translation, deserving more work in post-editing process.

### Example 7

*ST: Betwixt Sarnath and the city of Ilarneke arose a caravan route, and the precious metals from the earth were exchanged for other metals and rare cloths and jewels and books and tools for artificers and all things of luxury that are known to the people who dwell along the winding river Ai and beyond.*

*TT1 (Google Translate): 萨纳特 (Barnixt Sarnath) 和伊拉内克 (Ilarnek) 城之间开了一条商队, 人们将地球上的贵金属换成其他金属, 稀有的布料, 珠宝, 工匠的书籍和工具以及居住在这里的人们所知道的所有奢侈品。蜿蜒的艾河和超越。*

*TT2 (Baidu Fanyi): 在萨尔纳和伊拉内克之间出现了一条商队路线, 从地球上运来的贵金属被交换成其他金属、稀有的衣服、珠宝、书籍和手工工具, 以及居住在蜿蜒的艾河沿岸和远处的人们所知道的一切奢侈品。*

**Post-editing analysis:** Example 7 is a long sentence that shows great difficulty for online translation to analyze its grammatical structure. The Google version seems to be ridiculous by dividing the last phrase of “the winding river Ai and beyond” into an independent sentence. It is put into “蜿蜒的艾河和超越”, which is wrong both in grammar and meaning. Compared with such wrong grammatical cognition, the Baidu version shows correct understanding in this perspective and carries higher readability. In the post-editing process, it is necessary for the translator to make more effort in order to produce a more standard Chinese version by polishing the Google version.

## Conclusion

Nowadays, online translation plays a more significant role in interlingual communication. “Technical advances and its increasing availability, mean that Machine Translation is now widely used for the translation of search queries in multilingual search tasks. A number of free-to-use high-quality online MT

systems are now available and, although imperfect in their translation behavior, are found to produce good performance in Cross-Language Information Retrieval applications” (Vahid, et al., 2015). It can largely enhance the efficiency of translation in most cases. Besides its merit, we should equip ourselves with the knowledge of some common errors for the sake of improving translation quality in the process of post-editing. This article sheds light on four common errors of online translation, including improper translation of proper nouns, wrong meaning choice, translationese, and wrong grammatical cognition. These errors are frequently found in online translation. The translator has to pay more attention to erasing such errors in the process of post-editing. From the case analyses above, we can draw the conclusion that both Google Translate and Baidu Translate have merits and demerits in their versions. The demerits of these two online translators mainly lie in the lexical polysemy, contextual ambiguity, and grammatical complication. So far, online translation has been improved greatly, but it is still not satisfying to a great extent. In order to take advantage of online translation the translator should be careful in the process of post-editing.

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# Online British and American Literature Teaching During Covid-19 Pandemic

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*[Abstract]* Based on an investigation of the advantages and disadvantages of an online classroom on the QQ platform, the essay has discussed how to carry out an online British and American literature class effectively, and argues that under the special circumstances of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the teacher of British and American literature should try to make full use of the internet technology to take the characteristics of literature into consideration and to combine online with off-line classroom teaching. Internal factors concerning a qualified literature classroom are of fundamental significance, which include arousing the students' interest; mingling basic knowledge and skills with interest; and asking students to read and recite some original literary works, and to do some electronic assignments off-line.

*[Keywords]* Covid-19 pandemic; online; British and American literature teaching

## Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected traditional teaching seriously. On January 27, China's Ministry of Education requested "Higher education institutions, primary and secondary schools and kindergartens under the purview of local governments to postpone the start of the 2020 spring semester" (2020). According to the statistics on April 26, 2020, 87.9% students from 189 countries in the world have been affected by the novel coronavirus, and 1.539 billion students' classes have to be suspended (UNESCO, 2020). To deal with the situation, teachers have started online teaching, and research papers on online teaching have been on the increase. However, many papers explore online teaching theoretically. For instance, Hu Xian-qi advocates "focusing on education thought, education idea, teaching mode and education mode, strengthening the guidance and cultivation" (2020). The shortcomings of present online teaching researches lie mainly in that "the total number of research is not large and the quality is not high," and the "research methods mostly focus on theoretical analysis and lack of empirical research" (Lu, 2020). Only a few papers have discussed online teaching specifically. Kang Lian-lian has suggested "College English online and offline mixed teaching method" (2020). Based on the "Superstar Network Teaching Platform," Zheng Rong-hua has explored "online teaching for the course of British literature" (2020). So far, it seems that there has been no paper exploring online British and American literature based on QQ Platform, which is said to be better than the Superstar Platform. Therefore, this paper will explore online British and American literature classroom teaching based on the QQ Platform. It first introduces the research background and the structure of the paper. Then it analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of an online classroom on the QQ Platform. Finally, it discusses measures for carrying out an online British and American literature class effectively, such as making full use of the internet technology, arousing the students' interest, mingling basic knowledge and skills with interest, and asking students to do some electronic assignments off-line, etc.

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Classroom Teaching on QQ Platform**

There are three modes that we can choose to carry out an online class on the QQ Platform: QQ Video Telephone, QQ Group Classroom, and QQ Telephone. None of the three is perfect, and each one has its own advantages and disadvantages.

When we use the mode of the QQ Video Telephone to have an online class, in order to establish a quiet atmosphere, we may ask the students to close their microphones at first. The teacher can share his or her screen with the students. When the teacher asks the student to answer a question, the student can open his or her microphone, and when the student has finished answering the question, he or she should close the microphone in order not to be noisy. The advantages of this mode are as follows. When the teacher opens his or her PPT and shares it with the students, he or she can share the PPT completely with full screen, and the students can see the contents shown on the screen clearly. The students can hear the teacher's words almost simultaneously, without pauses. At the bottom right of the teacher's desktop, there is a button of "closing screen-sharing," hence the teacher can end screen sharing at any time conveniently. The shortcomings of this mode of teaching are as follows. When the students have a classroom discussion, it will become very noisy. When the teacher plays an episode of a video, either a song or an episode of the film adapted from a novel; for example, the students can only see the picture but cannot hear the sound, which we can make up by playing the episode of the video on the cell phone. However, the difficult point is that we should try our best to keep the video playing on the computer and on the cell phone in the same pace.

When we use the QQ Group Classroom to have an online class, we may choose the mode of Host. In order to keep the online class quiet, the teacher may ask the students to close their microphones. The teacher can share his or her files with the students; if the teacher does so, he or she needs to open the file first with a full screen, and then press the "sharing" button at the bottom right of the computer desktop. The teacher can also play and share his or her PPT. When the teacher does so, he or she should, first of all, choose the menu of PPT presentation and then open it. The advantages of the QQ Group Classroom are as follows. First, when sharing the screen, the teacher is able to share more than one file in different forms, such as PPT, DOC, or PDF. The teacher does not need to close the shared file when he is sharing a new file. However, when the class is over, the teacher needs to go back to the first shared file to close the shared screen. Second, when carrying out a class with the QQ Group Classroom, the teacher can play video with a good result smoothly, and he or she can adjust the playing-rate of the video. The shortcomings are as follows. First, it is not convenient to achieve interaction between the teacher and the students; second, it is noisy when the students open their microphones; and third, the teacher's voice spreads to the listener a few seconds late.

We may also carry out a class with the QQ Telephone, and probably this is the most convenient way to have an online class. When the class starts, the teacher can choose to share the screen easily and share different files, and it is very convenient to end the screen sharing. Besides, the students can feel free to open their microphones.

Based on personal teaching experiences, the author has summarized the advantages and disadvantages of online class teaching and learning. The question is how to carry out an online British and American literature class effectively. The paper will be discussed in the following part.

## **Strategies for Effective Online British and American Literature Class**

Classroom teaching and learning is a communicative interaction between teachers and students. “It is often through conversation, discourse, discussion, and debate among students and between instructors and students that a new concept is clarified .... a learning objective is achieved” (Ya Ni, 2013). The distinctive difference between the online and the traditional class is that in the traditional classroom, the teacher and the students are communicating face to face, while in the online classroom, they are communicating in a virtual classroom in which the teacher finds it difficult to maintain interaction with the students. It is the same as online British and American literature class. Hence, in order to carry out online British and American literature classroom teaching effectively, teachers must combine the advantages of online classroom with the characteristics of British and American literature.

### ***To Arouse the Students’ Interest, and to Stimulate the Students’ Enthusiasm***

Einstein once said that “motivation is the best teacher” (1979, p. 144). It is very important and necessary to arouse the students’ interest and to stimulate the students’ enthusiasm when we carry out an online class. In order to achieve this goal, the teacher must mobilize himself or herself first, for an online class is quite different from a traditional class. This is indeed the very first time that teachers and students all over the world have had classes on the internet. In China, “[i]t is unprecedented in history and the first initiative in the world to deliver the large-scale online education to hundreds of millions of students nationwide during the epidemic prevention and control period” (Huang, et al, 2020). Therefore, it is urgent for teachers to get familiar with the online class and make full use of the internet technology. The paper suggests that teachers might take the following measures before starting the online class:

The teacher should train himself or herself to master how to carry out an online class. He or she must conduct enough experiments before the online class so as to master the ways and skills online: for example, to start a class, to open and share his PPT on the screen, to ask students to answer questions, to end his screen sharing, and to end his class at the end of his lecture etc. Experiments among family members are suggested in order to get ready fully for the online class.

The teacher should by himself or with a student’s help to establish a QQ Group with all students who have selected British and American literature course. The teacher should, also, conduct necessary experiments with the students and train them to get familiar with features and procedures of an online class to overcome fears and anxiety so that they can get ready for the online class.

In order to arouse the students’ interest in the online class, the teacher may play music at the beginning of a lecture to inspire the students’ enthusiasm and increase the student’s confidence in defeating the novel Coronavirus. The teacher may also ask some students to answer questions to strengthen the classroom interaction, deepen the students’ understanding on certain aspects of the lecture, and frequently make positive remarks to encourage the students.

Here, the paper has discussed measures to get the students used to the online class and methods to motivate the students. The strategies involve internet technology, and students’ motivation, etc. Although these are important, they are, after all, external factors. What really count are the internal factors. The content of the lecture and the teaching method play the key role in carrying out a successful online lecture. Therefore, in the following part, the paper will discuss the internal factors concerning how to carry out a successful online lecture.

### ***Mingle Basic Knowledge and Skills with Interest in the Process of Teaching***

A qualified or successful university classroom lecture, as a matter of course, should include the following three aspects: knowledge, skills, and interest, among which basic knowledge comes first, basic skills comes second, and interest comes last. In order to achieve the best teaching result, a teacher should try his or her best to combine the three aspects with each other. Literature is an important course to cultivate the students' human accomplishments. As the editor in chief of *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature* remarks, "Even as English spreads over the globe, British literature still remains at the heart of the commitment to the humanities in English-speaking countries, not least in the United States" (Kastan, 2009, p. xi). Thus, the teacher of British and American literature should consider all these factors and try to achieve the best teaching result.

a. The teacher may ask the students to prepare the lecture, but he must design corresponding questions to guide or enlighten the students beforehand. For example, when we discuss Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18," we may design such questions as the following:

- i. Why does the persona "I" compare his lover to a summer's day?
- ii. Why is the lover more lovely and more temperate than a summer's day?
- iii. What are the shortcomings of summer?
- iv. What is the persona's opinion of beauty, immortal or temporary?
- v. How can youth and beauty be made immortal?
- vi. What is the theme of the sonnet?
- vii. Which is more powerful, literature and art or human beings?

In class, the teacher may ask the students to have a discussion. At the end of the discussion, the teacher can lead the students to come to the conclusion that although literature and art are powerful enough to make human beings immortal, it is eventually created by human beings. Here the class may come to the point that the sonnet sings the praises of the greatness of human beings, which touches humanism, and is keynote of the Renaissance. Thus, the students have deepened their understanding of the sonnet and, also, on literature, and even on humanism.

b. When the teacher organizes the classroom activities, the teacher should consider the characteristics of the students so as to arouse their interest. The university students are young and energetic, in the golden stage of their life, in the process of acquiring knowledge, and growing up physically, psychologically, and mentally. Therefore, when we discuss Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, we may design such questions as the following:

- i. Do you believe in love at the first sight? Why or why not?
- ii. Would you defy your parents to marry someone you love? Why or why not?
- iii. Can people fall in love in less than a day? Explain your answer.
- iv. Describe your future ideal spouse. What qualities would you expect from your would-be partner?
- v. What would you do if you were Romeo/Juliet?
- vi. Could you please make a comparison between *Romeo and Juliet* and the ancient Chinese tragedy *Butterfly Lovers*?

University students are marching on the way of knowledge and career and social life, and of love and marriage and family life. They are very interested in such kinds of questions and are very active in

expressing their opinions. About Question No. 4, some students mention a very important quality: sense of responsibility, which impresses the author deeply and moves her a lot. About Question No. 5, they have thought out many clever and interesting ways to solve the problem. What is encouraging and important is that none of the students choose to die for love. Unconsciously, they have made some encouraging leap in terms of humanistic education.

***Ask Students to Recite Famous Passages from Original Literary Works and Read Literary Classics in Their Spare Time, and do Some Electronic Assignment Off-line***

A literature course requires a large amount of reading of original literary classics. The normal teaching hours of British and American literature, either in a traditional or online class, are insufficient. Therefore, the teacher of British and American literature needs to ask students to recite famous passages from original literary works, to read literary classics in their spare time, and to do some electronic assignment.

- a. In order to make up for the limited teaching hours, to strengthen the students' literary attainments, and to achieve a better teaching and learning result, the teacher of British and American literature needs to ask the students to recite some famous poems or famous passages from original literary works. Besides, we require the students to read 2-3 literary classics during the summer vacation and 1-2 literary classics during the winter vacation. We also require students during the school term to read 2-3 British and American literary classics. For example, the literary classics that we recommended to the students during the summer vacation are the following: *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, *Gulliver's Travels* by Johnathan Swift, *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy, and *Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding. The students can choose from the recommended books to read 2-3.
- b. After reading the novels, the students are required to do some electronic assignment off-line, either to answer the following six questions or to write their reflection in about 1,000 English words or to write an essay in about 2,000 English words. The assignment should be handed in to the literature teacher to evaluate in due course. The six questions that the students are required to answer are as follows:
  - i. When did the story happen? How did the historical background influence the fate of major characters? Why would the story not happen now, or could it happen now?
  - ii. Where did the story happen? How did the setting influence the fate of major characters? Why would the story not happen in China, or could it happen in China?
  - iii. Who are the main characters? What is the relationship among them?
  - iv. Which character do you like (or dislike) best? Why?
  - v. Which part of the novel impresses you best? Why?
  - vi. If you were the heroine (or the hero), what would you do to change your fate?

In this way, we have made up for the shortcomings of an online class. By combining online and off-line teaching and learning, we have achieved good results in British and American literature class.

### **Conclusion**

Taking the QQ platform as an example, this essay has discussed how to carry out an online British and American literature class. Though the online classroom has some disadvantages, it also has some advantages. The students are more active in an online class than in a traditional class. The reasons may be

that students and teachers are not face to face; hence, the students feel more relaxed. The essay concludes that under the special circumstances of Covid-19 pandemic, the teacher of British and American literature should try his or her best to make full use of the internet technology and to take the characteristics of literature into consideration. He or she should also try to combine online with off-line classroom teaching in order to achieve good results. Besides the external factors, such as advantages of the QQ platform and students' motivation, the essay maintains that internal factors concerning a qualified literature classroom teaching are of fundamental significance. The internal factors include the following three aspects: to arouse the students' interest; to mingle basic knowledge and skills with interest in the process of teaching; and to ask students to recite famous poems and famous passages from original literary works, read literary classics in their spare time, and do some electronic assignments off-line. It is hoped that the essay will provide some enlightenment for online British and American literature teaching during Covid-19 pandemic.

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# The Innovation and Practice of the Course Construction of Police Professional Courses under the Background of Post-epidemic Period

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*[Abstract] In the background of the post epidemic situation, the course team of police professional courses takes its example by the international advanced training concept of police professional courses, combines the anti-terrorism security situation in China, optimizes the teaching content and training courses, improves teaching methods, makes full use of modern education technology, to conducting innovation and practice in the teaching mode, teaching content, teaching organization, teaching evaluation, and teaching team construction, solves the operational and interactive bottleneck problems in teaching and practice, constructs the curriculum knowledge graph, and improves the students' practical working ability.*

*[Keywords] the post-epidemic background; police professional courses; online teaching; innovation and practice*

## Introduction

In the last 20 years, the internet has grown from being nearly non-existent into the largest online education form of education in which students use their home computers through the internet. For many nontraditional students, among all who want to continue working full time or raising families, online graduations and courses have become popular in the past decade (Desai, 2020). However, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has required educators and students across all levels of education to adapt quickly to virtual courses (Lockee, 2021). Worldwide, there are currently more than 1.2 billion children in 186 countries affected by school closures due to the pandemic (Li, & Lalani, 2021).

The sudden, novel Coronavirus changed the teaching mode of police colleges and universities, making the majority of teachers and students feel the great mission of police education. Like other schools of various levels, the police colleges and universities in China carried out online courses teaching in a planned way, implementing “classes suspend, but teaching and learning not suspend” according to the requirement of the Ministry of Education (2020). For a moment, online teaching becomes the favorite in the mind of the teachers, parents, and students (Guo, Wu, & Zhu, 2020). Through the WeChat platform and the public security network query, this paper investigates the online teaching situation about the police professional courses, combined with the early teaching practice experience, further explore the online and offline hybrid

teaching mode, in order to provide some theoretical and practical references to the innovation and reform of the police professional courses during the post-epidemic period.

## **The Implementation of the Police Professional Courses in Police Colleges during the Post-epidemic Period**

### ***Improve the Construction of Online Courses and Choose Appropriate Broadcasting Platforms***

To carry out online education is a positive action for traditional education to embrace digital education, and it is an epochal change for traditional education (Feng, 2020). Through the investigation of the online course construction of police professional courses during the epidemic period, we can find the best practices of most police colleges. On the basis of online teaching in the early stages, the non-confidential teaching content was further improved. The teachers provided students with a complete course syllabus, teaching plans, teaching videos, teaching resources, and so on online. The teaching department checked and verified the teaching resources uploaded by teachers to ensure that the teaching resources are oriented correctly, that there are no classified contents, that there are no contents that may endanger national security, and that there are no other contents that are not suitable to be published online. Public security colleges and universities used different online platforms for teaching, including Tencent Conference, QQ platform, WeChat platform, ZOOM platform, MOOCs, Dingding and other live broadcasting platforms. Although there are many live broadcasting platforms, there are not many good ones. Most platforms have split-screens and shared screen capabilities for online interaction. Among them, Tencent and Zoom can also implement online voice interaction, while XUXTONG can only meet students' text interaction, but the teaching environment is relatively quiet. Due to the impact of the online environment, ZOOM and Tencent were prone to lag and crash during peak class hours, while ZOOM and XUXTONG were not affected by the crowding of online classes. In short, each platform has its own strengths and weaknesses. The police professional courses were mainly carried out in the form of course companion MOOCs V8+QQ group class, which is convenient for the management of students' attendance, online previews, online videos, courseware learning, homework assignment, teaching interaction, and other teaching processes, and can effectively obtain teaching data in such a learning situation analysis. Each course team worked with the division of labor to complete the online course construction task in the shortest time, which ensured no suspension of classes during the epidemic.

### ***Adjust Teaching Progress and Teaching Content Reasonably***

Due to the COVID-19 epidemic factor, the off-line opening time of police colleges and universities in China varies greatly. The police professional courses in the Chongqing Police college carried out nine weeks of online teaching. Using the online teaching platform "course partner – MOOC", students download a "mobile course partner" APP, combining with a QQ group class. The course's teaching schedule and content revolve around students' learning early with training mainly at home, through the course partner MOOC V8 platform resources, constructing online courses, setting up some columns, including the course learning, course resources, unit learning, curriculum activities, foreign modern shooting training, training highlights, police dynamics, course education, and so on, uploading abundant learning resources, providing the domestic and international frontier training video data, dealing with the knowledge points that students mostly need to learn and master, and making full preparations for carrying out live teaching.

### ***Teaching Administration Department and Teaching Auxiliary Department were Responsible for Ensuring and Supervising the Online Teaching***

According to the needs of online teaching, the Academic Affairs Office, the Information Technology Center, and the Student Affairs Office of the college did a good job in the teaching management and guarantee of course schedule revision, textbook sending, platform upgrading, and other related work. The teaching quality monitoring and evaluation center and the teaching supervision group inspected the online teaching. The college required the teaching supervisor and the head teacher to join the course learning group, check the development of online class by attending classes, master the learning effect of students, and provide timely feedback of the information to the teacher so as to ensure the smooth development of live teaching. The police professional courses are mostly practical courses; in order to avoid students dealing with the class, the course teacher team uploaded students' training videos in teaching so that teachers could control the training completion of students; according to the students' learning situation, make timely adjust the teaching content and progress to ensure the smooth development of teaching activities.

### ***Adjust Teaching Arrangement and Innovate the Assessment and Evaluation***

Each teaching department of the college reasonably adjusted the teaching content and progress according to the course types, dividing the course teaching into online and offline parts. The theoretical (non-confidential) part of the course was taught online, while the practical part of the course was taught offline, which was postponed until the students returned to school. Through learning discussion, tutoring, and answering questions, assigning homework, online testing and other links, ensure that students' learning process is solid and effective. At the same time, considering the connection between course teaching before and after students' return to school, course assessment was divided into teacher evaluation, student evaluation, and supervision evaluation. In the process of teaching, teachers used classroom evaluation to collect students' feedback in time, which was convenient for further improving the teaching quality. Teachers make students active in class teaching by making comments on students' practice videos, homework, and the evaluation of the supervisor after class.

## **Exploration on the Teaching Reform of the Police Professional Courses during the Post-Epidemic Period**

The new online teaching mode during the epidemic period and the mixed online and offline teaching mode in the post-epidemic period have provided new opportunities and challenges for the course teams of police colleges. Only by facing the challenges, keeping up with the development trend of higher education, innovating thinking, taking the initiative to integrate into the overall situation of public security reform, seizing the opportunity, taking the initiative to carry out practical teaching reform, can we solve the problem that the teaching content is out of line with the reality of public security.

### ***Adhere to Course Ideology and Politics***

In the course construction process, the course team should always put course ideology and politics through the whole process of education and teaching, and carry out ideological and political education through online or online and offline linkage activities. According to the political nature of public security education, political police construction should be placed first. In light of the new situation and new requirements of public security work, the "loyalty gene" should be integrated into teaching and into the blood of teachers and students. First, enhance students' awareness of strict law enforcement through the full use of various

warning cases. Second ,guide students to “fasten the first button of being police officer” (Railway Police Academy, 2020). Teachers should pay close attention to the online discussion content in time, give positive guidance to some messages, and further implement the teaching concept of ideological and political thinking in class and in the whole process of education. Third , combine social hot spots and students’ reality, set up thematic discussions, improve the affinity and pertinence of ideological and political teaching of the course so that students can be educated imperceptibly and distinguish right from wrong (Yao, Yu, & Zhao, 2020).

### ***Make Full Use of Modern Education and Teaching Technology to Solve the Bottleneck Problems of Operation and Interactivity between Teaching and Practice***

In the post-epidemic period, the combination of online and offline teaching modes requires teachers to take the initiative to adapt to the network, redesign classroom teaching and innovate teaching concepts. The curriculum should be changed from teaching-centered to student-centered, and the concept of “learning-centered” should be truly established. The modern education and teaching technology should be integrated into the whole process of teaching, the advantages of technology should be brought into play, and the teacher-centered theory should be changed. Combine “technology” with traditional teaching methods to form corresponding guidance methods. The effective use of the education teaching technology on the police professional courses complied with the current science and technology strong police and public security information construction. The online courses, VR simulation training system, and the smart classroom strengthen the effectiveness in teaching and guidance in practice, promote the organic integration of the contents itself and its extension. Police colleges and universities should take this opportunity to establish an intelligent teaching concept, improve the information literacy of teachers and students with the help of various favorable resources, promote the deep integration of modern information technology and classroom teaching, and promote the fundamental reform of education and teaching (Feng, 2020).

### ***Construct the Knowledge Graph of the Course for Teaching Practice***

As an important part of knowledge engineering, the knowledge graph is the core of think tank construction. Each teaching team of the police professional courses takes “knowledge graph” technology as the center, extracts hierarchical knowledge points according to the chapters through software programming and links the knowledge points to form a network with relationships, thus constructing the knowledge graph of police professional courses for practical teaching activities.

### ***Adhere to the Practical Teaching Concept***

Adhering to the integration of “teaching, learning, training and fighting,” setting up the concept of “training talents for actual combat needs and testing results with actual combat results,” implement actual combat requirements and combat effectiveness standards in the whole process of teaching and training to make teaching and police actual combat seamless, increase the proportion of practical teaching, and promote teaching to the actual combat extension to cultivate students’ professional qualities of courage and responsibility, be not only brave and strong and full of wisdom.

### ***Focus on Improving students’ Practical Work Ability***

The practical training methods, such as case teaching, project teaching, modular teaching, and simulation of confrontation drill are adopted to move the classroom to the actual situation of the scene for teaching, so as to truly achieve the specific teaching goal of “police combat.”

## **The Methods and Ways of Innovation in the Police Professional Courses during the Post-Epidemic Period**

Considering the current domestic anti-terrorism and security situation, in order to solve the practical problems plaguing the front-line police at present, the police professional courses are innovative and practiced in the following aspects in terms of teaching content and cultivating students' abilities in accordance with the talent cultivation goal of "growing up, being policemen and being specialists."

### ***In Terms of Teaching Mode***

According to the individual characteristics of students, the theoretical knowledge adopts the teaching mode of "online MOOC platform + offline smart classroom", combining modern teaching technology with practical operation, and effectively organizes classroom teaching. The use of paintball confrontation training room, other teaching facilities, experimental training places, and small class system classes ensure that the experimental training project opening rate reached 100%.

### ***In Terms of Teaching Content***

The main content of the police professional courses focuses on actual combat, highlighting the close-range application of shooting training, combining with the hot and difficult issues of police law enforcement under the premise of ensuring the safety of law enforcement; it is fast and accurate. Exploring the techniques and tactics in line with the actual combat needs so that the teaching content can meet the practical needs is also necessary.

### ***In Terms of Teaching Organization***

Through the discussion area of the online course, teachers are concerned with students' problems and help with information in time, answer questions, and give guidance on time, communicate and guide on time through various ways, such as WeChat, learning platform, and telephone. In order to solve the problem of disconnection between teaching and actual practice, the college teachers and resident instructors are used to jointly compile the teaching syllabus and teach together. The most needed and effective techniques and tactics in actual combat are taught to students through the "real field, real scene, actual combat" so as to temper students' abilities, increase actual combat skills, improve the effectiveness of classroom teaching, provide students with more learning opportunities, pay attention to the individual differences between students, break the pattern of "march," make every student have full development through the layered teaching plans, stratified practice, individual counseling, and layered evaluation.

### ***In Terms of Teaching Evaluation***

Open assessment, carried out for the students, and the course assessment scheme with ability as the center, is adopted, focusing on the combination of theory and practice, qualitative and quantitative, process evaluation, and result evaluation. The composition of students' scores is diversified, including online testing, online participation, student mutual evaluation, homework, classroom questions, practical training, final exams, and other aspects. Make full use of the online classroom's advantage that all has its parts, so the teacher team will issue full records of research-based learning and experiential learning to generate the student's learning database, analyze and judge the student performance, learning, learning outcomes, and learning progress, find the problems, put forward the improvement strategy and suggestion, issue study notices on time, and remind students to adjust their learning process and key learning points.

### ***In Terms of Teaching Team***

With the construction mode of “police colleges + combat units,” police colleges and combat units jointly carry out curriculum development, collective lesson preparation, project training, quality evaluation and other teaching and research activities to enhance the overall strength of the team. Take the initiative to explore the characteristics of online education, look for new growth points and driving forces of teaching reform, and strive to improve the quality and efficiency of teaching.

### **Conclusion**

Actual combat skill is the second life of the police and the steel defense line for cracking down on and deterring violent and terrorist crimes and maintaining social harmony and stability. In the context of the post-epidemic, promoting the teaching reform of the police professional courses is the need to implement the Party Committee of the Ministry of Public Security’s special training action on the use of weapons by police. The teaching team should innovate ideas, follow the development trend of higher education, take the initiative to integrate into the overall situation of public security reform and carry out actual combat teaching reform. In teaching practice, we should combine laws and regulations with the use of police weapons, optimize the setting of training subjects, and improve the police combat ability in accordance with the law, reduce the occupational risk (Huang, Lee & Wang, 2016). Solving the problem that the teaching content is out of line with the reality of public security, identify the key points and difficulties in police combat training, further improving the police education quality.

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# Discussion on the Countermeasures of Online Education under the Pandemic of COVID-19

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**[Abstract]** *The havoc of COVID-19 has had a great impact on normal teaching activities. During the pandemic period, online teaching replaced the traditional teaching mode and became the mainstream way of education at the present stage; this has solved the urgent task of teaching and learning during the hard time. Based on a series of problems faced by online education during the pandemic of COVID-19, such as the insufficient functions of online teaching platforms, the need to improve the information technology skills of teachers, and the dramatic increase in the number of online education participants, this paper proposes a series of countermeasures. For example, teachers need to do a good job in teaching design, effectively organize and guide students to enter the online classroom, make rational use of online teaching resources, and effectively deal with the faults in live broadcasting in online teaching.*

**[Keywords]** *COVID-19; online education; online teaching; online learning; countermeasures*

## Introduction

The ravages of COVID-19 have caused a great impact on normal teaching activities, and the teaching mode has been “forced” to change from offline to online, which is not only a great challenge to teaching methods, but also a great opportunity for the development of online education. During the pandemic period, online teaching and online learning replaced the traditional teaching mode, solving the urgent tasks of teaching and learning during the epidemic and becoming a very good way of education at the present stage. However, with the development of online teaching activities, online teaching has gradually revealed some problems. How to take good online courses has become a major challenge to online education during the hard time (Xu, Lan, & Wang, 2020), and how to develop online education also requires corresponding countermeasures.

## Research Background

“COVID-19” began to appear in December 2019, and it was another major public health emergency after SARS. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) believed that the current COVID-19 outbreak could be called a global pandemic (COVID-19, 2020). COVID-19 has led to the closure of schools around the world. Although COVID-19 infection rates vary from country to country around the world, more than 1.2 billion children in 186 countries have been forced to leave the classroom because of the pandemic. Therefore, with the rise of e-learning, teaching on distance and digital platforms has brought tremendous changes in education. Obviously, the pandemic has completely disrupted the education system, and many people assert that the system has lost its meaning (Li, & Lalani, 2020). COVID-19 pandemic has completely changed the education model, which has resulted in imperative education reform.

### ***Current Situation of Online Education***

In the past 20 years, the Internet has grown from a state of almost non-existence to the largest and most accessible information database in history; it has changed the way of communicating, shopping, socializing, doing business, thinking, and learning. The emerging online education is changing the traditional classrooms, making education more accessible than ever (Anjali Desai, 2020) (Xu, Lan, & Wang, 2020). After analyzing the situation of mobile learning in the field of distance education in China, Bai Shengnan concludes in his “Visual Analysis of the Research Status of Mobile Learning in the Field of Distance Education” that the development of mobile learning in the field of distance education is in a sustained growth trend (2018). Will the shift from traditional education mode to online learning become a catalyst for a new and more effective way of educating students? Although some people worry that the transition from traditional education to online education is too hasty because of the pandemic, which will hinder the realization of its goal. While they will also experience the benefits of online learning and use it as part of the “normalization” of teaching. How to carry out online education well and what corresponding measures are needed is the focus of this paper.

## **The Challenges of Online Education under the Pandemic of COVID-19**

### ***The Insufficient Functions of Online Teaching Platforms***

At present, the functions of online teaching platforms are not perfect. Because of lacking unified standards and norms, the quality of user experience, personalized teaching, student evaluation, teaching evaluation and platform interaction is also varied. In this regard, developers should constantly innovate and improve the products of software and platform according to the needs of users. Educational departments should issue standards for online courses to correctly guide and standardize online curriculum construction. Facing the current situation, teachers should also adjust their own teaching methods and strategies, grasp the characteristics and usage of the online teaching platforms, optimize teaching resources to help students successfully complete their learning tasks in the learning of specific courses and achieve predetermined learning goals.

### ***The Limited Skills of Teachers' Information Technology***

In the process of implementing online teaching, many teachers are not proficient in operating the software required for online teaching and often make operational errors, such as forgetting to turn off the microphone and camera; therefore, they waste a lot of time debugging the software. In order to improve this situation, teachers should upgrade their skills of information technology as soon as possible to keep up with the pace of scientific and technological development. Schools also should organize teachers to conduct information technology training regularly to upgrade their operation skills.

### ***Ineffective Teacher-Student Interaction in Large Classes***

When teaching in large classes, teachers cannot catch the learning situation of online students in real time because of the limited number of videos. Therefore, classroom activities and teaching contents cannot be adjusted in time and teacher-student and student-student interactions are not so effective. At the same time, teachers are not clear about the specific learning situation of students and cannot control the teaching rhythm well, which makes the teaching effect fall short of the expected purpose.

### ***Unstable Networks because of the Surge in the Number of People Online***

There are certain differences in network infrastructure construction between regions, which will lead to the poor fluency of the network. For example, when audio and video are turned on, there will be stutter or even downtime, which will affect the normal progress of teaching activities.

### **Countermeasures to Effective Online Education**

Students' learning should not be stopped, which is the original intention of *Suspension of classes and non-stop learning* issued by the Ministry of Education. In order to enable distance teaching to be carried out in an orderly manner, each school has responded positively and formulated a series of plans and adequate preparations for “suspension of classes and non-stop learning.” While the key is the implementation by teachers. In the context of the pandemic, the internet is a better way to implement teaching, but how to make better use of network resources requires teachers to carefully prepare teaching plans, rationally use limited networks, and guide students to learn online at off-peak times. By sending students learning plans, learning contents, and learning notes before class, we can correctly guide students to self-study in advance and stimulate students' learning initiative, which is more important than teachers teaching in class. It is the common goal of our educators that students can learn something through learning. Therefore, when facing a brand-new online teaching method, teachers should prepare good measures in advance for various difficulties that may arise.

### ***Elaborate Teaching Design***

Teaching is a task in which teachers carry out specific teaching designs in order to meet the curriculum requirements and complete the task together with students through reasonable carriers and means. Careful teaching design is not only the focus of the completion of online teaching, but also a laborious task. In order to strengthen the training of students' thinking and practical ability and to maximize the realization of the curriculum goal, teachers should carefully design the teaching contents according to the syllabus. According to the contents of the course and the characteristics of the students, a study discussion group should be set up to communicate and discuss the unclear learning contents offline (Xu, Lan, & Wang, 2020). Flexible use of teaching methods, such as case analysis, group discussion, role-playing, enlightening guidance, etc. to guide students to think actively and be willing to practice to improve teaching effects (Shao, 2015; Lu & Chen, 2017).

Faced with the lack of online teaching experience, the teaching team should organize teachers to actively carry out teaching and research activities, discuss the key points and difficulties of online teaching together, clarify teaching ideas, design the online curriculum structure and explore new methods of online teaching. Enrich the contents of the existing teaching resource database, update the new teaching schedules, course PPT, and other teaching documents in time; decrypt the confidential contents; design assignments and seminar topics based on the teaching content and teaching progress; compile test questions according to the teaching content and progress; test and master the students' learning effect by discussing in groups and submitting homework after class; or you can first make a teaching video and send it to the students for preview in advance, and you can check the learning effect online in the form of live video during the formal class (Li, Chen, & Zheng, 2016).

### ***Organize and Guide Students into the Classroom***

How to correctly guide and organize students to enter and adapt to online classes is a very important factor in online classes. The reality we face is like remotely instructing a loose team to participate in the disposal

of a law enforcement site in which the correct organization and guidance of teachers is very important. Our teaching teams are based on QQ group classroom and Umooc V8 as the carrier to teach live, which effectively complete the teaching and training contents of the action part of the course and organize the students to complete the training subjects according to the requirements, randomly check the students' mastery of the learning content, and correct the common problems by video. We also use the combination of live broadcast and recording to teach in different periods: online teaching and answering questions through live broadcast, and repeated learning of key and difficult points through recording and broadcasting. We try to help students familiarize themselves with the operation of learning software and develop the habit of using online platforms to assist learning through the linkage between mobile phones and computers. At the same time, we stimulate students' learning enthusiasm and initiative and pay more attention to the cultivation of students' learning ability. The forms of activities we adopt include online asynchronous discussions, information reminders, tests, teachers' answering questions, assignments, offline discussions, questionnaires, real-time discussions and one-to-one tutoring; some students' videos are opened randomly during the class, which can not only maintain teaching emotions but also collect students' responses in real time.

### ***Clear Teaching Purpose: Students Learn Well***

The purpose of teaching is to enable students to learn well and put what they have learned into practice. Our teaching should be carried out around students' learning: we have set up the columns of curriculum learning, curriculum resources, unit learning, curriculum activities, training highlights, police dynamics, and curriculum ideology through the UmoocV8 online teaching platform; a wealth of learning resources are uploaded there, and more cutting-edge teaching and training videos and reference materials at home and abroad are provided to solve the difficult points that students most need to learn and master. Through the design of live broadcast interactive activities, open-ended topic discussions, task point distributions and assignments, we can examine the students' learning effect through multiple channels and achieve timely feedback, comments and teaching adjustment. In addition, we should formulate reasonable evaluation criteria and types to prompt students to complete their learning tasks consciously. According to the characteristics of the curriculum, a combination of formative evaluation and summative evaluation can be used to record the learning and interactive processes with reasonable evaluation strategies, and they can be used for learning evaluation and teaching research, such as the length of learning time and the number of assignments that must be completed in course learning. The types of evaluation include unit assignments, discussions, in-class quizzes, unit quizzes, surveys, offline exams, final exams, and assignments, preferably with at least one assignment for each learning unit (Xu, N., 2017) (Li, Xu, Zhang, & Zuo, 2019).

### ***Set Teaching Objectives in Stages***

During the teaching activities, teachers can participate in the whole process, partly or even not at all. We should take students' learning as the center and formulate teaching goals in stages. The learning goals should not only have the big goals of the whole course, but also the small goals of each unit. Students should be very clear about their own learning progress according to the learning goals of different stages. By answering questions and organizing discussions online, teachers can effectively understand students' mastery and application of knowledge points, as well as the evaluation of students' practical problem-solving ability and other related situations. In the case of limited network resources, we focus on how students learn and how well they learn through course assignments, question-and-answer discussions and

other activities. This goal is our real teaching purpose, and it is also the process in which our teachers and students grow up together.

### ***Make Rational Use of Online Teaching Resources***

For practical training courses, the purpose of teaching is to pursue the actual effect of students mastering the professional skills. Therefore, online teaching should be based on the prerequisite of systematic and scientific nature, and it should not be random and blind. In teaching, the first goal is to make good use of the live teaching on online platforms, making full use of its teaching space, explaining basic theories, demonstrating the practical training methods to students, etc.; the second is to focus on the actual needs of online teaching and the teaching characteristics of online courses, strengthening the development and utilization of teaching videos and other new resources; the third is to make rational use of online course resources to explore practical training contents that are suitable for online teaching and easy to operate.

### ***Prevent the Failure of Live Broadcast in Online Teaching***

In the process of using the online teaching platform, teachers should choose a few more alternatives, such as the Tencent meeting, and set up QQ groups and WeChat groups (Academic Affairs Office of Tianjin University, 2020) to interact with students in real time. We also should use the recording software to record lecture contents in advance to prevent the possible failure of live broadcast in online teaching. In the event of an emergency, such as a live broadcast failure, the teacher should contact the technicians of the relevant platform as soon as possible to try to resume normal teaching in time. When there is a malfunction, you should communicate with your classmates through WeChat groups or QQ groups in time to notify them to self-study online or complete exercises, or in a timely fashion, send pre-recorded course videos, course recordings, and other teaching materials to ensure students' online learning and clearly inform students of the learning requirements, learning time and testing methods of this class. You can also complete the question-and-answer activities of the course teaching in WeChat groups or QQ groups. After class, teachers should download students' interaction, homework, and Q&A information in a timely manner, and back up the data to prevent data loss.

## **Conclusion**

In view of the challenges faced by online education under the pandemic of COVID-19, we have changed the traditional teaching model from teacher-centered to student-centered, which is also an opportunity for us to reform the teaching model and rapidly develop online education. With the rapid development of information technology, we also need to constantly try to improve teaching ability and teaching quality. In order to effectively improve the quality and level of curriculum construction, we should adopt the integration of online and offline and actively promote the deep integration of modern information technology and education. The development of online education is the direction of education reform that keeps pace with the times.

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# Online EFL Teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic through the Eyes of a Chinese College English Teacher: A Case Study

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*[Abstract] Based on the self-report data of a Chinese college English teacher, this paper reports the online teaching and learning practices of a group of teachers in China, their initial responses, efforts, and changes in perception over time. It concludes with implications for school administrators, teachers, and technicians, and encourages teachers to optimize this learning opportunity.*

*[Keywords] online teaching; pandemic; EFL; platform; perception*

## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic that began in early 2020 has caught everyone off-guard and disrupted the normal functioning of the entire education sector. According to UNESCO, when lockdown measures were lifted in many countries in June 2020, schools and higher education institutions remained closed in 119 countries. During this period, most higher education institutions resorted to online learning, regarding it as a panacea for the emergency, rather than an option (Dhawan, 2020). Differing from the online learning of pre-COVID times, which often formed part of blended learning or distance learning schemes, online learning during the pandemic frequently lacked short- and long-term anticipation, an appropriate technical infrastructure, and good digital literacy skills on the part of both teachers and students. Furthermore, teachers had insufficient expertise to implement distance learning pedagogies (Reimers, et al., 2020).

In terms of these difficulties, foreign language teaching was no exception. Aside from their fear of the pandemic, foreign language teachers had little time to improve their digital literacy and adapt their teaching materials to meet the needs of online learning (Gacs, et al., 2020).

In China, the Ministry of Education responded promptly to the strict, home-based quarantine policy issued by the government and called for online teaching and learning to be implemented between teachers and students at all levels in late February 2020. This decision left teachers with few options and even less time to prepare for the new semester. Under these circumstances, how did EFL teachers perceive and respond to their disrupted teaching arrangements in Chinese universities? The answer to this question is related to the quality of language education in Chinese universities.

A number of studies have investigated online teaching/learning during this particular period from the perspective of both teachers and learners (Gao, & Zhang, 2020; Maican, & Cocoradă, 2021). Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used in these endeavors. In terms of qualitative methods, interviews are frequently used in educational research for detailed investigations into the issues at hand (Miles, et al., 2014). However, such cases are relatively scarce and are not sufficiently in-depth. Besides, as a research tool, the use of interviews has its problems, such as providing indirect information “filtered

through the views of interviewees” (Gao, & Zhang, 2020), not providing information in a natural setting, and the possibility that interviewees have provided biased responses as a result of the researcher’s presence during the interview.

The first disadvantage of interview data is related to the inherently subjective nature of a person’s perspective. Thus, results need to be interpreted with caution. The latter two disadvantages can be compensated for to a certain degree by the interviewer also serving as an interviewee, that is, providing self-report data for the research questions. In this way, research can be conducted in a natural setting, and the researcher’s presence will not bias responses because she herself is the “interviewee” or self-reporter. To accomplish this and to enrich the literature on online EFL teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, the current study will examine first-hand, self-report data to investigate online teaching practices during this particular period in light of the common themes raised in relevant qualitative research.

This paper will first introduce the research questions, background information of the participant/researcher, data collection and analysis, and present the results obtained from the data analysis and their implications.

## **Method**

### ***Research Questions***

1. How did EFL teachers receive technical support during the initial stage of the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What factors influenced the teachers’ choice of certain platforms or applications (apps) for the implementation of online teaching?
3. Did differences exist in how language teachers perceived online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic? If yes, what were these differences?

### ***Participants***

The principal participant, also the first author of this self-report study, is female. She has taught English in a Chinese university to non-English college students for seventeen years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the participant taught two courses online each week: four hours of “English listening” for doctoral students, and four hours of “academic English listening and speaking” for first-year undergraduate students. For convenience, in the following sections, she will be referred to as “Ann.” This study also includes data from Ann’s colleagues and students, who can also be regarded as random participants of this study.

### ***Materials***

Data collected in this study include Ann’s personal account and teaching log written in Chinese, observations of her own teaching procedures, observations of her colleagues’ behavior, interactions between Ann and her colleagues and between Ann and her students, as well as recordings of Ann’s classes. These different forms of data-enabled data triangulation.

### ***Procedure***

The data were analyzed by conducting a thematic analysis. This is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes that emerge from the data (Braun, & Clarke, 2006; Miles, et al., 2014). Three prominent themes emerged from both the literature concerning teachers’ perception and reaction to online teaching and the data, namely, how they received technical support, how they implemented online

teaching, and how they perceived it during the pandemic. Therefore, results would be reported in this order.

## Results

### ***Research Question (1): How did EFL Teachers Receive Technical Support During the Initial Stage of the COVID-19 Pandemic?***

After the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020, teachers in China were instructed to move to online teaching for the upcoming spring semester, resulting in significant levels of confusion and anxiety for teachers during the initial stages of online teaching (Gao, & Zhang, 2020).

Fortunately, many universities took the initiative and organized online teaching training for their teaching staff. The university that employs Ann was one of these pioneering institutions. University administrators invited those teachers who had, pre-pandemic, successfully undertaken online teaching or blended teaching to give online lectures, with the aim of providing their colleagues with the essential knowledge and skills to implement online teaching. Relevant software and platforms were offered, such as DingTalk, Zoom, TeachingApplySquare, and EVCapture. More than one QQ (a social networking platform) group was established, with both teachers and technicians as group members. Manuals and recorded procedures on how to use these platforms and software were also provided to group members.

Some experienced online teachers in Ann's department volunteered to give lectures on online platforms to inform their fellow teachers about their different functions. The technicians in Ann's department provided helpful assistance in the form of answering technical queries or solving any problems that arose, which ranged from searching for a particular teaching resource to fixing computer breakdowns.

Lecturers that taught similar courses, but with little experience of online teaching, voluntarily formed small groups to try out different platforms and software. In this way, they were able to share their experiences of using various platforms and software with other members of the group. Furthermore, they initiated simulated live teaching to ensure the effectiveness of the online classroom activities that had been designed for the upcoming semester. As Ann taught two courses, she became a member of two of these groups, and benefited a great deal from exchanges with fellow group members throughout the spring semester, which greatly improved her information and communication technology (ICT) literacy.

### ***Research Question (2): What Factors Influenced the Teachers' Choice of Certain Platforms or Apps for the Implementation of Online Teaching?***

According to Ann's observations, after trying a range of software options and platforms, some colleagues decided to change their initial choice and opt for a newer, more efficient option; other colleagues insisted on remaining with their initial choice, despite its imperfections. Several factors appear to have influenced the choices made by teachers:

The first factor is availability and timing. Some teachers remained with their initial choice out of convenience and familiarity, so the timing of the promotion of a certain platform or software was essential. With so many different platforms and apps to choose from, teachers had a tendency to choose those options that had been explored and studied to the greatest extent. Their choices were closely related to the availability of these platforms, when and how they were available, and whether their colleagues and students used and recommended them. Provided these platforms and apps were able to meet the teachers'

basic requirements, they were unlikely to be abandoned in the middle of the semester unless there was an insurmountable drawback to the option the teachers had chosen initially.

The second factor is user-friendliness. This aspect was crucial because the abrupt nature of the decision to move to online teaching left teachers with little time to prepare relevant teaching materials. Therefore, they had limited time to become familiar with technical details. If functions on the interface could not be located quickly and if teachers were unable to see the value of each function in meeting their teaching needs, they tended to make another choice.

The third factor is function. It was related to the course that each teacher was providing. As a university English teacher, Ann needed to be able to play audio/video material during her live teaching, with the option of pausing the material and providing explanations to the students, simultaneously. The last thing she wanted to do was to upload material onto a platform and then ask students to listen to the content by themselves. Therefore, a crucial factor in determining a suitable online teaching platform was whether the teaching material could be heard clearly enough. Although at times the Wi-Fi signal interfered with the quality of the audio/video material, some platforms performed better than others. Moreover, instant teacher-student messaging was also a requirement for Ann's class to optimize the impact of the teaching material. As a result, Ann chose "Tencent Classroom" in preference to Zoom throughout the semester because it satisfied the aforementioned two requirements. In addition, Tencent Classroom provided an automatic recording of each class, which supported repeated viewing and recorded when students logged in to the class, allowing Ann to determine student attendance. Despite not allowing instant oral interactions or group discussions, Ann continued to use this platform for her English listening class.

The fourth factor is the fee. Some platforms performed very well, but only the trial versions were free of charge. As it was unclear how long online teaching would continue, teachers were not necessarily prepared to pay for using platforms if substitutes could be found. For example, with the university's assistance, Ann had the opportunity to use Zoom and discovered that its most attractive function was the grouping function, which she used to organize online group work. However, when group work was not required, Ann chose to use another platform.

***Research Question (3): Did Differences Exist in How Language Teachers Perceived Online Teaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic? If Yes, What Were these Differences?***

Ann observed a number of differences, not only between individual teachers or between a teacher and her students, but also in the same teacher's perception of online teaching at different periods during the semester. First, teachers have individual differences in their response to the need for online teaching. Based on Ann's observations of her colleagues and her interactions with students, she discovered that slightly older teachers and those who had no interest in computer technology reacted more reluctantly to the urgent need for online teaching. These teachers insisted on using the most common social networking apps, such as QQ or WeChat, to give live lectures, or they opted to distribute teaching material so that students could learn independently. Some of these teachers even combined several of their classes into one large class to save them the bother of repeating the same lecture several times.

In contrast, teachers who were younger and those who had an interest in computer technology and current software reacted more readily to the change in teaching mode. As mentioned earlier, these teachers formed small groups with like-minded colleagues throughout the semester to try out live teaching and exchange their experiences.

Second, teachers and students had different opinions on the effectiveness of online English teaching. For Ann and, indeed, many of her fellow English teachers, the clarity of the audio/video teaching material needed to be of sufficiently high quality to ensure effective English listening could take place. In traditional classroom teaching, the teacher only needs to check whether the material can be played on the classroom's computer and whether the amplifying equipment is suitable. However, in online teaching, the teacher has to rely on the quality of both her own computer and that of the students' devices, as well as the Wi-Fi signal in both her own home and the homes of her students, and sometimes the capacity of the platform that is being used. If any of these develop problems, the effectiveness of the online teaching will immediately be compromised. All these uncertainties posed a significant challenge to teachers during the semester.

With a few exceptions, Ann's live teaching ran smoothly and efficiently. The first exception was the failure of her computer without any prior warning in the second week of the spring semester. Fortunately, as previously suggested by the head of the teaching team, she had prepared some recorded lectures and was able to upload them on to the TeachingApplySquare platform. All her listening exercises and teaching materials were also uploaded on to this platform. Therefore, if unforeseen incidents like the aforementioned computer failure arose, Ann resorted to the platform and asked her students to undertake independent learning, while giving them online instructions through the QQ app on her cell phone, requesting them to listen to certain materials and complete follow-up exercises. This experience demonstrated the importance of making backup plans in advance.

The second exception happened several weeks later and was related to effective communication during live teaching. Some students realized that there was a problem with the sound of a video file that Ann was playing live online and informed her about the situation in the dialogue box of the Tencent Class. However, Ann was watching the video and did not notice the message until several minutes later. Finally, the problem was resolved, but this incident demonstrated that, in the case of live teaching, teachers should remain in close contact with their students at all times so that they can react promptly to any feedback provided by them.

The students themselves held somewhat different opinions about online teaching. They did not need to worry about the quality of the teaching material, but they were ill at ease when problems occurred. The majority of students were very understanding and tolerant about any temporary breakdowns, provided the incidents did not affect their grades.

To ensure that students were engaged and actually listening to the teacher, Ann and her colleagues developed innovative ways of checking the students' level of attention. If the teaching platform did not permit face-to-face interactions, Ann asked students to type in 1 or 2, representing Yes or No, to a question that she had just asked. In addition, she made use of the teaching platform's voting function to check their overall understanding of particular questions. After discussing her underlying concerns with one of her doctoral students during a casual conversation, Ann was told the following:

*You really don't need to worry, Mam. We are all grown-ups. We can take full responsibility for ourselves and our own learning.*

However, in the case of undergraduate students, things were not all optimistic. One of Ann's students refused to answer any questions in class, giving the excuse of not having a microphone. It later transpired that he was traveling at the time and was unable to show up at class. Although he was a young adult, he did not appear to take full responsibility for his own learning.

Those graduate students who had jobs in other cities found the online teaching mode more attractive than traditional methods because there was no need for them to commute back and forth between cities, and they did not have to request leave from their bosses. Some office-based students were even able to listen to lectures while dealing with work matters, although with understandably reduced learning outcomes.

Last, but not least, in addition to differences between teachers, differences or changes in the same teacher's perception of online teaching were also evident, particularly when this teaching mode became familiar and routine to them.

When online teaching first started, uncertainties about the Wi-Fi signal and the quality of networks, platforms, and electronic devices were the source of great concern for Ann and her colleagues. Besides, many teachers with school-age children had to compete for the Wi-Fi signal with their children, who were also receiving an online education. Teachers with young children were even more anxious because youngsters do not understand the concept of "working at home." Therefore, the support of other family members, a separate place to work, and a more powerful Wi-Fi router were all crucial to the successful implementation of online teaching.

As time passed, teachers and their families became accustomed to this online teaching mode. Some of Ann's colleagues found that the gap between the two teaching modes narrowed; Ann recalled that in an informal conversation with colleagues, many agreed that online teaching was becoming more like offline teaching, provided that everything was functioning normally. Other teachers found that online teaching was more suitable if the teacher was unwell, and others even developed a liking for it. As Ann's university is located in the suburbs, under normal circumstances, many teachers would have spent around an hour commuting to work. With home-based live teaching, teachers were able to rise later and spend less time choosing an outfit to wear, as students were only able to see their teachers on screen from the waist up.

## **Discussion**

The results obtained from this study can be summarized as follows:

1. For online teaching and learning to run smoothly, school administrators must play an important role in providing teachers with sufficient technical support and guidance. Teachers themselves also need to take the initiative and learn how to effectively use this new teaching mode, grasping every available opportunity to improve their ICT literacy.

Communication is crucial to this, not just between administrators and teachers, but between teachers who are more motivated and those who are not, as well. In this way, problems can be detected promptly and solutions be offered.

2. The platforms and apps that were chosen by teachers to implement online teaching during the pandemic depended on their availability, timing, user-friendliness, and functions, in addition to whether or not they were free of charge.

Designers of these platforms should pay more attention to user feedback than to cost-efficiency, providing various channels to gather feedback. Only when they can take into account their users' urgent needs and preferences can they develop better products.

3. Teachers had different perceptions of online teaching, which were probably influenced by their age and interests. Teachers and students also had different opinions about the effectiveness of

online English teaching. In the case of the same teacher, her view on online teaching underwent a dramatic change after she became accustomed to the new teaching mode.

Despite of all these differences, what is even more important is how to go beyond teachers' and students' perception of online teaching, and to ensure that effective teaching and learning is taking place. In both traditional classroom and online teaching, there are students whose attention is engaged elsewhere or those who cannot follow from time to time. How to provide pertinent help and guidance to these students is forever an important issue in teaching.

### **Conclusion**

This study is based on the self-report data of an EFL teacher in China, which was obtained from her experience of online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the results may not be particularly representative, this single-case study offers a detailed observation of not only the teacher herself, but also her colleagues and students. The in-depth analysis of the results will serve to enrich studies on online teaching in the literature. This study could provide future research with useful information on how to design detailed questionnaires for large-scale, quantitative studies. The designers of online teaching platforms and software could also draw important lessons from the observations provided in this study to improve the function and service of their future products.

Online teaching will coexist with traditional teaching methods for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been an excellent opportunity for teachers to move out of their comfort zones and learn something useful that will benefit their teaching careers.

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# **A Probe into the PBL Teaching Mode Based on New Media Technology during the COVID-19 Pandemic – A Case Study of English Teaching**

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*[Abstract] During the prevention and control of the COVID-19 pandemic, in response to the requirement of the Ministry of Education, most universities in China adopted online teaching with new media technology. PBL (problem-based learning), that is, problem-oriented learning, is an important content to realize student-centered educational activities and an important carrier to develop students' abilities. In this paper, the PBL teaching mode for English Teaching during the prevention and control of the COVID-19 pandemic is analyzed, which is of guiding significance for the realization of the combined offline and online teaching model in the future.*

*[Keywords] PBL; online teaching; pandemic situation; teaching mode*

## **Introduction**

The year 2020 opened in an unexpected way with COVID-19 taking the world by storm. Out of the needs of pandemic's prevention and control, in order to maintain the health and safety of teachers and students and prevent the pandemic from spreading to campuses, the Ministry of Education put forward the requirement of "Suspension of classes but non-stop teaching and non-stop learning" during the COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control period. So, to implement this requirement and to enable the majority of students, who are isolated at home and unable to return to school, to continue learning, the distance teaching based on various new media technologies is imperative. The teachers should take this pandemic as an opportunity to create more time and space for the teacher-student relationships based on the proposition of this era and combine students' autonomy in learning with teachers' guidance, turn "controlling" into "pushing," "management" into "companion," and make "teaching" and "learning" combined. Diversified as the online teaching methods may be presented, the online PBL teaching method seems to be the field seldom touched nowadays. The paper is projected to elaborate on the following four aspects: the research background of online English PBL teaching method, the current comprehensive documents, its plan and process, and its design scheme and implementation process.

## **Research Background of Online English PBL Teaching Model**

Online teaching, namely the use of new media technologies to carry out teaching activities, is through computer networks, wireless communication networks, satellites, and other channels, as well as computers, mobile phones, digital TV, and other terminals, to provide users with information and services in the form of communication. From the perspective of space, "new media" refers to the media corresponding to "traditional media" at present. It was supported by digital compression and wireless network technology, and with its large capacity, real-time performance and interactivity "new media" can finally realize

globalization across geographical boundaries (Zeng, 2015). As a product of economic and social development, the application of new media technology in teaching has become the key point of today's education reform and has also achieved a lot (Zhang, 2020).

PBL (Problem-Based Learning), namely, problem-oriented learning, is an important part of student-centered educational activities and an important carrier for inspiring students' critical thinking ability, cultivating their ability to analyze and solve problems, and improving their ability to communicate and other comprehensive qualities (Bickley, 1993). The PBL teaching model is based on the real world and has its roots in medical education in the 1960s. In PBL learning, teachers pose questions or tasks as guides. Students acquire knowledge through the process of analyzing and solving problems and then share the summarized knowledge for reflection. Finally, teachers and students form feedback and evaluations together.

This research plans to use advanced new media technologies, such as PowerPoint (PPT), "Rain Classroom," Micro-lecture, and Ding Talk, combined with the PBL teaching method, to build a new student-centered teaching mode, and to change passive acceptance into active inquiry, so as to improve the learning effect.

### **The Current Comprehensive Documents concerning Online English PBL Teaching Mode**

With the popularization and development of the Internet and the development of various learning application platforms, online teaching has long been used in people's study and life, but it has always been a "line." To that effect, online teaching is only a part of auxiliary teaching points. However, in the wake of novel Coronavirus pneumonia outbreak in early 2020, online teaching has become the main teaching method in the special period. In the context of pandemic prevention and control, online teaching tends to be necessary. It is still the most direct and important way of learning at present and, even, in the future. It is of great significance to explore the teaching effect of online teaching combined with different teaching methods under the background of the pandemic situation's significance.

At present, there are many kinds of online teaching platforms with different functions. According to personal teaching habits and information technology teaching level, online teaching software is selected. Rain classroom is within the background of mobile Internet and big data, Xuetang online, and Tsinghua University. The online teaching tool, which is jointly developed, integrates advanced information technology into the teaching scene. Through the creation of online virtual classroom, effective interaction has been produced between teachers and students, improving the quality of students by enhancing the ability of self-learning through the problem-based learning (PBL). It is a problem-based, teacher-led, and student-centered teaching mode. It has become one of the most widely used teaching methods in the world.

PBL teaching in the process of practical application involves independent evaluation and teaching. Teachers' evaluation and students' mutual evaluation are diversified evaluation methods, which means that teachers should be good at scientific evaluation of students' development from the perspective of development. Learning process and learning results, combined with the scientific guidance and help, which are considered ways of enhancing students in the process of continuous self-reflection and improvement to achieve English discipline. In order to build an efficient English reading class, teachers should improve students' comprehensive ability.

In a word, the PBL teaching mode is based on problem-based learning and is not only beneficial to teachers' teaching, but also beneficial to students' learning. To improve students' English language ability and English learning enthusiasm, it is imperative to improve the teaching ability of teachers in the course

of adopting PBL teaching mode. In English class teaching, teachers are expected to create a reasonable problem-teaching situation, guide students to think deeply, divide cooperation groups reasonably, and create inquiry learning. The learning atmosphere is desired to encourage students to explore independently and in groups, giving rise to the attention to stimulate students' interest in learning. In addition, teachers are expected to improve their teaching level and make full use of it. Teachers are also desired to pay attention to the cooperative inquiry learning activities, carry out diversified evaluations, and implement the cooperative inquiry learning activities, given the full play to the role of PBL teaching mode.

### **Plan and Process of Online English PBL Teaching Model**

For a long time, English teaching has been criticized by students for its spoon-feeding teaching. The purely lecturing teaching mode can not improve students' listening and speaking ability, critical thinking ability, or international vision of English, and even make students fear difficulties and resist English learning, which frustrates their enthusiasm for English learning. Therefore, teachers should give priority to students, make themselves guides, and take advantage of new media technologies to add vitality to English teaching.

#### ***Technology Platform for Online Teaching***

In a variety of online teaching technology platforms, this research plans to choose PowerPoint (PPT), Rain Classroom, Micro-lecture, and Ding Talk as teaching means to carry out teaching activities. PowerPoint is one of the important components of the Microsoft Office software series, with strong text editing ability, rich paragraph and file formats, complete drawing means, better network support functions, and other characteristics. Hu Zhuangling divided the presentation modes of PPT into words, images, charts, colors, and sounds from the perspective of modal. He also divided PPT into four basic types from the perspective of discourse function: suggestive patterns, intuitive patterns, analytic patterns and persuasive patterns (Hu, 2007). In the teaching process, PPT is especially suitable for the introduction of cultural background and the expansion of students' intercultural consciousness.

Rain Classroom is an intelligent teaching tool. It connects teachers and students through intelligent terminals, seamlessly linking every section of preview, class and review, and realizing the smart teaching of new media in the era of big data. Since the medium of the rain classroom is PPT, it forms an interdependent and win-win situation with PPT. PPT is the mother of the rain classroom, providing a foothold for it, and the rain classroom is a pearl on the crown of PPT, so that it has created a more brilliant luster in the new era.

Micro-lecture, a new media technology, presents the fragmented learning content and process according to the cognitive law, and it expands the material at the same time. Its core content is classroom teaching video (lesson example clip). Micro-lecture has the characteristics of short teaching time, prominent teaching themes and exquisite teaching design, etc., which is especially suitable for classic demonstration case teaching and independent learning. Professor Zhang Yichun believes that for teachers, the most critical thing is to make micro-lessons from the perspective of students, rather than teachers, and to reflect the student-centered teaching idea (Zhang, 2013).

Ding Talk is a small and medium-sized enterprise and team communication coordinated multiterminal platform, which is developed specifically by the Alibaba product team for free. Its functions, such as cloud classroom, video conference, and live broadcast platform, meet the social needs of distance teaching and home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control.

### ***Design Scheme and Implementation Process of PBL Online Teaching Activities Combined with New Media Technologies***

During the COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control period, the school curricula will be carried out in the way of “independent learning + distance learning.” In this new situation, how to carry out teaching activities with high quality and efficiency is a proposition of the era placed in front of every educator. Next, English teaching is taken as an example to propose the corresponding design and implementation scheme for the PBL teaching mode in the home-based learning stage.

**The issue of push staging is based on the teacher team as the main body.** First of all, the teacher team sorts out and discusses the contents related to PBL teaching to be carried out in advance, determines the research issues, and makes relevant video and audio files. Second, teachers divide the students into four groups, which contains five people, and they select one person as leader. Grouping is based on the differences in English proficiency and different personality characteristics, and the criterion is that the students with good English proficiency lead the students with relatively weak English proficiency, and the students with extroverted and lively personalities lead the students with introverted personalities so that the group members can give play to their strengths and perform their own duties. Before class, teachers should push questions and preview materials to the student teams.

**The initial stage of problem finding and solving based on the student team as the main body.** The initial stage of problem-solving is divided into three steps: initial preparation, initial discussion, and initial report.

During the process of initial preparation, at the very beginning, the teachers of each class hold a video meeting for all the students to give a general overview of the problems to be solved. Then, each team leader will voluntarily claim each sub-task on behalf of the team members. After the meeting, teachers will no longer participate in the preparation process, and the team leader will be responsible for the assignment and coordination of tasks within the group. Meanwhile, students can keep in touch with teachers through new media technologies and report the progress of the project to teachers at any time.

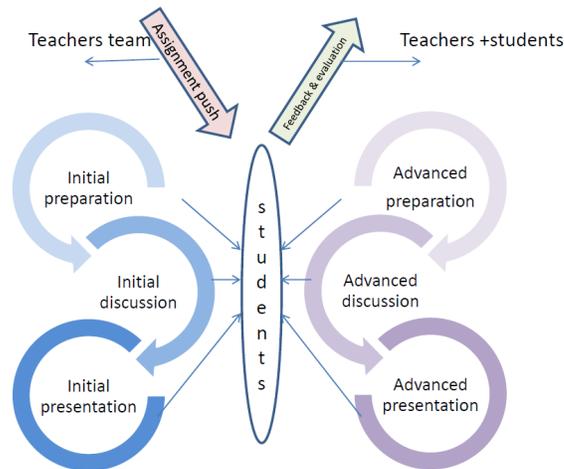
With the deepening of cognition, the group of students will naturally make the transition from the initial preparation stage to the initial discussion stage. The discussion can be divided into several sections, which will be recorded by the team leaders, using the new media equipment throughout the whole process, and the teachers should attend at least one initial discussion meeting.

As the discussion go deeper and deeper, through constant brainstorming, team members keep exchanging their thoughts and ideas and then form the initial material. After this, teachers will be holding the second plenary meeting, listening to the results of the initial report generated by each group. Meanwhile, the teachers will specifically comment on the problems that emerged on the preparation and the discussion stage and make students think more, deeper, and wider about the problems involved. While listening to the reports of other team members, each team member should also actively find and raise questions to prepare for the advanced stage of the PBL teaching model.

**The advanced stage of problem finding and solving based on student teams as the main body.** After the initial three steps of preparation, discussion, and presentation, team members will discover new problems, develop new perspectives, and form new ideas. Then it comes to the advanced stage of the PBL teaching model. The same steps will be repeated again, but the content of the study will be much deeper and more extensive.

**The summary, evaluation, and reflection stage based on the teacher team and student team cooperatively.** This stage is divided into two parts: In the first one, each group asks questions and evaluates

each other's tasks through the new media technologies platform. In the second one, the teacher team evaluates students in multiple dimensions according to their performances and the big data, which is provided by new media technology platforms during the stage of preparation, discussion, and presentation. At the same time, the teacher will explain the difficulties of the curriculum, correct the false that the students made in the PBL teaching process, summarize, and reflect on the teaching process. The design of teaching activities of the PBL model is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. The Design of Teaching Activities of the PBL Model**

The above is the teaching process and teaching design scheme of the PBL online teaching mode based on the teaching reality and learning situation analysis. After the COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control period, we suggest resuming “offline learning,” summarizing the previous work experience and lessons of “online learning.” What’s more, we need to optimize the learning process of the PBL model and combine offline teaching and online communication closely to form the combination mode of “Online and offline learning” (Lv, Wang, & Liu, 2020).

### **Implications and Conclusion**

During the process of the COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control, all the schools took advantage of the online teaching methods. Although it is a necessity for students to study at home during the epidemic, it is also an opportunity for transformation – the one that we are calling for all the time but which is hard to make, the one that we are trying to put forward but failed – we should regard students as main body to improve their comprehensive ability in all aspects by multiple means. The English teaching in the PBL mode emphasizes participation, experience, and perception, and it helps students to truly unify knowledge and skills, process and method, emotion and attitude, improving their language ability and completing their cognitive structure (Li, & Chai, 2019). In the change of teaching conditions and communication space, we have to recognize the pandemic as a teaching material, daring to be tested. We need to establish and shape the correct outlook on life, values, and the whole world. We need to cultivate the students’ perseverance, the unflinching spirit of struggle and sincere benevolence, the feelings of honor for their homeland and country with the responsibility in mind, and truly grow up with the motherland (Yao, Jin, Liu, 2020).

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# **Reform of Management Course for Secretary Major in Higher Vocational Colleges in the Post Epidemic Era – Take the Teaching Content of Live-Broadcast Assistant as an Example**

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***[Abstract]** In the post epidemic era, many teachers use online resources and teaching methods in their class. Therefore, higher vocational education has begun to make changes in content and mode. This article is about how to change the content and mode in the secretary major in higher vocational college in the post epidemic era based on a real practice in management course of secretary major. However, the effectiveness of this the new method of teaching needs to be tested. The author of this article provides a model of teaching experiences and puts forward some points to be discussed.*

***[Keywords]** post epidemic era; higher vocational education; management course; secretary major*

## **Introduction**

During the epidemic period, colleges and universities actively made full use of various information-based means to carry out online teaching activities. China's epidemic situation has been effectively controlled from the outbreak of the epidemic period to a long-term co-existence with the virus, which is known as the "post-epidemic era" (Zhong, & Zhang, 2021). In the post-epidemic era, how to effectively carry out teaching is the focus of attention by educators. At present, the research on education in the post-epidemic era mainly focuses on the "online-to-offline mixed" teaching model, but lacks the experience summary of the practice of higher vocational education in the post-epidemic era. In particular, the lack of higher vocational education in the post-epidemic era of how to do a good job in the integration of school-enterprise cooperation lacks research.

In the post epidemic era, the revolution of the teaching in vocational education should be taken seriously. Many teachers are trying to add online resources into their teaching. However, online-classes, as the new teaching method, have some problems. Additionally vocational college teaching is different from regular college teaching. Vocational education aims at letting students improve working skills, while regular college education aims at letting students grasp research methods. To solve the online classes' problems and improve students in vocational college's working skills, teachers in vocational education should take real tasks into consideration.

This paper argues that, in the post epidemic era, higher vocational education began to make changes in content and mode. In terms of content, according to the requirements of the new era, "live-broadcast assistant" is added to the course of enterprise management and a practical part is also added to the management course. In the teaching mode, we need to combine online teaching and real enterprise teaching. Based on the post demand for secretaries in the post epidemic era, real tasks have been added to the

“management” course of the secretarial major, and information technology has been used to build a real learning environment. By skillfully using the inquiry teaching method, the collaborative education teaching organization system of “online and offline integration,” school enterprise cooperation integration has been built.

### **Literature Review**

Online education has traditionally been viewed as an alternative pathway, one that is particularly well suited to adult learners seeking higher education opportunities. However, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has required educators and students across all levels of education to adapt quickly to virtual courses (Lockee, 2021). So, Decisions made today in the context of COVID-19 will have long-term consequences for the futures of education. Policy-makers, educators, and communities must make high-stake choices today—these decisions should be guided by shared principles and visions of desirable collective futures (UNESCO, 2020).

In the context of epidemic prevention and control, education informatization, as an endogenous force of higher education and systematic change in education, is promoting higher online education in an all-round way, as well as transforming the concept of governance, reengineering the system, reshaping the ability, and increasing the allocation of resources, supporting, and leading the modernization of Higher Education Governance System and governance capability (Liu, & Zhou, 2021).

During the post-epidemic period, the education and teaching activities under the epidemic period are in the critical period of “teaching recovery” and “education extension.” It is necessary to completely change the online teaching mode during the epidemic period into the online-to-offline Integrated Development Education Paradigm, So that the existing teaching methods, content, system, and model could adapt to the post-epidemic era of students’ cognitive rule (Duan, 2021). Compared with the systematization of information application ability training for teachers in basic education, the development of information education for teachers in higher education in our country is still in great difficulty. The information technology application ability of teachers is basically available, but the innovation of information-based teaching is still insufficient, and the information literacy of teachers in education needs to be improved (Shen, Yang, Chai, & Dong, 2021).

Literature review on school-enterprise cooperation. The school-enterprise cooperation in China started in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is a “win-win” mode to pay attention to the school learning and enterprise practice, as well as the resources and information sharing between schools and enterprises (Cai, 2013). After more than 20 years of exploration, on the one hand, Chinese scholars draw lessons from foreign achievements, and, on the other hand, based on their own national conditions, it is to meet the needs of the society, connect with the market, and realize the combination of theory and practice.

In recent years, the cooperation between schools and enterprises has gone through three stages: one is the stage of “order education,” which is based on emotion and characterized by talent supply; the second is the stage of “training outsourcing,” which is based on service and characterized by reciprocity; the third is the stage of “cooperation of industry, teaching and research,” which aims at sustainable development and features deep integration (Liu, C., 2016).

### **The Existing Problems of Online Course**

In the post epidemic era, most teachers are using the teaching method of mixing online and off-line resources. However, learning effect is the most important in any teaching and studying situation. Especially,

for the practical vocational education, how to improve the effectiveness of teaching in the context of network teaching is an urgent problem to be solved. At present, we are mainly faced with such problems.

First, an online-class can easily produce “indoctrination” teaching. The “indoctrination” teaching puts students in a passive position, teachers can not encourage students to study independently, the classroom atmosphere is poor, students’ participation is low, and students cannot learn effectively.

Second, mixture teaching with online-class increases the difficulty of classroom management. Online-classes are a challenge to teachers’ classroom management abilities, while distance-based teaching makes teachers’ teaching ability decline. In addition, the large number of online classes, the uneven level of students, and the difficulty of doing hierarchical classification of teaching weaken the teaching effect.

Third, online-classes easily weaken students’ practical ability, and it is difficult to adapt to the goal of “cultivating applied talents” in higher vocational education. The long-distance and one-way nature of the network course makes it impossible for students to fully practice their working skills in the classroom, which leads to the students’ weak ability of practical operation. At the end of the course, students do not learn the real skills that businesses need.

Fourth, “management theory and practice” is aimed at improving students’ practical operating ability. However, when it comes to the online-class, the “management theory and practice” course has some problems, such as poor classroom atmosphere, few students’ operation, weak teachers’ ability to handle contingency and data analysis, etc. These problems have not been solved during the epidemic era or in the post-epidemic era.

### **The Practices to Solve the Teaching Problems Existing in the Post Epidemic Era**

To solve the problem of indoctrinating online-class, teachers should reconstruct the content of management courses. Taking the opportunity of “digital transformation of management in the post epidemic era,” management systematically analyzes the post responsibilities of secretaries, refines their typical working tasks into text editing, employee motivation, activity execution, and data service, and integrates the learning contents of decision-making, planning, organization, leadership, and control of management into the typical tasks of secretaries. By connecting the work field and learning field, the traditional, pure theory teaching mode of management is comprehensively reformed to project task-driven teaching, and the teaching goal of “learning is to use, learning for application” is achieved. In order to realize the transformation from the subject-based course system to the task-based course system, we reconstruct the course content through five teaching modules. The first module is the introduction of management; the second module is assistant for store celebrations; the third module is live-broadcast assistant; the fourth module is the activity assistant of the annual meeting; the fifth module is the activity assistant of order in meetings.

In the post epidemic era, most teachers in vocational education like to use online and offline teaching methods, while in online-classes it is very hard to let a teacher focus on practical skills. The oriented, task-driven teaching mode is supplemented by the problem oriented method, inquiry learning method, group cooperation method, and other teaching method. The oriented task-driven teaching mode also relies on the cooperation of schools and enterprises, such as the Ailaiyi Group. Additionally, teachers should use the hardware facilities such as multimedia classroom and school new-media studio to increase the practical skills of students. The implementation of the oriented, task-driven teaching mode is based on using the Zhejiang Online Open Course Platform, Xuexiqiangguo App, Weimeng University App, and other information resources successfully to assist teaching. By breaking through the key difficulties of teaching,

the oriented task-driven teaching mode achieves the teaching goal of increasing secretarial major students' practical skills in their future work. It meets the needs of enterprises, also.

However, how will the class form in every single class? The class instruction should be accurately designed. It is better to let the students explore new knowledge and have teachers analyze students' learning situation before every class.

By uploading theoretical knowledge videos and arranging theoretical knowledge tests on Zhejiang Online Course Platform before every class, teachers can grasp students' theoretical knowledge learning situation. By arranging questionnaire surveys, also, on Zhejiang Online Course Platform before every class, teachers can understand students' cognition of the real task environment. Students learn theoretical knowledge independently, complete the pre-test and questionnaire survey; teachers analyze the learning situation through students' questionnaires and test feedback, accurately set the teaching objectives, adjust teaching strategies, and make full preparation for the implementation of the teaching of each class. When it comes to the class form, at the very beginning of a class, teachers introduce real tasks as classroom introduction, guide students to complete inquiry learning through multiple cycles of "initial attempt, case appreciation, theory learning, simulation practice," and arrange the class tests and at last take a class summary. To extended learning after class, teachers should ask students to search for relevant classic cases and upload them to the online homework area where teachers can comment on them to enhance the learning effect. Additionally, the use of the new media studio and enterprises should be focused, as the new media studio and enterprises are used as the training ground to expand the time and space of learning. Therefore, the students who are secretary majors will improve their vocational ability.

### **Vocational Education's Teaching Experiences**

Making full use of multiple resources should be focused. In the past, students only got knowledge from a class and books, but nowadays, lots of information from different sources widens students' vision. Therefore, how to make full use of multiple resources is an important topic. In the management course, we use the multimedia classroom to expand learning space so that we broke through the limitations of the traditional classroom, and the students' learning enthusiasm was improved. We also use the enterprises' training bases, such as their secretary studios, to help students practice in a real working environment. Additionally, different software, such as Xuesxiqianguo APP, that can help students widen their vision should be used. Therefore, to other majors in vocational education, hardware is to improve students' working experiences, while software is to widen the knowledge vision.

Students' knowing the teaching and studying goals will improve the enthusiasm for study. In teaching the management course in the secretary major, students were told about the study goal. By realizing the goal of each class, students acted better in the class and got better scores on the class test. The videos, tests, and questionnaires before class can help students get familiar with the theory in advance. In the class, through the multi-round of teaching and study made students get closer to the teaching and studying goal; thus, the enthusiasm of students to participate in learning was enhanced. After class, exploring new cases and the enterprises' practices let students achieve the good results in teaching and studying. This experience could also be focused on by other subjects in other majors.

Vocational spirit should also be refined when teaching, which is totally different from other kinds of education. In the teaching of management courses, teachers guide students to do the real tasks from the enterprises, while students need to insist on complementing the hard tasks. After practicing the tasks, teacher and students refine the secretary's vocational spirit to for "loyalty, carefulness, integrity and

innovation.” For example, the secretary’s “carefulness” of vocational spirit can be reflected through a secretary’s writing task, so after the task, “carefulness” is highlighted in the secretary’s vocational spirit. In other majors of vocational education, vocational spirit is also important to educate about, from students’ personal qualities to social responsibility.

### **Discussion**

Although we have tried the online-offline class for one year and made some achievements, we still think that this kind of teaching method, the online-offline class, needs to be improved. Whether it is useful still needs to be discussed. In the management course teaching in the secretary major, teachers spend lots of time making the online class video. However, the online courses only emphasize the theoretical knowledge, but not take into consideration the practical parts, which are the most important parts of vocational education. The reason is that when we established the online resources, we thought the purpose of the online resources could be used both in regular college and vocational college. For the students in the vocational college, the theory knowledge is hard to understand, and they need a practical part to improve their working skills. The resources need to be polished. Based on the characteristics of students’ cognition, the theoretical knowledge and operational skills are implemented to make students learn vocational skills. By adding the practical parts into the management course, we break through the working and learning field.

At present, teachers who teach management courses always use online resources before class. However, the time of using the online resource still needs to be discussed. Especially when it comes to the vocational education, only using the online resources is not enough for the students, as their study capabilities are not as good as the students in regular college. What is more, we always think that students should learn theory online and operating skill offline. This thought needs to be discussed. A really effective offline class should connect a theory and operating skill, while a good online resource for vocational education also should connect a theory and operating skill.

The co-called typical tasks of a secretary also need to be discussed. We tried to do some surveys on enterprises by asking enterprises’ secretaries about their daily work and skills. We tried to establish the teaching and learning module based on the real secretaries’ daily work. However, the so-called typical tasks might be fake because of the inaccurate method of survey. Additionally, we had tried letting the enterprises gather to do the brain-storm, but the validity still needs to be tested.

### **Conclusion**

What is an effective class for vocational education? A perfect online resource that meets the need of the vocational education, a good class atmosphere that unconsciously lets students learn the knowledge and skills, and an enterprises base that provides the real typical tasks are things that are needed.

In the post-epidemic era, the online resources have become an indispensable teaching method. Under this background, vocational education needs to emphasize the actual effect of the online resources. A perfect online resources should not just talk about the theory. In order to meet the needs of vocational education, network resources should start from the practical operation.

In the class, students can enhance their professional competence by taking the real tasks from secretary’s daily tasks. The form of a class is “Task-driven.” By setting up a task-solving goal, teachers lead students to be the main body of a class. The real learning scene enhances the effectiveness of the classroom teaching. By solving the real task for the main line of the classroom, students improve their skills

and create a good atmosphere in the classroom, too. In a word, “The new form of the class” enables the student to obtain the new knowledge in the practice.

Also, an enterprise base that provides real typical tasks enables students to promote operational skills. As feedback, schools also can provide enterprises with skilled talents. In teaching management courses, we use the new media studio on campus and the Ailaiyi studio off campus, adopt the scoring system under the guidance of both on campus tutors and off campus tutors, deeply connect with the industry and service industry, and improve the science of teaching assessment.

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# A Study on English Binominals in Chinese EFL Learners' Essay Writing

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**[Abstract]** Based on Chinese Learner English Corpus (CLEC), this paper studies the use of English binominals in essay writings of Chinese learners with different English proficiency. The contrastive interlanguage analysis reveals that, English majors outperform non-English majors in terms of the variety of English paired words used in their writing; when the reversibility of English binominals is concerned, English majors tend to use binominals with stronger irreversibility.

**[Keywords]** English binominals; learner corpus; reversibility; variety; word order

## Introduction

As a branch of linguistics, phraseology has always been the focus of study. For second or foreign language learners, the ability to use phrases of all kinds is believed to be an essential part of learners' linguistic repertoire. Learning and then producing a desirable number of phrases are of great importance, for formulaic sequences can improve fluency and idiomaticity of language expression (Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Stengers, & Demecheleer, 2006; Towell, Hawkins, & Bazergui, 1996; Wood, 2006). Phraseology, a broad term, encompasses rich varieties of phrases; some forms are more causal in nature, such as *second hand*, while some may come in more fixed structure, such as *safe and sound*. Standardized expressions like these produced by second or foreign language learners have long been the target of research in second language acquisition. Studies in this respect are, thus, easily available. For example, Hu, Shi, and Ji (2017) found that, Chinese English major students (with seniors not considered) used more English lexical bundles than their counterparts in English-speaking countries. Similar results can be found in other studies (e.g. Hyland, 2008a, 2008b; Staples, et al., 2013). These studies deliver the information that phrase output in second or foreign language learners could be a mirror of how well a learner commands some aspects of a foreign language, and these findings can facilitate second or foreign language learning.

## English Binominals and Related Studies

Under the term "phraseology," English binomial is a type with features of its own. English binominals, also referred to as twin words, words in pairs, or paired words, are coordinated pairs words with the same part of speech by way of *and*, *or*, *but* and so on (Malkiel, 1959). Examples of binominals abound, and familiar ones can be *father and son*, *more and more*, *boys and girls*, etc. A property of binominals that deserve attention is its (ir)reversibility. Linguists at home and abroad have looked at this property, both diachronically and synchronically (e.g. Wen, 2001). Reversibility concerns the issues of whether the order of the two words in a binomial can be reversed. Some binominals are reversible, such as *short and long*, which is equally acceptable as *long and short*. However, some are nearly irreversible, such as *law and order*; some are likely to occur in certain order, though the other order is also plausible (Lohmann, 2012; Malkiel, 1959; Mollin, 2013; Mollin, 2014).

Though binominals fall into the group of lexical bundles in a broad sense, this special form of word combinations is rarely examined in the context of second language acquisition (Mollin, 2014), let alone the context of English learning in China, and existing research on English paired words as second language

output mostly examined the performance of second language learners by way of blank-filling tasks based on binomial structure (e.g. the study of Alexander & Plein, 1991). To date, the author has not found studies that take binomials produced by Chinese English learners as subject of discussion. It is a research gap that calls for attention, considering that binomials differ from other lexical chunks with distinctiveness like metaphoric function and structure, and they may produce different situations of acquisition in second/foreign language learners in China and other countries alike. To prelude further studies, this paper, by way of corpus analysis, sets out to compare the use of English paired words between two English learning groups with different English proficiency. Two research questions are thus proposed:

1. Do English majors use more diverse English paired words than non-English majors?
2. Are there any differences in the reversibility between English paired word order used by English and non-English majors?

## **Methods and Procedures**

### ***Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis and Corpus***

Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis is a corpus-based method to study learners' languages. Interlanguage comparative analysis (Granger, 1998) is to compare the corpus of interlanguage of second/foreign language learners with that of native speakers to discover mistakes or errors in learners' language or to make comparison between interlanguages to spot differences or similarities in between. This study mainly adopts the latter. To be more specific, the paper centers on the comparison between learners' corpora of Chinese English majors and non-English majors.

The corpus used in this article is the Chinese Learner English Corpus (CLEC). The corpus was completed by professors Gui Shichun and Yang Huizhong and takes English writing by Chinese students as its raw material. The one-million-word corpus has the following in it five sub-corpora: st2 (writing of high school students), st3 (writing of college English Band 4), st4 (writing of college English Band 6), st5 (writing of English major in lower grades), and st6 (writing of English major in higher grades). Their capacity is 208,100 words, 209,000 words, 219,900 words, 214,500 words, and 226,100 words, respectively (Gui & Yang, 2003). This paper takes st3 and st4 as the corpus of Chinese non-English majors (421,900 words; referred to as Sub-corpus One) and st5 and st6 as the corpus of Chinese English majors (440,600 words; referred to as Sub-corpus Two). The sizes of the two new corpora see no big difference, thus making it possible to do quantitative analysis.

### ***Retrieval and Identification of English Binomials***

For initial attraction for English binomials, Antconc3.4.4w is in use. As previous studies (e.g. Mollin, 2013), the current study focuses on binomials that are connected by *and* only, for binomials coordinated by *and* are the most frequent (Meyer, 1996; Mollin, 2013). Besides, considering manageability, the minimum cutoff point of frequency is set at 5, equal to 11 pmw. In Mollin's study (2014), the cutoff point is 1pmw, but 1 pmw is too low for the present study because, as coarse search shows, there are too many binomials with a frequency under 11 pmw, and the manageability would be thus threatened. Another note of caution related to frequency is that, since only comparison between Sub-corpus One and Two is involved, the pure occurrence of binomials is discussed, saving the trouble to make *per million word* transfer. By Antconc3.4.4w, preliminary search results of binomials in Sub-corpus One and Two are listed in Table 1. To save space, only the top 10 are shown.

**Table 1. Preliminary Retrieval of Binomials**

	<b>Sub-corpus One</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>	<b>Sub-corpus One</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>
1	more and more	493	more and more	297
2	reform and open	117	school and college	98
3	expectancy and infant	103	dreaming and imagination	65
4	again and again	56	science and technology	59
5	upset and depressed	51	dignity and peace	47
6	black and bruised	49	agony and degradation	42
7	expectancy and the	49	men and women	39
8	better and better	45	hospital and the	38
9	less and less	32	translation and compilation	32
10	old and the	27	mentally and physically	29

**Short-listing of English Binomials**

With preliminary search results at hand, the next step, data re-selection and removal, was conducted. The following selection criteria were applied: 1) singular and plural forms are not considered separately. For example, *women and men* and *woman and man* are treated as a same binomial, and errors or mistakes in this aspect are also ignored. For this reason, any one in *man (men) and woman (women)* belong to the same group; 2) Following the treatment in Mollin (2013), two binomials with reverse word orders, despite identical components, are counted as two different ones, *such as day and night* and *night and day*; 3) word sequences that contain markers (e.g. *s-] and so*) and that are apparently not binomials (e.g. *old and the*) were eliminated; 4) binomials from stems of the writing tasks (e.g. *upset and depressed* in Sub-corpus One and *translation and compilation* in Sub-corpus Two) were excluded, for they should not be considered as the natural production of learners. So do expressions that derive from those pairs (e.g. in Sub-corpus Two, *mentally and physically*) as from one stem, so its adjective counterpart *mental and physical* is discarded. Table 2 displays binomials after the selection procedure mentioned above. For the purpose of space saving, only the top 10 are listed.

**Table 2. Short-Listing of English Binomials**

	<b>Sub-corpus One</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>	<b>Sub-corpus One</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>
1	more and more	493	more and more	297
2	again and again	56	science and technology	59
3	better and better	45	men and women	49
4	less and less	32	relatives and friends	20
5	science and technology	21	now and then	16
6	rivers and wells	19	friends and relatives	15
7	study and work	18	again and again	14
8	here and there	15	time and energy	14
9	by and by	14	here and there	13
10	time and energy	14	stronger and stronger	12

## Results and Discussion

### *The Variety of Binomial in Use*

In order to compare the usage of English paired words between the two groups, we turn to type/token ratio, as Huang (2015) did in his inquiry. Type tells which learner group uses more paired words and type/token ratio informs the variety of binomials use. See Table 3 for details. The data show that the type/token ratio of binomials produced by non-English majors (0.00006) was slightly lower than that of English majors (0.00007), indicating that more binomials were repeatedly used by non-English majors. It is easy to see that English majors tend to produce words in pairs with greater variety. The very reason for this status quo may be that the use of paired words necessitates a good mastery of vocabulary and, if any, certain knowledge that underlies the coming of age of some binomials. English majors in general outperform non-English majors in these aspects, and so do their production of binomials.

**Table 3. The Type/Token Information of Binomials in Use**

Sub-corpus	The type o binomials (occurrence $\geq$ 5)	Token	Type/token ratio
1	25	416523	0.00006
2	32	449234	0.00007

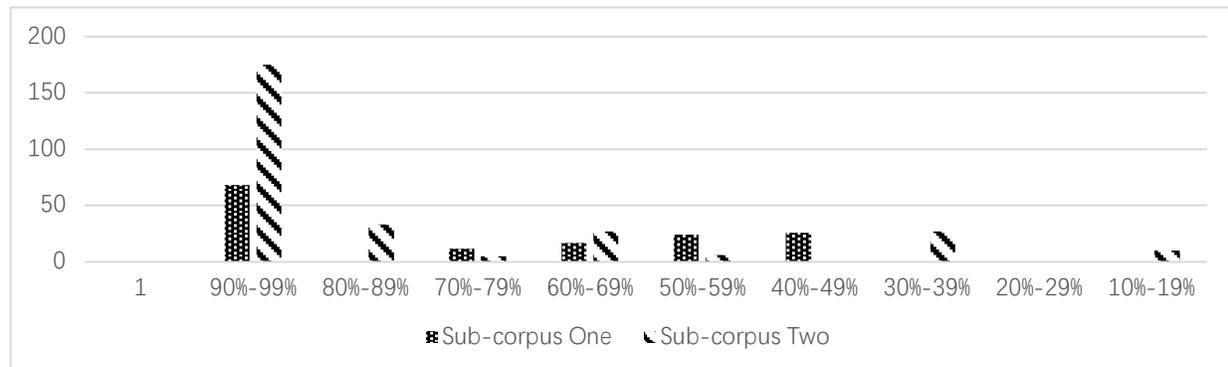
### *Reversibility of Binomials in Use*

To make it a more scientific inquiry, Mollin (2013) introduced an (ir)reversibility score that expresses the degree to which one word sequence of a binomial is preferred: frequency (A and B) / [frequency (A and B)+ [frequency (B and A)]\*100. This formula, coupled with frequency information from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), enables the calculation of the reversibility score of the target binomials in the current study (repetitive constructions like *more and more* are excluded). Several cautions are given. First, if binomials from CLEC are found with low occurrences for both word orders in COCA, they are removed because low occurrences for either order of a binomial indicate that it is not an idiomatic expression; second, single and plural forms of a binomial are considered separately, as they, more often than not, have different occurrences, such as *man and woman* (1806 occurrences in COCA) 和 *men and women* (23940 occurrences in COCA). The table only lists the top 5 binomials.

**Table 4. The Reversibility Score of Binomials in Use**

	Sub-corpus One	Occurrences	Reversibility score	Sub-corpus Two	Occurrences	Reversibility score
1	science and technology	21	97%	science and technology	59	97%
2	study and work	18	48%	men and women	39	90%
3	here and there	15	99%	relatives and friends	21	34%
4	time and energy	14	94%	now and then	16	88%
5	industry and agriculture	13	54%	friends and relatives	15	66%

According to Mollin (2013), when the reversibility score of a specific binomial is 1, it indicates this binomial is not reversible, not occurring in the reverse order; if the score is around 0.5, then it means that the binomial is highly reversible, i.e. both sequences of the construction occur equally frequently.



**Figure 1. The Distribution of Reversibility Scores**

As is revealed in Figure 1, differences concerning reversibility scores can be found in two subgroups. Compared with non-English majors (Sub-corpus One), the majority of the binomials used by English majors (Sub-corpus Two) are with reversibility scores between 0.90-0.99, indicative of the fact that they tend to produce binomials with much stronger preference for one order; or to put it another way, the binomials they produce are featured by stronger tendency towards irreversibility. By contrast, binomials by non-English majors are found with varying reversibility. It may be that English majors (with much more exposure to English on a daily basis) are more aware of the word sequence issue, so they are liable to use binomials that are more fixed in order to keep the chance of errors at minimum. Such results suggest the use of binomials by English learners may be related to their proficiency; with higher English proficiency, learners may be more aware of the reversibility of binomials for the sake of accuracy of use.

### Conclusion

This study examines the use of English binomials by Chinese English learners. Through the comparison of paired words in their English writing, English majors, with their higher English proficiency, are found using binomials with a wider variety and are more likely to binomials that are more fixed in order. These findings deliver a hint that for EFL or ESL learners, the use of English binomials is related to the proficiency of users.

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# The Transmutation of the Notion of Home in the Age of Mobility in Robert Stevenson's Works

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**[Abstract]** British writer Robert Louis Stevenson showed his complex understanding of home by presenting the bargee's floating home in Willebroek Canal in *An Inland Voyage*. The bargee's home is featured with the uncertainty of the identity of family members, the relationship between the family members and people's knowledge of home. On the one hand, mobility brings crisis to the traditional home, leading to its disintegration. On the other hand, mobility contributes to the dynamic generation of the new notion of "home," whose significance is demonstrated in the following two aspects. Mobility promotes frequent interaction among people different in cultural and social backgrounds, resulting in the gradual deconstruction of traditional domestic order; mobility serves to relieve the anxiety of individuals. The identity, which used to be fixed and settled, loses its stability in the mobile society, offering "home" the possibility of openness and transmutation.

**[Keywords]** Stevenson; mobility; home; transmutation

## Introduction

In recent years, home has become an unavoidable and important research object in geography, as well as in other disciplines such as sociology, women's studies, history, and anthropology (Blunt, 2006, p. 2). In literature, "home" is regarded as a special perspective from which to examine life, which not only reflects the living state of individuals in a specific period, but also conveys the writer's understanding of history, reality, and future. The works of the 19th-century Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) witness how the age of mobility transmuted the traditional structure of home. Sun Yifeng (2005) concludes in his *Cultural Exile and Homeward Journey: R. L. Stevenson and American Fiction*, "Stevenson's complex understanding of home or homes deserves a rigorous and systematic probing analysis" (p. 1). The writer frequently left home and travelled around the world. Home is a common motif in his works. And "home" is a key word in Stevenson studies, as well. An increasingly expansive body of literature explores the theme of home in Stevenson's works (Zlosnik, 2004; Sborgi, 2007; Colley, 2011; Hayward, 2012; Frances, & Danelle, 2013; Mathews, 2013; Prosser, 2014). There have been, however, few attempts to study the transmutation of the notion of home, which is actually a hidden characteristic of the Victorian age. This paper first explores why that age is called a transitional period, aiming to interpret the historical background of Stevenson's creation of the mobile home. Second, it analyzes the features of the mobile home in his *An Inland Voyage* (1878). Finally, with the theory of mobility from literary geography, it elaborates the positive role that the mobile home plays in motivating the dynamic generation of the notion of home.

## Home in Victorian Age

It is a basic and almost universal conception of the Victorian age that men thought of their time as an era of change from the past to the future. Walter E. Houghton (1957) in his *The Victorian Frame of Mind: 1830-1870* pointed out that "the one distinguishing fact about the time was 'that we are living in an age of transition'" (p. 1). Although all ages are ages of transition, in England the idea and the Victorian period began together. The ideological and affectional crisis caused by social transition is embedded in the literary

works of that period, which Huang Mei (2003) called “the latent ideological function of literature” (p. 2). The relationship between people and home steps into the transitional period, as well, due to its close association with affection. Why is the Victorian age called a transitional period? What distinctive features of the time are implied in the notion of home?

To answer the two questions above, it is necessary to mention the most important vehicle in the changing Victorian age – the railway. The image of the railway in 19<sup>th</sup> century British novels facilitates our interpretation the notion of “home” in Stevenson’s works. Yin Qiping (2009) expresses it well when he points out, “the cold, emotionless and monster-like vehicle rushed into people’s life, bringing them to an unprecedented plight. People were taken out of their comfort zone which may be associated with poverty, while the expected golden future still seemed unreachable” (p. 504). Despite this, the Victorians proceeded without hesitation, stepping onto the train and waving goodbye to their old sweet homes. Railways and other vehicles standing for progress and speed expedited the individual’s leaving home, thus transmuting the traditional structure of home and the emotional connections among family members.

During his whole life, Stevenson left his home in Scotland and travelled in England, Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland, America, and the South Seas. The railway and the train played an irreplaceable role, although he also traveled by donkey as recorded in his *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* (1879), by boat as recorded in his *An Inland Voyage* (1878), and by cruise ship as recorded in his *In The South Seas* (1896). Jenni Calder says, “as a child Stevenson embarked in imaginary voyages, as a young man he saw the steam locomotive as an emblem of escape” (2003, p. 14). Consequently, it helps the writer to realize his childhood dream via railroad journey. He recorded his journey from the East America to the West America in *Across the Plains and Other Memories and Essays* (1892). He noted, “so that there were some Caucasians among the Chinamen, and some bachelors among the families” (Stevenson, 2009, p. 30). The train here is not only the material carrier, taking the individuals’ physical body off their home, and providing an opportunity to experience the loss of home and the loss of the familiar, but also a special space offering individuals with distinctive cultural background a chance to interact and reestablish the self through the interaction. The train acts as ritual passage that creates liminal space, which is the idea of anthropologist Victor Turner for passengers to reconstruct subjectivities and deviate themselves from the inner struggles of frustration and the removal of cultural privileges.

In this transitional space, passengers in the train temporarily tear off the labels such as gender and race, suspend their own identities, and communicate and interact with a relatively open and positive mind. “Home” is undoubtedly the main theme of this interaction, which makes most people on the move feel the empathy. When “Home, Sweet Home” was played, the whole carriage went silent, and Stevenson said, “I have no idea whether musically this air is to be considered good or bad; but it belongs to that class of art which may be best described as a brutal assault upon the feelings” (2009, p. 31).

### **The Mobile Home in *an Inland Voyage***

In *An Inland Voyage*, Stevenson wrote sparingly about the bargee’s home. When the boat reached the Willebroek Canal, Stevenson encountered a rare mode of home: the bargee’s floating home.

*There should be many contented spirits on board, for such a life is both to travel and to stay at home.*

*.....and for the bargee, in his floating home, ‘travelling abed,’ it is merely as if he were listening to another man’s story or turning the leaves of a picture-book in which he had no concern. (Stevenson, 2013, p. 12)*

The bargee's home in Stevenson's work harmonizes the seemingly contradictory pair of notions "travel" and "home" with the landscape of the Willebroek Canal and deconstructs the traditional concept of home, which used to be interpreted as fixed, stable, rooted, and bounded. From the traditional perspective, travel, as a movement with purpose, focuses on "movement," while home is emphasized with "stability." The bargee's home is a perfect blending of movement and stability, adding warmth and peace to the wanderings and uncertainties of the journey. The relatively static home floats with the boat, breaking the traditional boundary between dynamic and static.

First, the family members have mobile identity. In his travel book, Stevenson focused on the life of a bargee and presented his changing identity. He may take his afternoon walk in some foreign country on the banks of the canal, and then come home to dinner at his own fireside. On shore he is a leisurely traveller; Back on board, he is a weathered laborer. With the picturesque landscape and the changing external environment, the identity of the bargee is fluid. As Stevenson wrote, the daily life of a boatman was between the life of a casual traveler and the life of a peaceful family. He can enjoy both the knowledge of travel and the warmth of home. "Travelling abed" is a vivid description of the bargee's life. In trans-national and trans-regional practices, the bargees frequently get encountered with foreign culture, and their original identity as a bargee is constantly impacted by the outside world. The uncertainty and fluidity of the bargee's identity is reflected in his ability to reassess his own identity and control his life. As Stevenson wrote, "the bargee is on shipboard – he is master in his own ship – he can land whenever he will – he can never be kept beating off a lee-shore a whole frosty night when the sheets are as hard as iron" (2013, p. 13). This absolute control over life is a positive expression of self-subjectivity and a way to ease middle-class anxiety.

Second, family members keep unfixed relationship, helping them jump out of the traditional model. The free and informal life of the bargee breaks the fixed and rigid relationship among family members and deconstructs the hierarchical relationship within the traditional family. With several lines of words, he revealed a harmonious picture of family life as "a window on either side of the rudder, and perhaps a jug or a flower-pot in one of the windows; a dinghy following behind; a woman busied about the day's dinner, and a handful children" (Stevenson, 2013, p. 11). "Bargee," "women," and "children," each performing his/her own duties, create a harmonious family atmosphere. What is remarkable about the writer is that he made no comments on the relationship between father and son, mother and son, or husband and wife on the barge. The reader can't get much out of that single sentence about the daily life on the barge. But the gaps of information about family life in the text have left plenty of room for the readers' imagination. In Victorian England, women were regarded as guardians of traditional family-centered morals and values. Even if the bargee's family is not a mainstream British one, the boundary between a bargee's workplace and home space is blurred. The bargee mentioned above is labeled as "traveler," "laborer," "husband," and "father." When he steps into the cabin and shares the space with his wife and children, his mixed identities may also affect the way he gets along with his wife and children. Thus, the wife is not only a tender "domestic angel" fixed onto the domestic trifles, nor are children absorbed in mere child play.

### **Mobility and the Transmutation of the Notion of Home**

Mobility has now set off a trend in the fields of society, economy, politics, and culture, which is called "mobility paradigm," also known as "mobility turn." Geologist Peter Adey (2010) believes that mobility has become a basic concept similar to "space," "society," "power," "city," "nature," and "home" (p. 5). Many researches are carried out under the framework of mobility. The connotation of home has also evolved in the context of mobility.

On the one hand, mobility challenges the traditional family structure and pattern, bringing great crisis to traditional home. In a society where culture and identity are fixed, bounded, and rooted, mobility is given more negative meanings, and people who are wandering are labeled as “vagrant,” “marginal,” and so on. In the Middle Ages, people on the move were seen as “homeless people.” Raymond Williams (1921-1988), a famous British cultural theorist, believed that the development of culture was closely related to the continuity of place and community. Instead, he stressed a firmly rooted economic order. Any form of mobility will threaten and impact the sustainable development of ideal culture. The great changes of individuals and the society brought about by mobility not only result in the differences and conflicts of ethnic and national cultures and as the anxiety and difficulties of individuals, but also impact on the traditional family pattern. On the other hand, the mobility also promotes the dynamic generation of new meanings of home. In his book *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (2006), Tim Cresswell, a geographer, makes a clear distinction between mobility and movement (pp. 2-3). In his opinion, movement is “the dynamic equivalent of location in an abstract space,” while mobility is “the dynamic equivalent of place” because “place” itself refers to the locations imbued with meaning and power (Cresswell, 2006, p. 3) and can be used in all manner of contexts in theoretical expositions. Therefore, the distinctive difference between mobility and movement lies in that the space of the former is a center of meaning, while the latter is abstract. When it comes to the notion of “home,” it not only refers to this home (home and the corresponding emotional factors, etc.) and that home (home and the corresponding emotional factors, etc.), but also refers to the forces driving home from here to there and the transmutation of the notion of home. Thus the notion of home is unfixed in the dynamic process of ceaseless generation. With people’s changing cognition of home, the meaning of home is constantly generated. Mobility has many positive meanings for the generation of the meaning of home, mainly manifested in the following two aspects.

First of all, mobility promotes frequent communication and interaction among people different in languages, cultures, and social structures, which helps deconstruct the traditional order in the context of home. “But it is the object of a liberal education not only to obscure the knowledge of one sex by another, but to magnify the natural differences between the two,” the writer said in his *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881), “the little rift between the sexes is astonishingly widened by simply teaching one set of catchwords to the girls and another to the boys” (Stevenson, 1918, p. 53). The writer held his views on marriage and love, unwittingly participating in a great debate about marriage in the late 19th century England. In 1888, Mona Caird published an article entitled “Marriage,” which sparked a debate about marriage in all walks of life. In this article, she criticized the institution of marriage and called for gender equality (1888, pp. 186-201). This was similar to what was written by Stevenson in *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881). On the one hand, Stevenson felt puzzled and criticized the view of marriage in Victorian society, pointing out that the social basis and the root of the couple’s lack of communication in marriage lay in the misleading education on marriage for young boys and girls. Stevenson, on the other hand, aimed to emphasize the importance of emotional contact in marriage. A marriage without affection is a contract without love. Stevenson talked about the emotional factors in an interpersonal relationship in *An Inland Voyage* and put forward the ideal mode of a relationship between men and women, “Where – here slips out the male – where would be much of the glory of inspiring love, if there were no contempt to overcome?” (Stevenson, 2013, p. 8). These words expose the emotional underpinning of Stevenson’s new mode of interaction between male and female: equal communication and mutual respect. At the same time, it is also a way for the writer to escape from the traditional hierarchical order in the context of home where the husband is superior to the wife.

Second, mobility can relieve family members' sense of anxiety about their own identity. The closed and fixed identity becomes erratic and uncertain in a mobile society, but it also offers the possibility of openness and innovation. Only by taking the anxious body out of the familiar context of home and then mobilizing all kinds of senses in a pure and innocent state like a baby to perceive things that used to be familiar and ignored can we endow home with new meanings. On the one hand, this relieves the anxiety of the family members, and on the other hand, it adds new meaning to home and provides the possibility for its innovation.

### Conclusion

Stevenson's complex understanding of mobile home stems from his unique life experience. The writer, born in Scotland, wandered around the world and died young in the South Pacific. In his whole life, he had lived in Scotland, England, Switzerland, France, the United States and the South Pacific. Sun Yifeng calls Stevenson a "solitary traveler," which is an appropriate portrait of the writer's life and, also, of his complicated and constantly troubled relationship with home. In his works, the author elucidated his profound perception of the mobile home, which not only exposed the collective unconsciousness in the late Victorian era, but also expressed the universal spiritual demands of people in fin-de-siècle. The era of mobility, facilitated by railways, had led to increasingly frequent trans-regional and trans-national mobility, bringing enlightenment to the positive interaction between people and their homes in the 20th and even the 21st century.

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# Constructing the Unnarrated: On the Narrative Gaps in Nabokov's *Lolita* from the Perspective of Theory of Mind

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**[Abstract]** *From the perspective of Theory of Mind, this paper identifies and analyzes the narrative gaps in Lolita. The unnarrated stories, defined by Abbott as “shadow stories,” reside in readers’ minds, promoting the development and construal of the whole narrative. In Lolita, by decompressing the compressed narratives, binding the incoherent narratives and creating narratives when narratives collide, readers are able to engage in the reconstruction of narrative. The narrative gaps not only demonstrate the ingenuity and richness of the novel, but challenge readers’ cognitive ability.*

**[Keywords]** Lolita; Nabokov; narrative gaps; shadow stories; theory of mind

## Introduction

*Lolita*' narrative pattern is one of the subjects most commented upon among its researchers. Nabokov weaves the whole narrative into a superb and exquisite network in which the integrated narrative techniques and the narrator's force conspire to challenge readers' minds. As Boyd records, one early reviewer thought that the story of *Lolita* was “not the corruption of an innocent child by a cunning adult, but the exploitation of a weak adult by a corrupt child” (Boyd, 1991, p. 230). The comment indicates that *Lolita*'s narrative is a highly deceptive and complicated construction and has much room for exploration. The previous research of *Lolita* focuses more on the unreliable narrative built by the first-person inside view and the shift of focalization. However, the lens of cognitive science is rarely used in the previous studies, and other narrative features, hard to be detected, are also worth our exploration. This paper mainly focuses on the narrative gaps in *Lolita*. Those unnarrated stories, defined by Abbott as “shadow stories,” reside in readers' minds, promoting the development of the whole narrative (Abbott, 2015, p. 106). With the adoption of Theory of Mind and by decompressing the compressed narratives, binding the narratives and creating narratives when narratives collide, readers are able to engage in the reconstruction of narrative. The narrative gaps not only demonstrate the ingenuity and richness of the novel, but challenge readers' cognitive abilities .

## Narrative Gaps and Theory of Mind

Mindreading, also known as Theory of Mind (ToM), is used to “describe our ability to explain people's behavior in terms of their thoughts, feelings, beliefs and desires” as attributing states of mind is the default way of our mental functioning (Zunshine, 2006, p. 6). Lisa Zunshine successfully adopted mindreading to analyze the narrative features of literary works in *Why We Read Fictions: Theory of Mind and the Novel*. She believes that applying the notion of mindreading to the study of literature is to make literature possible and understandable, while literature also testifies, stimulates, and strengthens our ability of mindreading. Analyzing narrative gaps with the ToM is able to better decode *Lolita*'s narrative techniques and form a new understanding of the relationship between the reader, the author, and the text.

Henry James commented in *The Portrait of a Lady* that “the whole of anything is never told” (James, 1955, p. 230). Lubomir Dolezel also claimed that in narrating a story “it would take a text of infinite length to construct a complete fictional world” (Dolezel, 1998, p. 169). In *Lolita*, many of narrative details are omitted that generate numerous narrative gaps in which different interpretations are born. The narrative gap, from the hermeneutic perspective, is an indicator of the deconstruction of the author’s authority, which reveals that readers are no longer the passive recipient of the text but the participants of meaning generation. According to Porter Abbott, readers construct “shadow stories” to fill the narrative gaps. While those shadow stories will never be validated as it is in the presentation of possible the world that they are capable of promoting the development and construal of the whole narrative. In *Lolita*, there are quite a few narrative gaps that are worth our investigations and require readers’ mindreading abilities in place to grasp the author’s intention and characters’ mental states. From the perspective of mindreading, the construction of shadow story and the cognitively challenging attributes of *Lolita* can be readily revealed.

Roland Barthe claimed in “The Death of the Author” that “as soon as a fact is narrated no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively...the author enters into his own death” (Barthe, 1972, p. 25). Analyzing narrative gaps from the perspective of mindreading offers a new perspective against Barthe’s view. The author is not dead but co-writes with readers. Though author’s manipulation of the text is obvious, readers are capable of injecting their own understanding into the unnarrated space. A text is not merely about the words in the text, but it contains multiple spaces in which many forces combine with each other to build various meanings of the text. The shadow story is evidently one of the spaces that the larger it is the more possibilities it includes the idea through which the text will no longer be confined in a simple and single interpretation; consequently, Barthe’s “language Utopia” can really be created.

### **Decompressing the Compressed Narrative**

Compressed narratives frequently emerge in news headlines in which several words contain plenty of information for readers to contemplate. In *Lolita*, some informative events are pathologically concluded with a concise sentence that forms a huge narrative gap and stimulates readers’ curiosity. Since the concise sentence makes the panorama of the story partly visible and partly hidden, it requires readers’ mindreading ability to fill the gap. Different from news readers, who can fully know the story with video and news comment, novel readers have to decompress the compressed narrative with the clues in the text and their own mindreading ability.

In *Lolita*, some watershed events are formed in a compressed way due to various purposes. Humbert’s recollection of his first love is formed in a special way: “I was on my knees, and on the point of possessing my darling, when two bearded bathers, the old man of the sea and his brother, came out of the sea with exclamations of ribald encouragement, and four months later she died of typhus in Corfu” (Nabokov, 1991, p. 13).

In this passage, Humbert describes the scene of their rendezvous by the sea in which many words are poured into the description. In contrast, the death of Annabel is rallied only in one simple sentence – “four months later she died of typhus in Corfu,” announcing the tragic ending of his first love, highly compressed with narrative power. Readers cannot help thinking about what happened in the four months, the cause of Annabel’s death, how she has been tortured by illness, and the hardship Humbert has gone through. While those shadow stories will never be testified as the relative narrative is completely absent, it leaves readers large space to insert their personal thinking and viewpoints into the whole narrative to fill the gap.

Then why does the author compress Annabel's death into one single sentence? It is partly due to Humbert's psychological defense, also known as "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder" (PTSD). Annabel's death is a big trauma that Humbert has born, and he fails to move on. The traumatic memory makes him mute and a "reluctant narrator," unwilling to mention the details of her death, as the recollection will bring about endless melancholia. Thus, Humbert buries the fact of her death deep in his heart, which is an obvious psychological defense of mental amnesia and narrative aphasia. Besides, his compressed narrative of Annabel's death reflects his reluctance to admit Annabel's death; consequently, he makes Lolita the substitute for Annabel to revive Annabel's life. However, Humbert's effort to prolong Annabel's life is a destined failure, as Lolita has her own trajectory of life, contrary to Humbert's avid aspiration. Humbert is not only reluctant to accept Annabel's death, but unwilling to acknowledge Lolita's natural growth in the following narrative, which is a clear indicator of his escapist personality that causes him to try in vain to hold the past time and leads him directly to the destructive end.

By reading the author's mind, we can discover that the compressed narrative endows the narrative with a sense of tension. The seemingly irrelevant narrative of "the old man of the sea and his brother, came out of the sea with exclamations" and "four months later she died of typhus in Corfu" adds a peculiar flavor to the narrative. The former one is meticulous description of details with a vivid depiction of the "two bearded bathers," which resembles a realistic painting that is exquisite in details; the latter resembles a painting splashed with ink that shows a rough silhouette and omits many details. The two contrastive styles of narrative generate a powerful tension. Technically speaking, it's the juxtaposition of two writing styles that forms the aesthetic pleasure. From the perspective of readers' reception, the transformation from descriptive narrative to compressed narrative gives readers an unexpected jolt that pulls readers out of the original way of processing the novel. The author breaks the transitive ground of the narrative of cozy seaside rendezvous and grief of death; he juxtaposes the two together to create a miraculous flavor of tension.

### **Binding Narrative Gaps**

Narrative divisions also emerge frequently in *Lolita*, which requires readers to bind the gaps with shadow stories. A coherent text not only means the coherence of the internal meaning but the external context. As a result, it needs readers to read the minds of characters and "read these gaps as if there are real connecting threads inside them, despite the fact that there is no thread, nor anything else, there to be known" (Abbott, 2015, p. 108).

After Lolita's mother Charlotte's death, Humbert does not inform Lolita immediately. Instead, Humbert deliberately embarks on the journey with Lolita. In the journey, when Lolita is on the brink of irritation, he eventually tells her of Charlotte's death, which leads to the sudden division of narrative. The following narrative goes in a digressional way that eliminates Lolita's reaction to her mother's death: "In the gay town of Lepingville I bought her four books of comics, a box of candy, a box of sanitary pads, two cokes..." (Nabokov, 1991, p. 141). It seems that Lolita's reaction to her mother's death will be permanently unknown to readers, so the readers need to contemplate shadow stories to bind the narrative gap.

Lolita's reaction may have multiple possibilities in which two conflicting possibilities emerge. As a child, she may feel pain and sorrow in facing her mother's death. But she may also feel relieved as their relationship was extremely terrible. Their daily strife and Lolita's incest with her stepfather contributed to proving their incompatibility. Thus, it is logically possible that Lolita may feel relieved by her mother's death. The two conflicting possibilities will not only produce different shadow stories, but, to some extent, coincide with "Quantum Narrativity." There was a famous physical experiment, "Schrodinger's Cat," in

which the cat in the box contains two possibilities: dead and alive. On the one hand, the conflicting possibilities give readers more room for constructing the story. On the other hand, the conflicting feature endows readers with “an acute feeling of uncertainty and unknowing.” The narrative gap leads readers to contemplate and be puzzled by the unknown feature. When readers are processing this kind of narrative gap, they may unconsciously recall their relevant memory of the previous narrative through which readers are able to mindread the character’s mind and to infer Lolita’s reaction, thus experiencing “pleasurable dissatisfaction” (Abbott, 2015, p. 110).

Besides, readers will be taken to the “new past” in which mindreading will build a new story. The narrative is actually past tense. No matter what Lolita’s reaction is, it has already happened. However, the uncertainty and the unknown give readers a sense of unendingness. When we are building the shadow stories, we are actually building the “past.” This past is not a real past but a “new past world” that is totally established by readers (Abbott, 2015, p. 111). Thus, the reader’s shadow story is actually a closed storyworld that parallels the real storyworld.

It also worth noticing why Lolita’s reaction is totally absent. From the narrator’s perspective, Humbert is using the narrative gap to lead readers to draw a conclusion that he wants us to draw. The absence of Lolita’s reaction and the following narrative also seem to build a character Lolita who is careless about her mother’s death. It does not matter that she is painful or careless; she must have some reactions since the emotional sphere of human nature must elicit some emotional response of Lolita. Lolita’s “aphasia” is deliberately conducted by Humbert; the latter successfully becomes the spokesman for Lolita and mutes Lolita. When Humbert forcefully interferes with the narrative of emotional reactions, the narrative itself is cruelly torn apart.

### **Rebuilding the Connection When Narratives Collide**

Different from a traditional novel, *Lolita* is “anti-genre” or “multi-genre” novel that contains many different genres, which makes *Lolita*’s attribute hard to define. *Lolita* is mainly Humbert’s confession. However, it is mingled with poems, diary entries, and letters that make the novel full of challenges. Especially in the poems in *Lolita*, two relevant narratives are juxtaposed, leading to the collision of narratives that resembles a “montage” in the movie version of the story. Abbott claimed that “the gap will occur when a narrative abruptly intrudes one another, cutting it off in a seemingly random redirect” (Abbott, 2015, p. 112). The collisions of narrative frequently occur in Pound’s and T. S. Eliot’s poems, as Eliot thought “the frontiers of consciousness beyond which words fail, though meaning still exist” (Eliot, 1957, p. 23). In Eliot’s *The Wasteland*, different narrative fragments are juxtaposed with each other, puzzling readers and adding tension to the text. Faced with the collision of narrative, readers are inclined to construct meaning and discover the hidden connection between the irrelevant with the clue implied from the narrative. Thus, the whole narrative can achieve its internal logicity, and readers can understand the narrative in their own way.

In *Lolita*, the collision of narratives also occurs quite a few times, endowing the text with a postmodern flavor and challenging the reader’s mindreading ability. In order to take revenge on Quilty, the villain who seduces Lolita and make her pregnant, Humbert decides to murder him. Before he shoots Quilty, he forces Quilty to read the “judgment” written by Humbert in a poetic style:

*“Because you took advantage of a sinner/ because you took advantage/ because you took  
because you took advantage of my disadvantage.....when I stood Adam-naked before a  
federal law and all its stinging stars.....a little downy girl still wearing poppies still eating*

*popcorn in the colored gloam/ where tawny Indians took paid croppers/ because you stole her from her wax-browed and dignified protector/ spitting into his heavy-lidded eye ripping his flavid toga and at dawn” (Nabokov,1991, pp. 299-300).*

The beginning of the poem is a parody of Eliot’s *Ash Wednesday* – “because I do hope to turn again/ because I do hope/ because I do hope to turn” – which indicates that Humbert is injecting a poetic feature into the “judgement” (Eliot, 1967, p. 172). Thus the “judgment” itself is deconstructed by him. First, a “judgment” should be formed through legal procedure and announced by the judge, not by Humbert. Humbert is, on the one hand, assuming himself the judge to sanction Quilty the criminal; on the other hand, he is intending to rationalize his personal revenge with the disguise of “judgement.” Both aspects imply Humbert’s hatred of Quilty and the intention of his legitimate his deeds. Second , a judgment is commonly written with legal register or language rather than with poetic language. Humbert’s poetic judgment indicates his poetic pursuit of possessing Lolita, which is undermined and ended by Quilty. His attempt to combine the poetic feature with the realistic “judgment” indicate his aspiration of introducing the poetic into reality.

Apart from the beginning of the poem, the following part is also noteworthy. The main content of the poem is the best example of the collision of narratives, which generates numerous shadow stories. Readers will contemplate why “I stood Adam-naked before a federal law and all its stinging stars.” It is quite puzzling that the naked Adam in the Bible is juxtaposed with “a federal law.” The seemingly irrelevant images will undoubtedly arouse readers’ curiosity. In order to reconstruct the connection between the irrelevant, shadow stories occur. Humbert compares himself with the Adam: both are seduced to taste “the forbidden apple” and become sinful. “The forbidden apple” Humbert eats, namely the pedophilia, violates the federal law. “It’s stinging stars” implies the stars on the national flag of the US that reveals Humbert’s pursuit of Lolita has led him into the abyss, and his love is strong enough to contend against the “federal law.” Humbert is so devoted and desperate that he becomes enraged when Quilty steals his love.

Another example of narrative collision can be found in the poem. The line “a little downy girl still wearing poppies still eating popcorn in the colored gloam where tawny Indians took paid croppers” also puzzles readers as many irrelevant images are jammed into the line. Why is “a downy girl wearing poppies still eating popcorn”? And what is she to do with “tawny Indians”? This example seems to be more challenging than the last example because we have to further mindread Humbert. The downy girl may refer to Lolita. The poppies she wears indicate the fatal seductive and addictive features Lolita possess, as poppies are the raw material of opium. Indians are the first to plant crops but are now “took paid croppers,” implying that Indians are deprived of what used to belong to them. It further reveals that Humbert is deprived of his beloved Lolita, while Lolita is ignorant of her situation, “eating popcorn” casually and oblivious of Humbert’s love. This interpretation is one version of shadow stories because the real intention of the author is never known to readers. Thus, we can put our individualized understanding into the text.

By reading Humbert’s mind and analyzing the collision of narrative, readers are able to sense Humber’s love for Lolita gradually running wild. He murders a man just because the man steals Lolita. Humbert has no hesitation when he conducts the murder, indicating that he is free from the restraint of convention and regulation and, thus, cannot be counted as a “regular human being.” It is fair to evaluate him as an irregular “postmodern-man” whose thinking pattern and moral standard is totally different from the regular one; this explains why his narrative breaks free the linear and traditional narrative. In the world full of regulation and convention, Humbert is doomed to be the “heresy” punished by law and cursed by convention. However, in his own world, he rationalizes his sin into the realm of “poet’s temperament.”

Humbert's tragedy lies in the insurmountability of morality and law. Reality, guarded by strict laws and the internal morals, cannot offer a "poetic dwelling" to Humbert, as his poetic pursuit is incompatible with the standards in reality. Thus, Humbert's attempt to realize his pursuit in this "regular man's world" is a predestined failure.

### Conclusion

From Annabel's death to Quilty's "judgment," the room for the reader's construction of story becomes larger and larger. The combination of shadow stories and actual narrative in literary works offers readers a new mode of appreciating the story; they can interpret and construct the story by the given clues and mindreading. The arrangement of gaps is an indication of its success and excellence in which the silence entails huge potentials. Also, the cognitive interpretation of this novel is a heartening experiment that brings about some new discoveries. First, it will draw us closer to the author and enhance our cognitive ability. Roland Barthe (1972) announced "the death of the author" that views the birth of the text as an indication of the author's death. However, the lens of cognitive science enables us readers to penetrate the author's cognitive process in writing the novel, which is evidence of "the presence of the author." It is the revival of the author's power because the cognitive interpretation constantly reminds us that the form and the texture of the novel is an implicit representation of the author's mind. Second, it not only helps us see through author's mind, but the minds of characters in *Lolita*. Cognitive science is conducive to analyzing the characters' diverse emotions and mental predicaments, schizophrenia and anxiety in particular, which will help deepen our understanding of the text and whole narrative. Finally, it makes the reader's cognitive process highlighted. It to some extent resembles the Reader Response Theory, but it has something more than that because it uncovers "why" and "how" readers process the novel. *Lolita*, due to its complicated construction, is always a cognitive challenge to the reader. However, the cognitive interpretation will make it more understandable by investigating the mental process of the author, the characters, and the readers.

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# **An Analysis of Multimodal Discourse Characteristics and Synergy of Modes in the Lead-in Part of English Teaching by using ELAN Software**

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*[Abstract] Based on Zhang Delu's framework of multimodal discourse analysis and the research tool ELAN 6.0, this study selects four teaching videos in the 13th National Junior High School English Teaching Demo and Training Activity and focuses on the lead-in part of the whole teaching, aiming to explore the four teachers' multimodal discourse characteristics and synergy of modes in the lead-in part of the teaching. The results show that verbal language is the most frequently used mode of the four teachers. The annotation frequency and duration of eye contact reflect the use type of teaching tools and the interaction between teachers and students. For the gestures, all the four teachers incline to using deictics. Furthermore, the facial expression and head and body movements of the teachers show their approval and encouragement for students.*

*[Keywords] multimodal discourse analysis; synergy of modes; ELAN software; the lead-in part of English teaching*

## **Introduction**

With the rapidly developing scientific and educational technology, multimodality has become a common feature in human communication and teaching. Scholars at home and abroad, including Jewitt (2008) and Hu (2007), have explored teachers' multimodal discourse based on systemic functional linguistics and social semiotics, which provide much beneficial inspiration for foreign language teaching. However, most of the domestic studies on teachers' multimodal discourse focus on college classes and qualitative research methods (Cheng, & Zhang, 2017). In this condition, this study chooses four teaching videos in the 13th National Junior High School English Teaching Demo and Training Activity as a small corpus and puts emphasis on the lead-in part of the teaching. Furthermore, using the video annotation tool ELAN for teachers' multimodal discourse analysis realizes the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, making the results more objective and persuasive. With the help of ELAN, four teachers' multimodal discourses in the lead-in part of teaching are annotated and counted so that the characteristics of the multimodal discourses and the synergy of modes can be deeply explored. The results are expected to provide references and implications for junior high school English teachers to optimize the multimodal resources in the lead-in part of the teaching.

## **Literature Review**

Multimodal discourse is a communicative phenomenon that is formed by the use of auditory, visual, or tactile senses, as well as various media and semiotic resources, such as language, images, sounds, and actions (Zhang, & Wang, 2010, p. 98). Roland Barthes (1977) is the first Western scholar to study the relationship between image and linguistic message, which lays the theoretical foundation of multimodal discourse analysis. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996; 2001; 2003) study the distinction between mode and medium, and posit a comprehensive "grammar" of visual design. Royce (2002) holds that different modes complement each other to realize an intersemiotically coherent multimodal text; he discusses how the various modes help learners develop multimodal communicative competence and work together in both

ESL and EFL contexts. Jewitt (2008) claims that significant pedagogic work is realized through a range of modes.

Based on systemic functional linguistics, Li (2003) first introduces the theory of multimodal discourse analysis into China. After that, Hu (2007) explores the relationship between multimodality and computational semiotics. Gu (2007) discusses the distinction between multimedia learning and multimodal learning. Zhang (2009) constructs a comprehensive framework of multimodal discourse analysis and applies the related theory to foreign language teaching, which make great contributions to the application and development of multimodal discourse analysis.

## **Research Design**

### ***Research Objects***

The corpus of this study is the four teaching videos chosen from the 13th National Junior High School English Teaching Demo and Training Activity. This paper specifically analyzes four teachers' multimodal discourse characteristics in the lead-in part of teaching and the synergy of different modes according to Zhang Delu's framework of multimodal discourse analysis, including language and non-language media systems. Language mediums consist of pure language and para-language, while non-language mediums are classified into bodily and non-bodily movements. The bodily medium refers to facial expressions, gestures, eye contacts and movements (head and body). Non-bodily mediums include the environment, PPT, and other tools. The widely referred type of gestures are proposed by McNeill (1992), namely iconics, metaphors, deictics and beats. Iconic gestures illustrate images of an object or action. Metaphoric gestures represent abstract ideas. Deictics refer to pointing movements. Beats are rhythmic gestures that can stress important contents. The four teachers selected are all excellent developing teachers, and the four English classes are reading classes. The teaching topics can be seen as follows: growing healthy, growing strong; colors and moods; Do you want to watch a game show? and Resolutions.

### ***Research Questions***

This paper mainly discusses the following two issues:

1. What are the characteristics of the four participant teachers' multimodal discourse in the lead-in part of English teaching? What are their similarities and differences?
2. How does the synergy of modes convey meanings?

### ***Research Tool***

ELAN, an annotation tool for audio and video recordings, is used to process the four teaching videos. Its latest version is the 6.0 version, which was updated on December 3, 2020, and can be downloaded from <https://archive.mpi.nl/tla/elan/download>. One of the main, new functions of ELAN 6.0 is an export to time-aligned interlinear text, which produces textual output where the positioning is based on time. This function provides a more concise and clearer reference for data analysis and also enriches the presentation form of multimodal discourse. Synchronous annotations of video files can be created on multiple layers so that the user can further analyze the speakers' different modes.

### ***Research Method***

Multimodal discourse involves the synergy of different modes. Most of the current research focuses on qualitative analysis (Cheng, & Zhang, 2017) and college classes, while few researches concentrate on teachers' multimodal discourse characteristics in the lead-in part of junior high school English classes. With

the help of ELAN 6.0, this paper will analyze the four teachers’ multimodal discourse characteristics from both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The analysis results are reflected from two angles: (1) the types of modes used by the four teachers, their frequency of use, the annotation duration of each mode, and the percentages of their total annotation duration in the whole lead-in period; (2) the similarities and differences of the four teachers’ modes used in the lead-in part and the example of their synergy.

## Results and Discussions

### *Multimodal Discourse Characteristics of Teacher 1*

It can be seen in Table 1 that the verbal language (49.3%, 43 times) is the most often used mode of Teacher 1. In the whole lead-in process, the teacher puts particular emphasis on the interaction with students through the use of many other semiotic resources, such as intonations, eye contacts, gestures, and head and body movements. To be specific, the teacher asks a series of questions: “What makes you healthy?”; “What makes you strong?”; and “What do people do in health camp?” in order to guide students to brainstorm about the teaching topic (growing healthy, growing strong). She asks questions accompanied by various gestures, such as iconics and deictics. Meanwhile, when students are answering questions, she sets her eyes on them, leans forward, or approaches them, smiling and nodding. Therefore, the total annotation time of gazing at one student (43.8%, 8 times), deictics (12.7%, 16 times), and smiling (12.2%, 13 times) are relatively long. Other modes also play a coordinating and complementary role.

**Table 1. Modes Used by the Four Teachers in the Lead-in Part of the Teaching**

Media		Frequency				Average Duration (Seconds)				Total Annotation Duration (Seconds)				Annotation Duration Percentage (%)				
		T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4	
LANGUAGE	Verbal language	43	33	20	31	214	307	294	266	922	101	588	826	493	57.1	48.6	47.2	
	Text	2	4	0	7	265	327	0	314	53	131	0	22	283	74	0	12.6	
	Para-language	Image	1	3	1	7	122	3.79	1.56	1.31	1.22	11.4	1.56	9.14	0.65	6.44	1.29	5.22
		Intonation fall	8	5	6	8	0.99	1.7	1.48	2.24	7.89	8.49	8.86	1.79	4.22	4.8	7.32	10.2
		Intonation rise	12	15	6	11	0.9	1.02	1.39	1.71	10.8	15.3	8.32	1.88	5.78	8.64	6.88	10.8
		Stress	5	3	6	4	0.57	0.89	1.29	0.71	2.87	2.66	7.75	2.82	1.53	1.5	6.4	1.61
NON-LANGUAGE	Gesture	Iconics	6	1	2	3	209	1.22	1.28	1.5	1.25	1.22	2.56	4.49	6.68	0.69	2.12	2.56
		Metaphorics	4	3	6	2	0.77	1.71	2.59	1.02	3.06	5.13	1.55	2.04	1.64	2.9	1.28	1.17
		Deictics	16	18	10	8	1.48	2.36	1.79	1.62	23.7	42.4	1.79	1.3	1.27	2.4	1.48	7.41
		Beats	9	8	4	1	0.91	1.66	1.45	1.49	8.19	1.32	5.8	1.49	4.38	7.46	4.79	0.85

**Table 1. Modes Used by the Four Teachers in the Lead-in Part of the Teaching (continued...)**

Media		Frequency				Average Duration (Seconds)				Total Annotation Duration (Seconds)				Annotation Duration Percentage (%)				
		T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4	
NON-LANGUAGE (cont.)	Eye Contact	Scan all students	7	8	7	8	3.19	4.1	5.68	3.66	223	328	398	292	11.9	18.5	32.9	16.7
		Gaze one student	8	6	3	5	10.2	5.24	9.92	3.64	81.9	31.4	29.8	18.2	43.8	17.7	24.6	10.4
		Blackboard	0	3	0	2	0	4.5	0	8.43	0	13.5	0	16.9	0	7.63	0	9.63
		Screen	4	7	5	14	1.9	2.03	1.36	2.46	7.61	14.2	6.81	34.4	4.07	8.02	5.63	19.7
	Face	Smile	13	11	5	8	1.76	2.61	3.16	2.38	22.9	28.7	15.8	19	12.2	16.2	13.1	10.9
		Frown	0	1	1	0	0	2.21	9.45	0	0	2.21	9.45	0	0	1.25	7.81	0
	Head	Nod	8	6	3	3	0.54	0.94	0.88	1.09	4.34	5.63	2.64	3.26	2.32	3.18	2.18	1.86
		Body	Slightly forward	2	4	3	7	2.88	1.04	1.73	2.08	5.76	4.17	5.18	1.46	3.08	2.36	4.28
			Approach students	6	5	1	2	1.7	2.5	1.42	2.48	10.2	12.5	1.42	4.95	5.45	7.06	1.17

**Multimodal Discourse Characteristics of Teacher 3**

For Teacher 3, the highest frequency mode is also verbal language (48.6%, 20 times). In the non-language medium, Teacher 3 always scans all students (32.9%, 7 times). Deictics (14.8%, 10 times) is still the most often used gesture. Additionally, Teacher 3 is good at using metaphoric (12.8%, 6 times). An example is shown in an utterance: *Hey, guys, there is a relationship between colors and moods*. When Teacher 3 mentions *relationship*, the abstract concept, she extends her hands with palms opposite and fingers bent. This gesture not only arouses the students’ attention but also externalizes the teacher’s abstract thinking. It is worth noting that Teacher 3 only uses the image once in the lead-in part of the teaching, and no text is shown. She has few body movements, like approaching students (1.17%), indicating that the modal type of Teacher 3 is relatively simple.

**Multimodal Discourse Characteristics of Teacher 4**

There is no doubt that the frequency of Teacher 4’s verbal language is the highest (47.2%, 31 times), followed by looking at the screen (19.7%, 14 times), and the annotation number of texts (12.6%) and images (5.22%) are 7 times, respectively. These data show that the biggest characteristic of Teacher 4 is that she prefers to use PPT as a medium to present the theme-related images and texts, then finally comes up with the question: *Do you have any Resolutions*, which aims to stimulate students’ discussion about the teaching topic *Resolution*. Beyond that, although Teacher 4 keep a certain distance from students; she leans forward many times (8.33%, 7 times) when asking questions or listening to students’ replies and uses a small number of gestures.

**Similarities and Differences of the Four Teachers’ Multimodal Discourse in the Lead-in Part of the Teaching**

According to the above data, verbal language is the most often used language medium of four teachers’ lead-in, whose annotation duration is also the longest. Deictics is the most common used gesture of the four teachers, which means teachers always point their hands to the blackboards, PPT, students or some physically present entities in English class. As to the facial expression, keeping smile displays the four teachers’ affinity and personal charisma, which is also one of the essential qualities of an excellent teacher. Moreover, from the annotation frequency and time of eye contacts, it is obvious that teachers use PPT more

often than blackboard in the lead-in part of teaching, which shows that young developing teachers prefer the multimodal PPT teaching mode.

For the differences of the four teachers' multimodal discourse, their frequency of use of the para-language are different. Teacher 2 and 4 prefer images, while Teachers 1 and 3 incline to use intonation and stress to convey their emotions, especially for the pronunciation of some adjectives, such as *wonderful* and *relaxed*. In the use of gestures, except for the most frequent use of deictics, teachers have different preferences for other types. Teacher 1 and 4 opt to use iconics. Teacher 2 tends to use beats, while Teacher 3 is metaphoric. For the eye contact, Teacher 4 has the highest frequency of looking at the screen. Teacher 2 and 3 usually scan the whole class, and Teacher 1 is personal-oriented.

### **Example for the Synergy of Different Modes**

In conclusion, in the four teachers' lead-in part, the main mode is auditory, including verbal language, stress, intonation fall and rise, etc. They dominate the whole teaching process. The visual mode of the lead-in, consisting of texts, images, gestures, head and body movements, etc., is complementary to the auditory mode.

For example, Teacher 4 leads to the teaching topic *Resolutions* with the plot of the movie *Dangal*. The teacher first raises a question: "What is father's resolution?" After that, the synergy of different modes can be seen in the time-aligned interlinear text (see Figure 1) exported from 00:01:28 to 00:01:31 of Teacher 4's teaching video. For the non-language medium, the teacher's eyes are on the student, who is answering the questions, nodding and smiling simultaneously. Then she repeats the information with a falling tone: *He is going to teach his daughters wrestling*. Meanwhile, she clenches the hands and swings her arms left and right. The use of the iconic gesture provides students a vivid scene of wrestling. Afterwards, the teacher's eyes turn to the screen. The verbal language is transformed into text and finally is presented on the PPT. In a word, different modes complement and coordinate each other to construct meanings, and they integrate into an organic whole, which makes the lead-in part of the teaching more vivid and attractive.

According to Zhang (2009), there are two types of complementary relations between different modes: reinforcement relation and non-reinforcement relation. This conclusion is confirmed in this study. However, it can be further found that there exists complementary and alternative relationships within the same mode. Since both iconics and images can be used to depict the form of physical entities, they are complementary and alternative within the visual mode.

Talk		<u>He is going to teach his daughters...</u>	
Hand gesture		_____	<u>Iconics</u>
Paralanguage		_____	<u>Intonation fall-</u>
Head		_____	<u>Nod</u>
Facial expres..		_____	<u>Smile</u>
Eye contact		<u>Gaze at one student</u>	<u>Looking at the screen-</u>
Body			
Text			
<hr/>			
Talk		<u>wrestling.</u>	<u>And, w...-</u>
Hand gesture		_____	
Paralanguage		<u>Intonation fall</u>	<u>Image-</u>
Head			
Facial expres..			
Eye contact		<u>Looking at the screen</u>	<u>Looking at the screen-</u>
Body			
Text			

**Figure 1. Teacher 4 Resolutions 00:01:28-00:01:31**

## Implications and Conclusion

To summarize, verbal language and deictics are undoubtedly the most frequently used semiotic modes of teachers. The teachers' eyes may rest on a student or look at the blackboard and the PPT screen. Mostly, the teachers keep smiling in the class. The annotation time of other modes is relatively short, but they play a vital role in the synergy of different modes. For example, teachers can emphasize important information by the use of texts, stress, rising or falling intonation, further explain verbal language and abstract concepts with images on PPT, and show encouragement to the students by head and body movements.

From the results of the data, we can see that all the four excellent teachers focus on the interaction with students in the lead-in part of the teaching. That is, teachers explain and lead to the teaching content by a succession of closely-related questions, during which multimodal performers are constantly transferred from the teachers to students. That means in the classroom, the performers of various modes are not only teachers, and the recipients of different modes are not just limited to students. The synergies of both teachers' and students' modes promote each other in the meaning-making, making the teaching and learning process smoother. In view of this, foreign language teachers should provide students with more opportunities to practice and express themselves freely in the class, especially in the lead-in part of the teaching, so that they can become the performers of auditory and visual modes, rather than always the recipients, which helps create an active teaching atmosphere and realizes the interpersonal function of teaching.

The development of multimodal discourse analysis in foreign language teaching has increased the teachers' awareness of intermingling text, audio, video, and images in meaning making. As Kress (2012, p. 337) argued, it "is now impossible to make sense of texts, even of their linguistic parts alone, without having a clear idea of what these other features might be contributing to the meaning of a text". Therefore, only through multimodal discourse research can the meaning construction of classroom discourse be complete and meaningful.

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# Seeking the Foundation of Life: The Meaning of Dignity in Ian McEwan's *The Children Act*

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*[Abstract]* With the intertwining of marital dignity, professional dignity, and belief dignity, McEwan's novel, *The Children Act*, underlines three attributes of dignity, namely the attribute of right, the attribute of emotion, and the attribute of morality. The inherent connection between dignity and well-being is manifested in Fiona and Adam's dignity dilemmas. Fiona's conjugal predicament is a representation of the conflict between free will and marital responsibility, which indicates an infringement of marital dignity and leads to emotional damage. Adam's first life crisis also emphasizes the right attribute of dignity via the imbalance of speech will and belief dignity. The analysis of Fiona and Adam's communicative practices further deepens the emotional attribute of dignity, which is rooted in the necessity and value of empathy. Adam's second crisis of life is not only about the contest of belief/spiritual demand and life need, but also about the game of professional dignity/reputation and human nature. His life tragedy contributes to Fiona's moral epiphany, which enriches the connotation of dignity as a kind of ethical stance and emphasizes that the pursuit of dignity originates from the vulnerability of life. Thus, dignity lays a vital foundation for life and provides an effective way to understand human nature and life essence, as well.

*[Keywords]* *The Children Act*; well-being; dignity; empathy; life

## Introduction

Since the second half of the 20th century, there has been a polarized tendency in people's social cognition of children with the development of society and culture. For one thing, due to their physical and mental characteristics, children are usually considered to be a vulnerable group that need protection. For another, with the increasing juvenile delinquency and youth violence, children have become the source of social anxiety and the threat of moral civilization, which forces the social authorities to increase the efforts of education and restraint on children. Children's well-being has become a key public discourse. Closely related to popular culture in the time, contemporary literature contains obvious realistic meaning. Ian McEwan's novel *The Children Act*, which was published in 2014, is a delicate illustration. In the novel, the promotion of children's well-being is not only a matter of parents' responsibility, but also for the legal authorities to make judgements. When the parents disagree over the guardianship of their children's welfare, it goes to Judge Fiona to rule on the children's interests. This is also one of the key principles in *The Children Act* in 1989 enacted by British government. As the most essential plot, the case of young Adam's blood transfusion has aroused great interest of researchers. Janićijević (2015) manifests postmodern reflection on the relationship between public authority and individual autonomy, according to the description of court proceedings in the novel (pp. 205-214). Soetaert and Rutten (2018) believe that McEwan discusses cultural disputes between art and science from the perspective of literature by utilizing legal and religious narration as rhetorical skills (pp. 67-88). Moreover, Biwu (2015) interprets the meaning and guarding method of children's well-being in the aspect of literary ethics criticism (pp. 53-63). Tianyue (2018) pays attention to the relationship between religion and the body, revealing the constructive relationship between religion and body outlook in modern secular society (pp. 225-237). In general, the

critics usually cut into the cultural and ethical values by analyzing those rhetorical elements of the narration. As a key theme of the story, dignity crises behind main characters' existential and communicative dilemmas have rarely been investigated. It is of necessity and importance to inquire into the narrative of dignity in *The Children Act*, which will reveal the connection between one's well-being and the demand for dignity and the benefit of the construction and reconstruction of social cognition in the moral level, as well.

To explore the meaning of dignity in the novel, this paper first describes Fiona's marital crisis and Adam's first life crisis, which delicately manifest the interpersonal tension via the interplay between free will and dignity. Their ethical choices affirm the attribute of right in the protection of one's dignity. Second, the emotional attribute of Fiona's professional dignity with the failure of Adam's self-construction is examined. The conflicts between belief dignity and life trigger extensive reflection on the supremacy of instrumental rationality in the contemporary urban culture and demands for empathy in daily communication. Finally, the role of dignity is discussed and combined with Adam's second life crisis, which reveals the inherent connection between dignity and well-being. Concisely, the intertwining of marital dignity, professional dignity, and belief dignity in the name of guarding children's welfare in this novel clarifies the practical significance of dignity.

### **Interpersonal Tension in the Interplay between Free Will and Dignity**

Dignity, as a core element of modern civilization, constitutes the spiritual foundation of people to live together. This is vividly illustrated by the Fiona's marital crisis and Adam's life dilemma, for both are in the crisis of sense and sensibility. Realizing his life's limitation, Jack, Fiona's husband, wants to have a hope in his later life, and he proposes to implement an open marriage. This sudden act of safeguarding his sexual freedom out of self-determination is no different from "betrayal" to Fiona, which seriously infringes on her marital dignity. Even though Jack has not taken substantive extramarital action, she feels deeply insulted when pondering his proposal. The obligation to loyalty and guardianship emphasized by the modern marriage system has been abandoned, which throws Fiona into a state of humiliation. As marriage dignity plays a major role in maintaining the intimate relationship, respecting each other's value is essential to guarantee the harmony of the conjugal relationship.

Why does Fiona, a famous judge of family court who is well versed in family ethics, have trouble dealing with her own marriage problems? One important reason is that she values her professional dignity highly. Even in a marital dilemma, Fiona still maintains the professional dignity of a "judge" at all times, which is a manifestation of her restrained reactions, like not daring to release her sorrows by wine. Outstanding work ability can bring her respect and affirmation from others. To a certain extent, this kind of satisfaction provides some spiritual delight and comfort for her life and then becomes her secret way to transfer her marital anxiety. However, the comfort coming from professional dignity also entails disturbing thoughts, like her situation in the tough case of Jehovah's Witnesses and Adam's blood transfusion.

Fiona's professional dilemma constitutes the second climax of the dignity narrative in this novel, which focuses on the well-being of Adam. In the case of Adam's blood transfusion, Adam seems to give up his life voluntarily, and this is regarded as a feat of sacrifice for faith. Nevertheless, the attending doctor, who takes saving lives as his priority, thinks that this would stifle the huge potential contained in life itself. As we know, the World Medical Federation in 1949 added that according to the Geneva Declaration, the main responsibility of doctors is to provide qualified medical services to patients under the premise of sympathy and respect for the dignity of patients, making full use of the advantages of technology and moral independence. In 1964, the federation required doctors to protect life, health, personal interests, and the

dignity of the human subject. Thus, when life being and the well-being of dignity are incompatible with each other, medical science advocates that life is the prerequisite and being alive is the greatest blessing. In this sense, Adam's doctor, on behalf of the hospital, is reasonable to seek help from the Higher Family Court, hoping to obtain the right to save young Adam's life through legal regulation.

Respecting others is an important aspect of dignity, emphasizing the non-infringement of the other's self-will or the protection for free choice. There is an essential question to be clarified: is Adam's faith choice based on his personal free will, especially his death determination? This is also the contention of the hospital defense lawyer, Mark Bernard, during the trial. In court, Mark points out sharply that Adam is afraid that his parents will abandon him because of his refusal of martyrdom; thus, giving up blood transfusion is not a free choice (McEwan, 2017, p. 86). In fact, Adam's parents and the elder of his religious community, who announce themselves as the teenager's guardians, do not pay enough attention to Adam's true mind. The youngster's growing environment directly affects his subjective world. Largely, Adam is willing to martyr himself, for he is worried about losing the love of his parents. In this aspect, his parents may unintentionally deprive the youth of his freedom, to a certain extent. The elder of Adam's religious community also ignores the fact of the inherent and inalienable connection between dignity and life when talking about one's life well-being. In contrast, Fiona's sincere talk with Adam in hospital is of great significance. Her face-to-face interaction with Adam is a manifestation of bounded rationality (Duoyi, 2018, pp. 31-33), and it endows Adam with the right to life. This communicative behavior helps her to ensure Adam, who seems intellectual enough to make a rational choice, does not well understand the meaning of death, and he is still full of enthusiasm for life.

Dignity is not the opposite of freedom, and the protection for dignity helps to realize the individual's freedom in turn. Fiona's interview with Adam in the hospital is an expression of respecting Adam's free will, which highlights his subjectivity, laying a foundation for the reconstruction of Adam's life dignity. For Adam, interactive communication with Fiona fully embodies the other's concern for him and represents the right attribute of dignity. In other words, this act is an expression of respecting Adam's freedom of speech will, stressing his right to decide his own life. However, it is worth noting that a human's well-being is not only about the existence of life itself, but also about the caring of one's mind. Adam, whose life is out of danger, has not realized his real sense of well-being. This is mainly because he does not have the ability of self-construction, and his spiritual appeal leads him to fall completely into an emotional vortex.

### **Emotional Depth of Dignity under Self-construction**

In the protection of Adam's well-being, both the protector and the protected experience some emotional involvement. At first, the interview in the hospital fully demonstrates Fiona's respect for Adam as a rational individual. She talks about poetry and music with Adam, disregarding her professional identity as a judge and her spiritual superiority as a mature adult. She even volunteers to sing for him faithfully. Apparently, Fiona's interview with Adam leads Adam to a fresh, new emotional world with curiosity and passion. However, as McEwan points out in an interview, if someone's faith is interrupted and does not find a suitable replacement, he or she may be deprived of happiness, for the mutation of their social connections makes them unable to obtain life consolation. As Adam has been restricted to the religious world for a long time, he has obviously cognitive limitations. His interaction with Fiona is of both hope and shock. On the one hand, he realizes that religion does not always protect the welfare of the believer, which is certified by the fact that his originally stalwart parents cry with joy when he is rescued from leukemia by violating the blood transfusion taboo. On the other hand, the communication with Fiona arouses his strong curiosity, and

he is eager to discover everything in the secular world. As Xiaomin (2018) put it about the construction of subjectivity, “When the initiative of the subject is restricted by a single authoritative discourse, the individual’s self-recognition is easy to fall into the trap of dualistic thinking” (p. 132). The talking in the hospital is far from constructive to Adam, and he is still unable to achieve a clear and stable mentality after the collision of multiple values in his mind.

Adam, who has just left his religious belief and steps into the secular world, needs a spiritual guide. Thus, he longs to seek spiritual support from Fiona, who is supposed to be his mentor. Yet, his need for affective interaction with Fiona, especially in the form of writing letters, gets refusals later, which directly leads him to a state of perplexity and distress. In other words, Fiona lacks empathy for Adam, who just wants to seek the truth, and this leads him to be deeply trapped in the spiritual crisis. Though disassembling the letters, Fiona fails to understand Adam’s true intention. Therefore, she thinks it will be better not to write back. Without considering the impact of her indifference on Adam’s psychological world, she deals with this issue from the perspective of instrumental rationality. In her opinion, the protection for life and well-being has ended with the conclusion of the trial. Even if Adam goes to the hotel where Fiona is staying and forcefully facilitates the second talk with her, Fiona fails to give effective feedback in time due to the misunderstanding of Adam’s real need.

The realization of dignity not only includes the respect from the other, but also the respect and perception that one offers to others. As a judge, deeply immersed in instrumental rationalism, Fiona is accustomed to dealing with emotional matters with rational thinking patterns. When facing Adam, who is full of curiosity and needs spiritual care urgently, Fiona first concerns her own interests: will the close contact with Adam make her marriage relationship worse? Will this affair (the subconscious kiss goodbye) stigmatize her professional reputation? At this stage, Fiona cares more about her reputation than Adam’s misery. In the game of self-interests and altruism, the former wins for the absence of empathy. However, when Fiona learns from her colleagues that Adam refuses a blood transfusion at the second life crisis and decides to die on his own, she is no longer able to sustain herself rationally, feeling guilty about Adam who regards her as a psychological instructor. This highlights the emotional attribute of dignity.

The sense of shame or guilt means returning to oneself, namely having a conversation with one’s internalized otherness, which is helpful to enhance self-consciousness. As his calling for help from Fiona has been ignored, Adam has to return to the previous religious world to gain some spiritual safety. His death can be regarded as suicide out of desperation and huge misery. Fiona feels quite shameful and guilty after realizing the truth in Adam’s death. It is noteworthy that her emotional response to the death of Adam contains something positive for one’s maturity and social harmony. Scheler (1999) emphasizes shame can prevent people from sinking to low values and inspire people to strive for high values (p. 533). Zahavi (2014) points out that shame is the overall loss of self-esteem or self-respect and the painful awareness of personal inadequacy and lack, which indicates a kind of self-alienation (p. 208). In fact, this alienation is a sense of isolation latent in modern rational civilization, revealing modern people’s demand for respect and love. As an extreme form of dialogue, Adam’s death contributes to Fiona’s realization of her responsibilities and sense of morality. In a certain sense, guilt shows that Fiona has realized the importance of empathy for the other. Simmel indicates that the feeling of shame and guilt has a dual function, namely rebuilding personal identity and stabilizing social interaction. Therefore, Fiona’s tears are not only full of sorrow, but also of self-reflection, and, thus, they have the function of purifying her mind.

The life-and-death ethical experience relates to the core quality of human nature, namely kindness. In other words, this tragic experience awakens Fiona’s empathy, bringing a transition to achieve her self-

growth. Just as the “21st College Student International Literary Festival” in China in 2018 commented, the purpose of *The Children Act* is not to reveal the restrictions and oppression of religion on people, but to reveal the entrapment the mutual reliance and betrayal of the people behind the writing about the warmth, coldness, and fragility in human nature. The exploration of dignity narration deepens the emotional depth of the novel and enlightens the significance of empathy. Empathy, a kind of moral attribute, promotes positive reinforcement of social dignity, emphasizing the harmony of self-other relationship.

### **Dignity as a Moral Cornerstone of Human Nature**

Dignity constitutes a vital part of people’s well-being, and it lays an indispensable foundation for the existence and development of life. From the main characters’ ethical choices in the novel, it can be concluded that they all relate to the issue of what is vital to life. Jack, Fiona’s husband, wants to pursue an exciting life in his late years, yet the so-called sexual freedom brings humiliation to his wife. When they fall into kind of cold war because of the above reason, it is listening to his wife’s tearing herself apart with respect and concern that eases their marriage on the verge of breakdown. Moreover, Adam can easily achieve physical recovery with the help of doctor’s therapy, yet his spiritual world gradually falls into a mess that is hard to renovate. Adam’s practice of giving up his life when facing the second choice of blood transfusion is an obvious proof. Lacking spiritual support, he is unable to come to terms with his crisis of belief dignity, and this tragedy of life directly stems from a sense of “unworthiness.” The issues raised above mirror the affinity between dignity and one’s well-being.

Spiritual support usually plays an important role in one’s development. As for Adam’s death, the lack of concern from others is also an essential cause. Some readers may argue that the judge, Fiona, does not have the duty to care about Adam when the case is finished. It sounds reasonable. As an unlimited subject bears unlimited responsibility, Fiona, who is seen as spiritual master by Adam, is not a goddess and does not have to bear unlimited responsibility. In this sense, she seems to have no responsibility for Adam’s death. Nevertheless, “if responsibility is limited, then the conscience’s evidence of responsibility will be planted on that limited point, and we will not become infinitely good creatures” (Zaifu, & Gang, 2011, p. 35). Although Fiona’s legal responsibility is limited, the core of her professional identity is still the existence of human nature, and she ignores the potential continuity of moral responsibility. In this sense, Fiona bears the inescapable responsibility for the interaction of Adam’s tragedy.

Dignity is a projection of humanity concerning human nature. As Kant puts it, no man can treat a man merely as a means (either to himself or to others); he must also be treated as an end. It is only in this way that his personality can be formed, and in this way one can sublimate oneself above other inhuman but useful beings in the world. Fiona, who is in a marital crisis, escapes from her marriage problem by throwing herself into work. To some extent, her decision to talk with Adam face to face is also a refuge that comes out of a personal emotional crisis. Therefore, in the first phase of their relationship, Fiona regards Adam as a means rather than a purpose, which means she does not fully respect Adam’s human dignity. In the second phase of their relationship, Fiona’s one-way withdrawal is also out of consideration of her personal reputation and lacks empathy for Adam’s spiritual plight. Her kiss still gives Adam a means of emotional comfort, which plays as the last stay to destroy Adam. All these communicational behaviors are without enough respect for the youth to lead to the life tragedy in the end of the novel.

Dignity closely relates to well-being and constitutes an important cornerstone of a human’s development in society. As a positive psychological ability, dignity contains the power to activate morality and can magnify one’s happiness. In a contemporary society with diverse values, dignity mainly refers to

self-esteem and mutual respect from ethical choices instead of pride or pride in moral practice. Dignity sometimes means a permanent internal value, relating to human virtue. Dignity is also a manifestation of character or ability to gain respect. Combined with the context of modern use, dignity cannot be interpreted independently of social relations, for it reflects respect for others and self-affirmation. Briefly, dignity is not a question of facts, but a question on one's feelings about facts. In modern times where technological rationality is supreme, biological science can tell us how to extend human life, but it cannot tell us whether we should do in this or not. In the opinion of Aristotle and Kant, morality not only embodies human nature, but also gives us dignity. Therefore, dignity, a kind of humanistic wisdom, may lead us to be a kind and helpful person.

### Conclusion

Ian McEwan, known as socially responsible literary intellectual, shows his humanistic care in his masterpiece *The Children Act*, which can be read as a social novel around dignity. Centering different kinds of dignity dilemmas faced by Fiona and Adam, this paper delicately manifests conflicts of free will and dignity of marriage, digs into the emotional depth of professional dignity, and explicates dignity as a moral cornerstone of harmonious social life with reference to the connection between dignity and well-being. Those dignity crises throughout the novel not only demonstrate a practical meaning of dignity from its attributes of right, emotion, and morality, but also construct an ethical view of interaction between one's self and others to enlighten the caring communication.

As a reflection of reality, literature can vividly reveal concrete educational and social issues. On the basis of realistic family cases, *The Children Act* is more appealing and thought-provoking concerning the cultivation of children and well-being of individuals in modern society of multiple values. As for seeking the foundation of life for Fiona and Adam, the meaning of dignity is explicated by affirmation of sincere respect for others' rights and keen perception of self-worth. A more humanistic and affective view bridges the gaps between law and reality with the exploration of dignity in the novel, which to some extent contributes to discourse equality in the power structure and emotional support in interpersonal communication.

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# Three Aspects of Iconicity in the Irreversibility of English Binomials

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**[Abstract]** *The pair of words, or English binomial, joined together by and (or), is in a relatively fixed and parallel relation, such as man and boy, less likely being boy and man. To reveal some of the mystery behind the word order of English binomials, iconicity is considered for discussion. This paper aims to give some explanations about why there is word-order issue tied to English binomials, through collecting data from English corpora and then examining three aspects of iconicity, namely iconicity in spatial sequence, temporal sequence, and cultural conventions.*

**[Keywords]** *iconicity; binomials; reversibility; COCA*

## Introduction

Binomials are a subclass of coordinate constructions that coordinate two single words (that are of the same part of speech) with the coordinators *and*, *or* and others alike. The definition of English binomials can also go like this: “the sequence of two words pertaining to the same form-class, placed on an identical level of syntactic hierarchy, and ordinarily connected by some kind of lexical link” (Malkiel, 1959). It is common to binomials as paired words consisting of the same class of words. Therefore, the configuration of the binomials is concise and clear enough: conjoining two words from the same lexical class, such as noun, verb, adjective, and so on. For example, in the binomial *safe and sound*, the two words both serve as adjectives to denote the meaning of being intact. Other familiar binomials can be *day and night*, *ladies and gentlemen*, and so forth.

As a special form of lexical chunks, English binomials have been studied from different perspectives. As the two coordinated words in a single binomial belong to the same word category, it follows that binomials can be divided into different coordinated structures according to the word categories that the linked words belong to. For instance, *safe and sound* is typically an adjective phrase, while *wait and see* fits into the verb construction. For structure analysis, Wang (1986) looked specifically at the motivation underlying the echoic structures like *more and more*, *again and again*, and so forth. Zhang (2000) made a comparison between English binomials and Chinese coordinate compounds from different angles, exploring similarities and differences and their potential influence on learners of both languages. Another criterion to breakdown the English binomial family is to examine the semantic relations between the two coordinated words; thus, *safe and sound* is a synonymous structure and *wait and see* is a hendiadys structure. The aim of this study is to examine another property of English paired words termed reversibility, and to illustrate the reasons behind reversibility or irreversibility, iconicity is introduced for discussion.

## The Definition of Irreversibility and Iconicity

Regarding English binomials, irreversibility refers to the fixed sequence of the syntactic-identical words which are coordinated by the words “and” or “or.” While its counterpart, reversibility, is a denotation of the reverse order of the two coordinated words that is totally acceptable. In this sense, some binomials are characterized to be the extremes of completely reversible or completely irreversible. For instance, *to and*

*fro* is a term that does not entail the reverse order of *fro and to*, thus bearing the name of *freeze*. According to Corpus of Contemporary American English (Davies, 2008), the phrase *to and fro* has the occurrence of 753, while *fro and to* has only two occurrences. Another example is law and order (occurrence: 1997) which seldom occurs in the sequence of order and law (occurrence: 9). As for the reversible or unfreezing ones, examples can be *fruits and vegetables*, *red and green*, and so forth. As is mentioned above, most binomials are not in the state of the two extremes. There is a cline between the two extremes of complete irreversibility and the complete reversibility (Mollin, 2014). That means preference one order could be demonstrated in the cline of reversibility, a concept which was first introduced by (Malkiel, 1959). Set in the middle range of the cline, the binomials are called more or less reversible or irreversible. There are other studies aimed at revealing more about this very property (Lohmann, 2012; Mollin, 2013, 2014). Mollin (2013), for example, made a revelation that the extent of reversibility or irreversibility of a single binomial is likely to change with the passage of time, with some reversible one being more reversible later.

Another term that deserves much illustration is iconicity. As Croft (2003) put it, the structure of language somehow mirrors human experiences. Put another way, iconicity means the configuration of language shares some similarities with people's experience and conception they have in their mind. In a broader sense, the concept of iconicity itself is based on the embodied philosophy. Taking iconicity as this fundamental viewpoint, embodied philosophy places humans above the other things in the world and regards humans as the core of the universe and the measure of all things. Serving as an important role in functional-cognitive linguistics, iconicity refers to the similarity and analogy that is noticed between form and meaning (Wang, & Liu 2007). It is much like a term that goes contrary to arbitrariness, for there is an underlying principle that coordinates the meaning and form closely together. Research into iconicity has been a frequent topic concerning morphology, syntax, linguistic typology, and, undoubtedly, cognitive linguistics (Ding, & Qin, 2009; Shen, 1993). As a result, further study of iconicity brings about a new field for linguistics, and there is no denying that iconicity does equip language signs with a more systematic and sound theory, as well as a great amount of material.

To narrow the topic down even further, iconicity facilitates the English learning to a large extent, informing the learners about the cognitive mechanism that dominates the English rules. In the domain of cognitive linguistics, the iconicity is always attached to the language sign and the meaning it intends to convey. Generally speaking, iconicity is a rather common feature entailed within language. Regarding pathology, it is of paramount significance to lay emphasis on those basic rules related to iconicity. Besides, a general knowledge of the coming-age of the rules is also required. Born with the development of cognitive study, iconicity reveals the intimate relationship between language and mental activity, with the experience people have in their daily life manifested in the language they use. Iconicity is embodied in the language structure, especially in the syntactic structure, indicating that there is always a motivation linking people's life to the syntactic structure. All in all, iconicity means the configuration of language shares some similarities with people's experiences and conceptions in their minds. From the perspective of daily life, symmetry always has its say. Left is often accompanied by right. Similarly, big often comes into one's mind along with the concept of small. Just as our physical body indicates, the body itself, it is a perfect example of symmetry.

In the light of the binomial, the sequence of it can be explained by iconicity. This also happens in Chinese. Examples such as “清清楚楚” (meaning *clear enough*) and “左邻右舍” (meaning *neighbors*) shows evidence that Chinese phrases have preferred sequences, just like English binomials do. It does not

take too much of a stretch of the imagination to come up with the idea that languages resemble each other regardless of distinction of language. In other words, word order embodies human's cognition, which is conveyed by a language's structure, as well as the format. In terms of binomials, the abundant evidence of iconicity exemplifies the bound relationship between binomials and iconicity. Examples such as now and then, day and night are all convincing enough. In the following discussion, this paper will illustrate the word sequence in light of different aspects concerning iconicity.

### **Iconicity in Irreversibility of English Binomials**

Concerning the rules lying behind the irreversibility of binomials, a variety of theories are adopted. Nevertheless, no matter how diversified those theories may seem to be, the underlying rule that is the most fundamental and important is the theory about iconicity. The following sessions, therefore, are devoted to the explanation of the word order of English binomials in light of iconicity.

#### ***Iconicity in Spatial Sequence***

It is noticeable that people's lexicon has its origin in the daily, and the initials ones are stemmed from the comprehension of oneself and the space order (Wang, & Liu, 2007). It is in this way that people enlarge their vocabulary through understanding and imaging. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) pointed out that all the conceptual events and status are organized by conception. People take their own bodies as the prototype of cognition. Symmetry demonstrates in the left and right side and asymmetry happens inside and outside. Taking themselves as a criterion to measure things in the whole, people become the center of the world, including their bodies. So, in English as well as in other languages, the orientation of up and front is always taken as positive, and down and behind are in most cases considered negative.

Regarding oneself as the standard of the measurement of all the things in the world, human beings have sensed that they are walking vertically and, thus, take it for granted that the vertical is the basic dimension to judge other things. That is called the vertical latitude. The vertical dimension, to be more specific, the dimension of up and down is the result of the sensation of universal gravitation. The basic concept of space is the within a certain range, that is to be under the sky and above the ground. Because eyes are situated in the relatively high position of our body and have the direction of looking forward, along with the evolution of human race and the gradual development of human language, this kind of preference for up and front has reflected on people's mental lexicon. Unconsciously, when they adopted these words, especially these binomials that have the concern of word sequence, they do not even realize that the sequence, indeed, has its set and fixed form in their minds. Many binomials, with regard to dimension, have shown great preference to one order. *Up and down* and *ups and downs* have a greater tendency for the order and another way around is less prevalent. According to COCA, *up and down* has the frequency of 15444 while *down and up* only possesses the frequency of 170. It is reasonable to draw the conclusion that there is a stronger tendency for the former than the latter one.

Here are other examples of this kind. *Above and below* has 771 occurrences in COCA (Davies, 2008) while its counterpart only has a frequency of 66, which indicates that there is a gap between the preferred and the less used one, and its disparity should never be neglected since it is the evidence for iconicity in spatial sequence. For *high and low*, there are 1397 occurrences in COCA. However, the opposite order, namely the *low and high* possesses the frequency of 268. Beside the preference pertaining to spatial sequence, these figures tell that irreversibility is not the matter of yes or no, but a preference for one sequence or another.

With respect to physical distance, closeness is far more obvious and positive than the further one. The cognition of positives to negatives determines the spatial rules from closeness to distance, and furthermore, the preference for the small ones to large ones is then settled down because from the angle of space and time, as well as our experience, closeness means the presentation of the large, while distance signifies relatively small ones. Example can be *here and there, now and then, this and that, and home and abroad*, etc. For better contrast of occurrences of some binomials mentioned above, Table 1 is provided.

**Table 1. Frequency of English Binomials Mentioned**

	Frequency in COCA
Up and down	15444
Down and up	170
Above and below	771
Below and above	66
High and low	1397
Low and high	268
Home and abroad	950
Abroad and home	2

***Iconicity in Temporal Sequence***

As one of the essential concepts in cognition among human beings, temporal sequence should be noticed. Different from Chinese that is parataxis and does not attach great importance to the use of linking words for the meaning, English is hypotaxis, where the linking words play vital roles in coordinating the sentences. As a result, English is not closely related to time, whereas binomials alone are highly dependent on the sequence of constituents (Wang, & Liu, 2007). In fact, it is the reflection of people’s understanding and cognition towards natural phenomena and experience of daily activities. For natural phenomena, some binomials are in the order of natural happenings, such as *sunrise and sunset*, because it is a common sense that sunrise happens before sunset. *Birth and death* embodies the same essence as *sunrise and sunset* does. Beside natural happenings, activities issued by oneself are also in set order. The first instance is the words of continuous actions that cannot be separated. *Cut and carve, come and go* and *wait and see* are examples. *Out and about* has some distinctiveness for it is not only bound by iconicity of temporal sequence, but also the metrical-phonological constraints of numbers of syllables; that is, words before *and* are supposed to contain fewer syllables than the ones after *and*. The second category would be that two words are in causal relation (e.g. *wait and see, rise and shine*). Another sequence, *father and son*, is subtler, in a way that is universally known. *Father* is usually put before *son* and the old always are placed before the young, considering the natural animals’ growth . For a clearer comparison of the occurrences of some binomials mentioned above, Table 2 is provided.

**Table 2. Frequency of English Binomials Mentioned**

	Frequency in COCA
Sunrise and sunset	151
Sunset and sunrise	32
Birth and death	333
Death and birth	24
Father and son	1569
Son and father	24

### ***Iconicity in Cultural Conventions***

The word sequence of English binomials is also bound by cultural conventions and is one of the evident manifestations in iconicity (Zhang, Zhao, & Liu, 2006). Just as many nations, English-speaking countries have the tradition of showing great respect to the elder ones and care to the young children. It is viable to examine the sequence of *father and son* with reference to the iconicity of temporal sequence, but it is also plausible to reckon that their sequence is bound by the cultural convention (here special attention should be paid to *old and young*. According to cultural convention, *old and young* is supposed to outperform *young and old* when occurrence is concerned. Statistics show, however, the opposite happens.) In English, superiority and inferiority are embodied as well. One kind is the regard to hierarchies in social status such as *teachers and students*. In this case, superiority is judged by knowledge and experience, rather than age. Another criterion is the deep-rooted gender prejudice for women who are often in a relatively low position, and people do not even realize when they make such subtle judgement. A body of examples are presented. *Brothers* are placed before *sisters*. As is often the case, *husband* precedes *wife*. A well-known expression in public speeches ladies and gentlemen is frequently adopted, and it does not abide by the rule of cultural conventions. The same goes to the widely known term is the *bride and groom*. Though they do not fit into the cultural convention rules, they are bound by politeness and convention and strongly dominated by phonetic rules. Also, for clearer comparison of occurrences of some binomials mentioned above, Table 3 is provided.

**Table 3. Frequency of English Binomials Mentioned**

	<b>Frequency in COCA</b>
old and young	241
young and old	1097
Ladies and gentlemen	10310
Gentlemen and ladies	54
Brothers and sisters	1607
Sisters and brothers	403

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, this paper gives some explanations about why some English binomials present in a preferred word sequence as it is in light of iconicity. Binomials are a special kind of lexicon that is closely related to human's daily experience, body structure, cultural convention, and so on, and iconicity is introduced here to give explanation. To be more specific, the word sequence of English binomials is bound by sequence rules connected to iconicity. However, it may be more proper to say that the sequence of words is the result of all the factors working together. As mentioned above, there are examples that are the outcome of combined working factors like out and about, ladies and gentlemen, and before and after, since other rules may get involved in. The outcome of this sequence is the result of syllable weight as well. Therefore, when encountering a new and novel binomial, we have reason to predict that its word order might be reversible, taking our cognition and experience into consideration.

The conclusion may deliver some hints for the learning or teaching of English binomials, especially in the case of the acquisition of English as the second language. English paired words, as a special form among the coordinate constructions or lexical chunks, call for attention on part of English learners. Just as a body of studies have done to discover learning regularities and then facilitate the learning of lexical chunks (Towell, Hawkins, & Bazergui, 1996; Wood, 2006), illustration of word sequences of English

binomials in light of iconicity is highly likely to help learners better understand the word sequence as it is and guide learners to produce binomials with authenticity.

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# Linguistic Functions and Features of Hedges in *A Streetcar Named Desire*

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**[Abstract]** Based on the representative hedges chosen from *A Streetcar Named Desire*, this paper examines the linguistic functions and features of the hedges. It is found that three types of functions are brought about by hedges, namely, informative, interpersonal, and discourse functions, and hedges are featured linguistically on lexical, syntactic and discourse levels.

**[Keywords]** hedges; *A Streetcar Named Desire*; linguistic functions; linguistic features

## Introduction

“Language without hedging is language without life” (Skelton, 1988, p. 38). To hedge (or hedging) is an indispensable linguistic strategy employed in the process of communication and can make utterances more polite, meaningful, and tactful. Hedges have drawn great interest of linguists at home and abroad since the 1970s, and hedges have been investigated from different linguistic perspectives. In recent years, applications of hedges are gradually gaining popularity among linguists. A lot of studies on hedges have been conducted in different genres, ranging from formal writings or texts to informal discourses. Based on a literature review, it is found that the genres cover academic articles (Crompton, 1997; Huang, 2002; Hyland, 1994), news reports (Zhang, 1999; Zuck, & Zuck, 1986), business advertisements (Geis, 1982; Zhong, & Wang, 2000), medical discourse (Dubois, 1987; Jiang, & Tao, 2007) and courtroom settings (Cui, & Miao, 2009; Cui, 2012). Undoubtedly, hedges in practical texts have been examined and discussed profoundly. However, employment of hedges in literary texts hasn’t receive much attention, let alone the systematic studies in different literary forms.

Drama is a literary form dominated by dialogue. Thus, it is inevitable for the characters to employ hedges frequently in their utterances, which indicates the necessity and operability for the study of this linguistic strategy in dramatic texts. Selecting *A Streetcar Named Desire* as the source of data, this paper attempts to conduct an analysis of the linguistic functions and features of the hedges used in this text.

## Linguistic Functions of Hedges in *A Streetcar Named Desire*

With reference to the theoretical frameworks of language functions before (Jakobson, 1960; Halliday, 1994) and with the present study taken into consideration, the functions of hedges in this paper are classified into three broad categories: informative, interpersonal, and discourse .

### **Informative Functions**

Communicative intentions and effects in hedges bring about the consideration that the informative functions of hedges are further divided into two types: making things fuzzier and making things less fuzzy.

*Blanche: They were some papers.*

*Stanley: You mean they’re no longer existing?*

*Blanche: They probably are, somewhere. (Williams, 2009, p. 23)*

Stanley asks Blanche to hand over the legal papers connected with the plantation in case Blanche possesses all estate alone. Obviously, Blanche is unwilling to present the papers and deliberately indicates that she doesn't understand what he is talking about. "They were some papers" implies Blanche's vagueness to this problem while Stanley is determined to figure out where the papers actually are. Since Stanley doesn't seem to compromise, Blanche employs *probably* to indirectly respond to Stanley's request. The accession of the plausible shield *probably* increases fuzziness in Blanche's utterance and proves that she prefers not to provide precise information.

*Stella: No, it isn't all right for anybody to make such a terrible row, but - people do sometimes. Stanley's always smashed things ... (Williams, 2009, p. 41)*

Stella is attempting to strengthen Stanley's savage image. Hedge *always* is an adverb of frequency which intensifies the degree of brutality. It manages to decrease fuzziness of the statement and helps to satisfy Stella's communicative intention.

### ***Interpersonal Functions***

Hedges help the characters to maintain harmonious relationship with both family and non-family members. Specifically, interpersonal functions of hedges in this paper can be classified into two categories in view of their communicative goals: showing politeness to improve interpersonal relationships and making utterances appropriate.

*Blanche: Yes. I ran into Shep Huntleigh – I ran into him on Biscayne Boulevard, on Christmas Eve, about dusk ... getting into his car – Cadillac convertible; must have been a block long!*

*Stella: I should think it would have been - inconvenient in traffic! (Williams, 2009, p. 43)*

What Blanche tries to emphasize is that she is wealthy enough to take a trip to such a famous resort and charming enough to attract such a rich man. Stella totally understands Blanche's intention, but doesn't want to expose her lie in order to save Blanche's face. Therefore, three plausible shields are employed in Stella's utterance. *I think* together with two modal verbs *should* and *would* assists Stella to avoid providing a categorical statement. By using hedges which are of indeterminacy, Stella succeeds in achieving some degree of flexibility for her point of view, and Blanche can take advantage of the ambiguity for self-protection. Thus, Blanche's face is saved without possible conflict.

*Stanley: There is such a thing in this state of Louisiana as the Napoleonic code, according to which whatever belongs to my wife is also mine - and vice versa.*

*Blanche: My, but you have an impressive judicial air! (Williams, 2009, p. 22)*

Stanley is arguing with Blanche for justifying his legitimate inheritance of the fortune, so he has to spare no effort to convince Blanche that his argument is supported by justifiable evidence. Constrained by the attribute shield *according to*, Stanley's utterance sounds as if it were not produced by Stanley himself but belonged to some other authority, someone not specifically directed. The hedge not only distances Stanley from possible commitment to the proposition, but also indicates that the proposition is credible. Considering the fact that Blanche is his sister-in-law, Stanley has to express himself in a decent way. Therefore, hedges can make utterances appropriate without damaging harmonious interpersonal relationships, as well.

### **Discourse Functions**

Based on the principle of discourse coherence, hedges help to coordinate turns of utterances in a sequence. Therefore, discourse functions of hedges are displayed. Specifically, hedges can also be used to make one's narration more coherent and initiate a question.

*Blanche: Will Stanley like me, or will I be just a visiting in-law, Stella? I couldn't stand that.*

*Stella: You'll get along fine together, if you'll just try not to - well - compare him with men that we went out with at home. (Williams, 2009, p. 10)*

Faced with Blanche's anxiety and question, Stella offers a definite answer but can't give a precise reason immediately. The hedge **well** functions as a coherent device to progress Stella's narration, which implies her meta-pragmatic awareness of hesitation for deliberation. It turns out that this hedge makes the narration more coherent and organized so as to manage the discourse effectively.

*Blanche: Is that coke for me?*

*Stella: Not for anyone else!*

*Blanche: Why, you precious thing, you! Well, is it just coke?*

*Stella: You mean you want a shot in it! (Williams, 2009, p. 53)*

Questioning manages what the hearer hears, so the strategy of asking a question is of importance. When Blanche asks whether the coke is for her, Stella responds impatiently. To ease Stella's anger, Blanche makes fun of her and initiates a new question. **Well** signals the beginning of a new topic and enables Blanche to initiate her question naturally. The choice of this hedge makes the new question not so abrupt and the new topic more salient. In addition, this type of hedge works as a transition, contributing much to a coherent discourse, as well as a smooth interaction.

### **Linguistic Features of Hedges in *A Streetcar Named Desire***

*A Streetcar Named Desire* is full of daily conversations that are expressed in colloquial and everyday languages. Therefore, the use of hedges in the text shows the typical features of daily language. The following parts show how hedges display linguistic features on lexical, syntactic and discourse levels.

#### **Lexical Level**

To make communicative intentions realized easily, the speaker tends to employ the same word or phrase in a row successively. Repetition of hedges helps to enhance the communicative effects. Besides, daily conversation is featured by simplified forms of some words, most of which appear in the form of abbreviations or variants of the original ones.

*Blanche: Yes. There's **so much - so much** confusion in the world ... Thank you for being so kind! I need kindness now. (Williams, 2009, p. 39)*

*Stella: ... He was as good as a lamb when I came back and he's really **very very** ashamed of himself. (Williams, 2009, p. 41)*

The repetition of hedged expressions **so much** and adaptor **very** respectively emphasizes the intensity of Blanche's despair and Stella's partiality for Stanley. Out of the consideration for diversity, hedges in written discourse or formal styles of oral English are less able to be employed repeatedly. Comparatively, repetition of hedges found in informal spoken language helps strengthen the intensity of a speaker's assertion without disrupting his or her psychological process of producing the following utterance:

*Blanche: Well, I thought you'd volunteer that information – if you wanted to tell me. (Williams, 2009, p. 7)*

*Eunice: Sure, honey. Why don't you set down?*

*Blanche: What I meant was I'd like to be left alone. (Williams, 2009, p. 5)*

Plausible shield **would** is shortened to **'d**. Through abbreviation, the Principle of Economy is observed and the same illocutionary force is achieved as that of **would**. Sometimes, **would** is abbreviated to **'d** in fixed collocations, like **would like to do**.

*Blanche: ... That I am absconding with something, attempting some kind of treachery on my sister? ... (Williams, 2009, p. 23)*

*Blanche: ... There was something kinda different about the boy, a nervousness, a softness and tenderness which wasn't like a man's, although he wasn't the least bit effeminate-looking - still - that thing was there .... (Williams, 2009, p. 66)*

Some hedges are variants of their original forms, as shown in these examples. **Some kind of** is a variant deriving from **kind of**, in which the adaptor **some** further modifies the degree of the proposition. The adaptor **kind of** is also frequently transformed into **kinda** in oral English.

### **Syntactic Level**

Syntax studies the rules that govern the way words are combined to form sentences. These rules include word order, sentence structure, and relationships between words and sentence elements. As far as hedges are concerned, the employment of hedges must comply with some syntactic rules grammatically or structurally. In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, some parts of the hedged expressions can be omitted without hindering the hearer's interpretation of the proposition, and past tense can bring about specific communicative effects.

*Blanche: Not that much?*

*Mitch: No. **More**. (Williams, 2009, p. 63)*

*Blanche: Oh, those pretty, pretty little candles! Oh, don't burn them, Stella.*

*Stella: I **certainly** will. (Williams, 2009, p. 79)*

*Blanche: I have never been so surprised in my life.*

*Stanley: I **guess** not. (Williams, 2009, p. 91)*

To make utterance concise, some information mentioned before will be omitted through the employment of hedges. Usually, an ellipsis is related to adverbial verbs, like adverbs of degree **more** and **certainly**. Plausible shields can also be useful because the following objects or object clauses can be omitted just as **I guess**. An ellipsis of hedged parts is one typical feature of the employment of hedges, which makes it convenient for the speaker to express his or her idea with the least effort.

*Blanche: ... You haven't asked me how I happened to get away from the school before the spring term ended.*

*Stella: Well, I **thought** you'd volunteer that information - if you wanted to tell me.*

*Blanche: You thought I'd been fired?*

*Stella: No, I - **thought** you might have - resigned ... (Williams, 2009, p. 7)*

This dialogue is embedded with many hedges, which are all used to adapt to the speaker's uncertainty. The tension between Blanche and Stella can be learned from this dialogue, so **I thought** in past tense is

applied twice by Stella to mitigate her tone. Besides, *I thought* indicates it is a previous idea, protecting Stella from being considered offensive as well as maintaining Blanche's face.

### ***Discourse Level***

Hedges perform discourse functions to facilitate a smooth interaction, and discourse functions are primarily displayed through discourse markers. Therefore, the employment of hedges on discourse level is characterized mainly by discourse markers. The reason why language users always resort to hedges to organize discourse is that colloquial languages require them to respond in an impromptu way and spontaneously so as to fulfil the smooth running of the conversation. However, it is inevitable that the speaker hesitates to choose the following linguistic material and linguistic gaps are caused. Under such a circumstance, linguistic fillers are necessary to bridge the gap between what is said and what is to be said. Usually, hedges work as hesitation fillers or gap fillers.

*Blanche: Virgo is the Virgin.*

*Stanley: Hah! **Say**, do you happen to know somebody named Shaw? (Williams, 2009, p. 51)*

Here, *say* works as a hesitation filler. Blanche's filthy utterance makes Stanley embarrassed and he tries to change the topic to make himself feel at ease. While it is hard to find an appropriate topic immediately within such a short time, so *say* comes to the rescue by prolonging some time for Stanley.

*Blanche: No, honey. The lord and lady of the house have not yet returned, so come in. We'll have a night-cap. Let's leave the lights off. Shall we?*

*Mitch: You just - do what you want to. (Williams, 2009, p. 61)*

Occurring in the middle of an utterance, hedges play the role of gap fillers. Blanche invites Mitch to have a drink, and Mitch doesn't hastily refuse her invitation in case he offends Blanche, which is vividly reflected in his utterance brimming with fuzziness. In fact, it can't be inferred whether Mitch is willing to accept Blanche's invitation or not. The adaptor *just* manages to make the utterance complete and smooth by filling the linguistic gap, so Mitch's indecisiveness to the invitation can't be perceived by Blanche.

### **Conclusion**

This paper distinguishes three categories of linguistic functions performed by hedges, namely, informative, interpersonal, and discourse. Informative functions deal with the speaker's degree of certainty towards the proposition, and fuzziness of the proposition is increased or reduced through the use of hedges. Interpersonal functions are condensed into two aspects: showing politeness to improve interpersonal relationships and making appropriate utterances. As for discourse functions, discourse markers, which are kind of hedge, help to make one's narration more coherent and initiate a question.

This paper also discusses the linguistic features of hedges on the lexical, syntactic, and discourse levels. On the lexical level, repetition of the same hedge enhances the communicative goals with the least effort, on the one hand, and hedges are used in the form of abbreviations or variants on the other hand. On a syntactic level, some parts of the hedged expressions can be omitted without hindering the hearer's interpretation of the proposition, and past tense can bring about specific communicative effects. Last, hedges are represented as hesitation fillers or gap fillers at the discourse level.

Although hedges may result in uncertainty, vagueness, or indeterminacy in utterances, without hedges, speakers would not communicate appropriately or even achieve communicative goals. This paper helps us

to have a better understanding of the various linguistic functions and features of hedges, and it may enlighten us to develop an awareness of the appropriate use of hedges in daily life.

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# Narrative in Plays: A Comparison between Susan Glaspell's *Trifles* and "A Jury of Her Peers"

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**[Abstract]** Dramatic language, including non-dialogue, functions as a vehicle of dramatic narrative, and there are a few characteristics in dramatic narrative in terms of narrator, person, focalization, and point of view. This paper will show how a similar story that has been told in the form of drama is then told in a narrative text. Susan Glaspell's one-act play *Trifles* and the short story "A Jury of Her Peers" adapted from it can demonstrate this well.

**[Keywords]** narrative; plays; Susan Glaspell; *Trifles*; "The Jury of Her Peers"

## Introduction

Is there any narrator in plays? This is the question we are confronted with in the very beginning. According to some scholars, "unlike novels and short stories, plays do not usually have narrators to tell the audience what a character is thinking or what happened in the past, the audience knows only what the characters reveal" (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006, p. 1289). That, however, displays only few of narrative situations in drama. Wayne Booth (1974) claimed that "even the purest of dramas is not purely dramatic in the sense of being entirely presented, entirely shown as taking place in the moment" (Booth, 1974, p. 149). He cited what Dryden had called "relations" to refer to "things happening in the action of the play, and supposed to be done behind the scenes" (Dryden, 2000, p. 28). Thus, drama, as a unique genre in all literary forms, is sure to possess quite a different narrative from that of narrative texts. This paper first examines the relationship between a few varieties of non-dialogue, narrator, and focalization in dramatic texts. Second, it applies Genette's theory of the levels of narrative to further explore the typical characteristic of dramatic narrative. Finally, Susan Glaspell's play *Trifles* and its novelistic adaptation, "A Jury of Her Peers," are used as a demonstration in which comparison is made from some key elements, such as narrator and focalization, to the levels of narrative.

## The Unique Form of Narrator and Focalization in Dramatic Texts

The presence of non-dialogue in various forms, such as soliloquies, and stage directions whose narrative functions have been illustrated above, breaks the bias and makes the conventional claim above unsound. Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*, for example, begins with a nine-line stage direction. Putting the descriptive part aside, we can still find a few narratives: "...At the rear the outer door opens and the sheriff comes in followed by the County Attorney and Hale...They are followed by two women...The women have come in slowly, and stand close together near the door" (Glaspell, 2006, p. 1314). Then, the narrator here is anonymous, doesn't show him/herself, but lets him/herself be heard by way of stage directions, which sound exactly like voice-over, or, precisely, look like print in the front of a film. The words are the implied narrator's, not one of the characters. Actually, such an anonymous narration is most usually seen in drama. Implied narrators seem to make the reader realize their existence only in stage directions. However, how should we explain the function of the lawyer in Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge*, or the Stage

Manager in Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*? I shall pay attention at the moment to "point of view" or what Genette calls "focalization," which is supposed to be distinguished with the "narration" of the implied narrator.

It is, in fact, the distinction between "who is feeling?" and "who is telling?" The one who is telling a story is the narrator, while the one who is looking and listening is focalizing. Thus, all narrators are not the ones focalizing. Sometimes, the two roles are overlapped, as in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. More often, they are played by different characters. Genette claims that a narrative features internal focalization when "the narrator only says what that character knows." In this formulation, the knowledge of the narrator is equal to that of the character. Genette argues, further, that a narrative features external focalization when "the narrator says less than the character knows," a formulation where the knowledge of the character exceeds that of the narrator. He speaks further of "zero focalization," where the narrator knows more than all of the characters, or, more precisely, reveals more than what any one of the characters knows. Here, the knowledge of the narrator exceeds that of the characters (Genette, 1982, p. 169). Novels can use any mode of focalization with no limitation. Detective stories usually employ the internal focalization in which the investigator and his assistant, like Dr. Watson in Sherlock Holmes' stories, don't know the truth, which won't be completely revealed until in the very ending of the story. *The Great Gatsby* is a representative of the external focalization in which Nick, the one to focalize, who is an outsider to some extent, relies on his own sight and hearing to give the reader clues, not without misleading and confusion. The examples of the zero focalization consist of an overwhelming majority of novels, especially in memoir and biography. However, these three modes of focalization are mostly found in a compound in a single literary work. The one to focalize in "A Rose for Emily" is also the narrator who tells the story in the tone of "we," is transformed into an omniscience (when Emily is known in detail to have gone to the drugstore and bought poison, for instance) and then returns to the external mode as a looker-on who doesn't realize the crime at all until the eventual exposition. A proper shuttle among these three kinds of focalization may help make a complex plot clear. In drama, however, focalization is confronted with a different situation.

Drama, chiefly consisting of dialogue exchanged between characters, is conventionally without focalization. It is decided by the theatrical nature of the drama itself, for the personal focalization, no matter if it is internal, external, or zero, is believed to break the illusion drama tries to create in the theatre. All characters on stage are the focus, and the audience, which is supposed to be a group of peepers, actually plays the role of the one to focalize, or rather, the reflector, whose point of view is random, unlike the personal focalization frequently occurring in films, fixed by a subjective point of view, or, precisely, the camera, and distracting the reader or audience in the direction the director wants them to go.

### **Dramatic Narrative, Tense, and the Levels of Narrative**

After being told the unique form of narrator and focalization in dramatic texts, someone may still hold a doubt, for he/she thinks narrative is a recounting of one or more real or fictional events by one or more narrators to one or more narratees. Definitions like this rely on the idea of an event as a past action. Indeed, absolute autonomy or the absence of a mediating narrator in dramatic texts means that the predominant tense used in drama is the present, whereas in narrative texts it is the past. Thornton Wilder formulated this distinction in the following concise manner: "A play is what takes place. A novel is what one person tells took place. The novel is a past reported in the present. On the stage it is always now... This confers upon the action an increased vitality which the novelist longs in vain to incorporate into his work" (Wilder, 1960, p. 114).

However, that does not mean that drama has no narrative. Actually, narrative isn't confined into a narrow temporal scope. Genette distinguishes four types of narration according to temporal position: (1) the subsequent or past-tense narration, where the time of the plot is beyond that of the story, as in most classic narratives; (2) the prior, which is rare, and is the predictive, as sometimes in dreams or science fiction; (3) the simultaneous, or "narrative in the present coterminous with the action" (Genette, 1980, p. 217); and (4) interpolated, which is inserted between the moments of action. In terms of these distinctions, drama, as a narrative of the actions presented onstage, most obviously seems a simultaneous narration that Glaspell's *Trifles* has typically assumed. As a matter of fact, in a qualified sense, all narratives are simultaneous, or, more precisely, the action of narrating and that of the writer's creation are always simultaneous. The novel that has always been a burning issue among narratological critics, *Tristram Shandy*, for example, forms a simultaneous narrative, for it recounts the act of narrating, which in most of novels has been consciously erased.

Another of Genette's most crucial and influential distinctions is among the levels of narrative, which he defines this way: "[A]ny event a narrative recounts is at a diegetic level immediately higher than the level at which the narrating act producing this narrative is placed" (Genette, 1980, p. 217). Genette goes on to explain the question of levels via this example:

*M. de Rencourt's writing of his fictive Memoires is a (literary) act carried out at a first level, which we will call extradiegetic; the events told in those Memoires (including Des Grieux's narrating act) are inside this first narrative, so we will describe them as diegetic, or intradiegetic; the events told in Des Grieux' narrative, a narrative in the second degree, we will call metadiegetic (Genette, 1980, p. 228).*

In *Trifles*, it seems as if there is only one level – Glaspell's writing, the extradiegetic level, which is naturally produced in company with the process of literary creating. Is that a common rule that drama usually consists of only the extradiegetic level? Not exactly. There is actually an implied intradiegetic level in the stage directions, which is apparently connected with the narrator on stage, where narrator is not equal to the playwright. In *Trifles*, the narrator is absent from the stage and hidden behind the stage directions. Nevertheless, his or her eyes are fixed on the stage and all happenings, through which the readers can know and, thus, make judgments by themselves. However, the information is personal and subjective to some extent and, therefore, casts an influence over the comment and acceptance of the reader, which will be explained in detail below.

### **Differences between Dramatic Narrative and the Narrative in Narrative Texts**

What is the difference between dramatic narrative and the narrative in narrative texts? Glaspell's one-act play *Trifles* and the short story "A Jury of Her Peers" (for convenience's sake, I shorten this title to "Jury" in the following passages) adapted from it can demonstrate well. *Trifles* was praised as "the grimmest, tensest half-hour of tragedy ever produced: a very arrow-flight of poignancy" (Irwin, 1922). In the play, two housewives, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, accompanying their husbands who are investigating the murder of a man by his wife, discover in the kitchen the clues which indicate the motive of the murderer; they silently agree to withhold this evidence from their husbands. Commentators on this classical feminist short story and the one-act play from which it derives have tended to treat the two works as essentially alike. Indeed, Glaspell incorporated into the short story virtually every single line of the dialogue from *Trifles*. Arthur Waterman, one of few who have noticed the differences that Glaspell made in the process of

adaptation, has a higher regard for the story than for the play (Waterman, 1966, pp. 29-30). Whether the play is inferior to its adaptation will not be debated here; instead I am talking about the different narrative techniques Glaspell respectively employed to handle these two works.

A narrator exists in drama in the form of stage directions, and there is no exception in *Trifles*. The play opens with a nine-line stage direction as an introduction of the scene where all characters have arrived in the kitchen of John Wright, while the short story begins with a hundreds-of-words presentation of Mrs. Hale's disordered kitchen and her response to the sudden interruption of her housework. Here comes the contrast. In the play, all characters are on the same level. They are all focused as participants of the investigation: the three men are responsible for searching for the proof and motivation of the defendant's guilt, and the two women, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, are supposed to accompany them. The only concern is on the investigation. In the short story, however, Mrs. Hale has been prearranged by the author as a reflector even before the investigation starts. Thus, the center is transmitted to Mrs. Hale and her reflections on the environment. Mrs. Hale seems to be unwilling to be called away for women's instinct of "(hating) to see things half done" (Glaspell, 1985, p. 524), which skillfully foreshadows her doubt of Mrs. Wright's kitchen filled with signs of incomplete work. Then we know her impression on Mrs. Peters, which is informed as well in the play but through a sketchy depiction in the opening stage direction. So, in the short story, we see through Mrs. Hale, while in the play through an invisible observer. This invisible man/woman hides during the characters' speaking and acting "by themselves." Readers won't notice his/her existence until it is revealed in stage directions in the play where a certain explanation is needed. If we label Mrs. Hale in the short story as an "internal focalizer" in accordance with Genet's theory, the "invisible man/woman" onstage should be the "external focalizer" whose knowledge is less than any of the characters; we can hardly find any psychological revelation in the play in which the hidden observer seems as if he/she is only one of the audience who is enjoying him/herself by watching while the characters don't realize in the least. What the external focalizer records or narrates is only what "should" be or "might" be from his/her partially subjective judgment. So, the narration in the short story is more credible than that in the play, though neither an external focalizer nor an internal focalizer can be as reliable as the zero focalizer, whose point view is omniscient.

Furthermore, different arrangements of the opening result in another contrast of narrative pace. As a playwright, Glaspell's treatment of conflict (or tension) was apparently distinguished from when she wrote as a novelist. In the play, as early as in the initial dialogue exchanged between the County Attorney and Mrs. Peters, a conflict has been constructed:

*County Attorney: (rubbing his hands) This feels good. Come up to the fire, ladies.*

*Mrs. Peters: (after taking a step forward) I'm not – cold (Glaspell, 2006, p. 1342).*

Here, a man's sham easiness and masculineness is sheerly confronted with woman's precaution and self-affirmation by refusing the imposed gender status of being taken care of and protected. By contrast, the same scene happens in the short story after a delay produced by the descriptive passages about Mrs. Hale. This conscious delay, which is placed in front of the central event – the investigation, functions as a buffer to the climax – Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters thoroughly reveal the motivation of the criminal and conceal the proof out of sympathy. In this way, readers' attention is drawn to the sullen mood of Mrs. Hale and the pace of the whole story-telling slows down. It is because of the requirements of pace in drama and narrative that the texts are unlike. Limited by the theatre time, drama is supposed to concentrate the audience's attention on stage as soon as the play opens and try to keep the audience focused on it until it

ends; thus, conflicts or tensions will still be an essential element in most plays. Novels, though, in which conflicts are necessary as well, needn't make an intense atmosphere as urgently as drama does.

As to dramatic conflict, which in *Trifles* is displayed between the two women and the three men, we know that Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters function as defense counsel and jury of their accused peer, Mrs. Wright, but what is the men's role? These men, in spite of their official capacity, are comparable to that of a Greek Chorus, "the voice of the community's conscience," entering at various points to reiterate their major themes – Mrs. Wright's guilt and the triviality of the women's occupations, avocations, and preoccupations. When Mrs. Peters mentions that Mrs. Wright is worrying about her fruit, for example, three men make fun of them:

*Sheriff: Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and worryin' about her preserves.*

*County Attorney: I guess before we're through she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about.*

*Hale: Well, women are used to worrying over trifles (Glaspell, 2006, p. 1344).*

Here, three men make comments which represent the conventional opinion most men hold of women in a patriarchic society. The two women respond silently but with some protest: "The two women move a little closer together." Similar in-fighting between the community's voices and the females' meek defense repetitively occurs in the play, and the male characters' choral function is repetitively performed, as well. The periodic entries, commentaries, and exits of the male characters mark the progressive stages of the narrative in which the women, including the offstage Mrs. Wright, are primary concern. Each time the "chorus" enters, the tension between the men and the women is intensified, though the three men don't realize that themselves. The culmination of this struggle occurs when, late in the story, the county attorney says that "a sheriff's wife is married to the law," and Mrs. Peters, who was either "small, thin, and didn't have a strong voice" (Glaspell, 1985, p. 524) in Mrs. Hale's eyes in the short story or "a slight wiry woman, a thin nervous face" (Glaspell, 2006, p. 1341) in the opening stage direction, responds with admirable courage, "Not – just that way" (Glaspell, 1985, p. 537). Men have had a trick played on them, and playing the role of a chorus as an irony, against which women are not understood; as a matter of fact, they have always been the real protagonists. A chorus can be said to be another narrative technique distinctive in *Trifles*, which has, no doubt, lent color to the short story, too. Although the rituality of the chorus is sensed with much more difficulty in "Jury" than in *Trifles*, it is not exaggeration to say the short story has actually benefited a great deal from its dramatic derivation and is a "dramatic" short story to some extent.

### Conclusion

Generally speaking, recognition of "dramatic narrative" is expected to be achieved in this paper. Drama has its unique narrator and focalization, which exist in stage directions and non-dialogues. Then, a communication among different genres is proved mutually beneficial and promising. Drama and narratology, however, are utterly divided in some aspects, after all. A reluctant match is obviously unwise. So, we just advocate applying some narrative theories to dramatic study rather than to pulling drama into the complicated system of narratology. Moreover, there are few theories that can be suitable to all literary works at all times. Therefore, "dramatic narrative," as a relatively new and less mature conception, has to be tested through more time and by more dramatic practices.

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## Body in D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*

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**[Abstract]** D. H. Lawrence first disclosed in the novel *Women in Love* that sense of touch of the body can work as an effective medium to reach the truth and repair the disharmonious relationship between men and women. Second, he disclosed that the harmony of body-and-soul could restore the ordered social system. Lawrence's attitude towards the body may be somewhat utopian; however, it presents human-oriented conception, which is of certain significance.

**[Keywords]** D. H. Lawrence; *Women in Love*; body; sense of touch; body-and-soul

### Introduction

The body plays a very important role in D. H. Lawrence's novels to show his vital attitude towards life. In his essay, "Why the Novel Matters," he said that "we think of ourselves as a body with a spirit in it, or a body with a soul in it, or a body with a mind in it..., the body, being the bottle. It is a funny sort of superstition" (Lawrence, 2003). He never thought that human body as a container, but a living body. He wanted to be a novelist just because he wanted to become a living body, so he created lots of images to uncover the weakness of life, present the essence of life, and present how important the human body is in his novels. For example, Mellors and Connie in *Lady Chatterley's Lovers*, find their true love and life-meaning through bodily communication; Birkin and Ursula in *Women in Love* find balance in their love and marriage through the sense of touch from the body.

Until now, more attention has been paid to the significance of the "body" in his novels, especially in *Women in Love*. For example, Professor Susan Reid illustrates how Lawrence vitalizes bodies of many characters in this novel when deeply affected by Friedrich Nietzsche's life philosophy (Reid, 2015). While Professor Deanna Wendel from Indiana University, proposes in her thesis that Lawrence expressed his criticism of industrial civilization in this novel when posthuman bodies are destructed by the industrial society (Wendel, 2014). Body studies in Lawrence's novels have already achieved some accomplishment, but few have noticed how the body played an important role in his novels.

Lawrence discloses that the sense of touch from the body could balance the man-and-woman relationship and restores the order of the industrial social system. He also clearly expresses his eagerness to recover harmonious man-and-woman relationship and the ordered social system through humans' return to the body in *Women in Love*. In the light of contemporary body theories, we discuss and interpret how Lawrence reveals the real significance of the body.

### Sense of Touch to Balance the Man-and-Woman Relationship

There is a clear body consciousness in the novel, and the concept of "body" is often placed in an obviously stressed position. In the second chapter of the novel, when Gerald mentions whether a "hat" is important or peace of mind is more important, Birkin protests that it is the "peace of body" that matters. That means physical and mental problems become the key to the novel. The characters' personalities, identity, fate, and life are all engraved on their bodies. A series of vivid body images are depicted in *Women in Love* as well:

some as beautiful as Greek sculptures, some as low animals like rats and beetles, some as quick and agile, some as stiff and rigid, some with flesh and blood, and some as twisted and deformed.

The sense of touch of the body could be a medium to recover the harmonious man-and-woman relationship effectively. In his essay “Why the Novel Matters,” Lawrence (2003) emphasizes the importance of touching. He says that “my hand is alive; it flickers with a life of its own. It meets all the strange universe in touch, and learns a vast number of things, and knows a vast number of things” (Lawrence, 2017b, p. 89). Each thought of a human being, which is the presence of one or another quality of his body, is a kind of object that functions on eyes, ears and other parts, and, since different functions produced different phenomena, the roots of all these phenomena are what we call senses. In other words, we can discover the essence behind the phenomena by senses, especially by touching (Hobbes, 2014). Touch, among all of the senses of the body, is closer to the truth and could bridge the man-and-woman gap.

The sense of touch working with nature could stimulate the maximization of the potential of the body and then make men and women closer to each other. It was first expressed in Lawrence’s letters. Lawrence once wrote to Ernest Collins, “I always felt like I was standing there naked, letting the fire of the almighty pass through me, and it was pretty scary. One must be very devout to become an artist” (Leavis, 1962). In other words, as an artist, he enjoys the union of body to nature, and prefers the sense of touch from body to any other mechanical function of it.

It is, second, illustrated by the harmonious life of Birkin and Ursula (lovers in the novel). They, as participators, feel the world more directly, and become closer to the truth of love. They become closer to the revelation of truth for each other after bodily communication (in Chapter 27 of *Women in Love*, “Excursion”). At that moment, Birkin meets Ursula like “the son of the god” meets “the daughter of human.” They find beauty and fall in love with each other (Lawrence, 1920). They do not see with their eyes, but with the touch of their fingertips. Through the mystery of a touch, in the serenity of darkness, man can activate the richness of the body’s senses, listening and perceiving themselves with their whole lives. Birkin and Ursula find their balance in love with the sense of touch.

It is finally proved by the tragedy of Gerald and Gudrun (another pair of lovers in the novel). Lawrence says that life is all wrong because we make it too visual, vision separates the body from the other, and one cannot find his true affection. For example, Gerald and Gudrun do not understand each other with touching like Birkin and Ursula because they rely too much on vision. Gudrun is often unable to perceive her own real feelings due to her self-contradiction. Sometimes, she is fascinated by the brutal violence of Gerald’s powerful control, while sometimes she cannot bear to look directly into Gerald’s cruelty. Gudrun is capriciously wandering back and forth between the unreal world and the real world. While, Gerard, whose body is labeled under the gaze of Gudrun, becomes crazy with mental abnormality. He commits suicide after his failure of balancing the man-and-woman relationship. Their failure to accomplish their love affairs with vision proves that the balance of the man-and-woman relationship could only be achieved through sense of touch. Although people like Birkin and Ursula, who can see with their “blind” eyes in the dark forest, truly see the reality of the world and the origin of life by the insight of the body; however, the process of socialization is the irreversible destiny of man after he is thrown into the symbolic world. Therefore, it is a tragic event for humans to fall into the symbolic world in the mirror stage.

The sense of touch could be helpful in the process of getting to the truth of the human body and setting up a harmonious relationship between men and women. It is first demonstrated through Lawrence’s ideas of “seeing” the world with touch. Lawrence said that people should give up sight and fall into darkness. Birkin and Ursula actually “see” each other in the pure darkness of Sherwood forest with touching. Besides,

Gerald and Gudrun establish their emotional and dating relationship transiently in the process of touching. In the chapter “Hare,” when the hare scratches Gerald’s and Gudrun’s arms, they look at each other and recognize each other. Their short touch of each other brought an instant harmonious relationship. Then, the day when Gerald’s father dies, Gerald goes to Gudrun for comfort. Gerald enjoys touching the body to regain his masculine power, while Gudrun sets down her own love for Gerald by touching, as well. Although Gudrun and Gerald continue their communication pattern of staring and looking back, with a sort of passion in it, they transiently experience how touch could make them understand each other.

It is, second, proved by Lawrence’s objection to the abuse of the visual sense of body. He believes that one’s excessive reliance on vision will cause his losing appearance instead of seeing the essence. Lawrence expresses his anxiety and criticism of this erotic world through the description of Gudrun’s ruined “love” by staring. He believes that this world is mainly a world of eroticism in which the body loses itself under the bondage of lust and becomes increasingly distant from the depths of life. Since the pathological visual desire leads to the alienation of men and women, the sense of touch may bridge the gap between men and women; humans should understand the world with touch and get to know each other with touch.

It is finally expressed in the tragedy of Gerald and Gudrun’s love affairs. The sense of touch could bring closer the man-and-woman relationship, while vision separates one body from the other, especially men from women. With her morbid desire to peep, Gudrun watched the object, Gerald, in the wedding from a spot near the church, peering from a distance, and she feels the desire to know more about this man. Then, Gudrun discovers some mysterious attraction in Gerald’s “body of a northerner,” and she never takes her eyes away from Gerald’s body. In the chapters “Diving” and “Coal-dust,” Gudrun stares at Gerald’s body more and more closely and carefully when Gerald is almost naked in the chapter “Diving.” Gerald’s interest in Gudrun is, also, aroused by vision, and their destinies are tragically intertwined from the initial glance to the active gaze. Through staring, Gudrun labels the bodies of those around her, eliminating the richness and possibility of the body. In this way, everything is reduced to ready-made, and the richness of life existence is stifled. However, Gudrun’s vision of Gerald is too powerful to be altered; their love tragedy inevitably leads to the death of Gerald and the destruction of Gudrun. Lawrence presents his wishes in the novel that anticipates a society in which all are naked to feel the wind and air freely and get well with each other. Therefore, if Gudrun wants to find her true love, she has to count on the sense of touch more than vision and to feel the world with her “touch” on it.

All in all, Lawrence presents how the sense of touch works in getting access to the truth and the world, setting up a harmonious man-and-woman relationship, while the alienation of the body from the other with vision is considered as the source of destruction to human life, especially to the harmonious relationship between men and women. Therefore, Lawrence shows that the sense of touch of the body plays a very important role in balancing the man-and-woman relationship.

### **The Harmony of Body and Soul for the Recovery of Ordered Social System**

The idea that the body and soul are to be united is demonstrated in Lawrence’s novels and expressed as a way to restore the ordered social system. Lawrence discloses that the body represents the essence of human beings, and that the soul is attached to the body. Lawrence agrees that the body and the soul were intertwined with each other, and when one is collapsed, the other is gone. However, the body is not just a bottle of soul or any of the rest of things. When one lives, he says, “me, man alive” (Lawrence, 2017b). When one dies, he is gone with nothing left. Therefore, he believes that there is really not any huge difference between body and soul, since “my hand is absolutely alive, me alive, the soul alive” (Lawrence,

2017a). When the body and the soul work cooperatively in the restoration of the social order, they can accomplish it, and vice versa.

The body and the soul are united into a harmonious entity in *Woman in love*. Lawrence clearly expresses this argument by the presentation of how death becomes the symbol of the harmonious relationship between body and soul. Take the death of Gerald's father, for example. Mr. Crich's death is infinitely magnified and prolonged in the novel. At the very beginning, the old Mr. Crich is dying when he took part in his daughter's wedding, but not until through three-quarters of the novel does he eventually die. It takes nearly two chapters of "The Industrial Giant" and "Death and Love" to capture his final moments. He dies in a terribly slow process. In face of his father's slow death, Gerald utters the words, "One should die as the Romans do without delay" (Lawrence, 1920, 2007, p. 243). These words remind us of the death of Socrates. In Plato's account, his teacher Socrates took his time to die without fear because the body is an obstacle to accessing the truth, while the soul can live forever without the body. Therefore, death is easy and instantaneous. Socrates's deliberate death is the first great event of death in western culture (Wang, 2003). However, the death of the old Mr. Crich debunks this myth. The meaning of the body is most vividly felt in its decay. This gradual decline of the body's function and the final death of the will of life proves that death is insurmountable. The body dies, and the soul does not exist, either. Body and soul live hand in hand.

The harmony of the body and the soul may adjust the unreasonable labor-and-worker relationship. Lawrence believes that only when the soul and the body are united can life be truly respected. However, Gerald insists on the value of the body-and-soul separation, which brings him lots of confusion and contributes to the social chaos. Gerald refuses to acknowledge the union of the body-and-soul philosophy, though he knows how it is practiced in his father's body. Since in Gerald's mind the body is just a thoughtless substance and the souls are superior, his disrespect for the body obviously becomes reasonable. This is manifested in Gerald's relations with his laborers. In the eyes of this industrial giant, the bodies of thousands of mine workers were soulless; in his values and ethics, the bodies of workers were just the gears of industrial machines: "they were all subject to him, they were his tools." The worker's body is capitalized as "labor," so he can "use" them without any guilt. The separation of body and soul brings about some dangers to the balance of social order. So, the bad effects arising from Gerald's experience proves that it is important to harmonize the relationship between the body and the soul. Birkin is the man who cares about body and considers body and soul as a harmonious entity. Lawrence expresses his idea through Birkin that it is well for the ordered social society to be the owner of a mine like old Mr. Crich, who treats miners equally and genuinely.

The harmony of body and soul could improve capital relations and promote the human relationship. When Gerald deals with his one-night love affairs with a woman, he'd like to pay some money for his enjoyment of sexual intercourse. Women's bodies are also capitalized and become a soulless commodity, according to Gerald's values. It seems that his treatment with his one-night love affair is accepted by most of the people around him, and satisfies the norm of the society at that time. However, Birkin disagrees with Gerald that one's conscience and soul count more than capital when a person conducts interpersonal relationship. He is a wise man, and he is quick enough to point out that it was not money that Gerald has to settle, but the conscience and soul. The body should be respected as the body-and-soul entity, then, to achieve a right social system. Lawrence also depicts Birkin as a man who practices the slogan that "I am completely the body, but nothing else; and the soul is the name of something in the body" (Nietzsche, 1997).

Birkin tries to seek a solution to the disordered social system with his fighting against the repressive state of the body in the industrial society.

The harmony of body and soul may harmonize the relationship between men and animals, and it may promote the harmony of the society. Gerald scares a horse for fun, just because animals, like a horse, are soulless. However, his values of the body-and-soul separation break up the principle of “all men are created equal” and break the harmony between man and nature, as well. Birkin, however, finds himself calm with the plants and animals in the wood. When he feels annoyed, he is lying down on wood with a bare body. When some troublesomeness attacks him, he sets his soul free in nature and calls it back after it has been spiritualized. In Birkin’s mind, as well as in Lawrence’s, being with nature harmoniously can calm a person’s state of mind and restore the ordered social system.

Furthermore, Lawrence’s approval of the harmony of the body and the soul and criticism of the body-and-soul separation can be proved in his anti-Platonism. First, Lawrence disagrees with Plato’s binary opposition of body and soul. Plato proposes that the binary opposition of the body and the soul is the basic structure of human beings. The body is ephemeral, the soul is immortal; the body is greedy, and the soul is pure; the body is lower, and the soul is higher; the body is wrong, and the soul is real; the body leads to evil, and the soul to good; the body is visible, and the soul is invisible (Wang, 2015). In other words, the immorality caused by the separation of the body and the soul is legalized under the ethical value of a capitalist society. However, Lawrence smashes the traditional binary opposition by introducing life into it. In his opinion, the unification of the body and the soul represents true life. The body and the soul work together to make a better life, which contributes to a human who is fully alive. That is why Lawrence makes efforts to harmonize the relationship between the body and the soul for a new social order. Second, Lawrence disagrees with the one who practices Plato’s philosophy of body-and-soul opposition. Take Gerald, for example; he is a man who takes the body-and-soul separation as his life philosophy, and falls into a collapse of the existing mechanism and a kind of mental crisis after being in the shadow of death from his childhood to his adulthood. He was said to have accidentally killed his own brother in his childhood; then, he failed to save his drowning sister in the chapter “Water Garden”; finally, he is greatly shocked by his father’s death, though he had believed that he could be fully at ease to face the natural law of death by aging. Gerald has a nervous breakdown in the witness of one death after another, and his life is a process of getting to death. His will is struggling with death, but it fails eventually. Especially when his father, who is a symbol of order in the existing world” dies, “Gerald found himself helpless in the storm of life, like a mate on a ship without a captain, and he saw nothing but a terrible confusion before him” (Lawrence, 1920, p. 244). It seems that both the body and the soul are eliminated by death, which cannot be accepted by Gerald, who always separates the body and the soul. Therefore, when he cannot settle down how the body and the soul work, he chooses to destroy his body so as to set himself free. The story ends with Gerald’s death. Lawrence emphasizes Gerald’s life experience to accomplish his aim that the opposition of the body and the soul cannot end well, while Birkin and Ursula, who keep their harmony between the body and the soul, will find a happy marriage.

In a word, Lawrence artificially presents the philosophical and moral dilemmas caused by the debasement of the material body, the separation of the body from the mind in a visual culture, and the violation of the idea of one body and soul, and then he resorts to the body to find the answer to these problems. He discloses that the body and the soul should be harmonious to each other to restore the order of the social system. Lawrence agrees with Nietzsche that the soul is invisible, that it can leave the body

and go to another place (Plato, 2010), and the body and the soul are united to make a better life; the separation of them will cause the destruction of one's life and the whole society.

### Implication and Conclusion

Through the examination of how the body plays an important role in the novel *Women in Love*, we can see that Lawrence criticizes how English culture's misconceptions about the "body" have led to the destruction of people and the breakdown of society; he discloses how the sense of touch instead of vision balances men's and women's relationships, and how the harmony of the body and the soul reorganizes the social system.

His persistence in returning to people's bodies as a means of liberating human beings from the dilemma of civilization is a kind of body philosophy that belongs to a philosophy of life movement and renewal. He emphasizes the importance of relationship, which has practical significance for the increasingly isolated modern life. With the popularization of the machine industry and the rapid penetration of computers and internet technology into every part of people's lives, current culture has actually become a "non-entity" culture. Only by returning to the body and breaking the isolation, can life be conceived, grown, and renewed, and finally surpass itself and give birth to new life in the endless relationship between the body and the world.

Though, his idea of an infinitely open and free body is an ideal utopia, it does not reduce the importance of Lawrence's views on the body, since it is revelatory to human beings in their pursuit of happiness and truth. Therefore, applying modern body theories to help the examination of the body as a matter of substance to human observation. Studying D. H. Lawrence can better expound the essence of Lawrence's life philosophy and arouse attention of the human body and human instincts. Furthermore, applying modern body theories in the study of Lawrence can help readers understand his body philosophy and life philosophy, which, in turn, may lead to establishment of views of life and social values.

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# Teachers' Cognition and Implementation of the Activity-Based Approach in the EFL Reading Class: Evidence from High Schools in China

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*[Abstract] The Activity-Based Approach in English Reading Teaching is a new way to implement key competence proposed recently by The English Curriculum Standards for General Senior High Schools 2017 Edition in China. By using questionnaires and interviews, this paper aims to identify English teachers' cognition and the actual implementation of reading teaching with the activity-based approach in senior high schools. The results show that senior high school English teachers have a high level of cognition from the perspectives of the activity objectives, teaching methods, and types of activities, while the implementation still needs improving.*

*[Keywords] activity-based approach in English teaching; reading activity design; high school*

## Introduction

Recently, many adjustments and reforms have been made in the field of English education, such as innovated teaching methods and concepts, which definitely has improved the actual teaching quality and efficiency. *The English Curriculum Standards for General Senior High School* (2018) puts forward the Activity-Based Approach in English Teaching that points to the key competence of the English subject (Ministry of Education, 2018).

Judging from the current research, Ji Xiaoting and Dai Junhua (2018) believe that there are still many problems in English classroom teaching activities in China. Especially in the reading teaching activities, most teachers lay emphasis on the shallow understanding of the text content, but ignore the in-depth interpretation of the text, and finally fail to dig deeply into the background of the text, the author's writing intention, and the thoughts and emotions of the protagonist. The one-way classroom teaching mode that only focuses on listening, speaking, reading, and writing is lacking in learning activities that can stimulate students' thinking quality, such as speech and debate. There is no doubt that these problems in reading teaching activities hinder the development of English education, and it is urgent to solve them.

In view of this, this study adopts the method of questionnaire and interview to investigate thirty high school English teachers' cognition and implementation of the Activity-Based Approach in English Teaching, aiming to help teachers better understand and practice this approach, effectively cultivate students' key competences, and, also, improve the quality of teaching.

## Literature Review

The Activity-Based Approach can be traced back to Rousseau's (1979) natural education thought, Dewey's (1938) "learning by doing," and Vygotsky's (1978) "Activity Theory," while in China, there are some similar beliefs from experts in education like Tao Xingzhi (1951). Relevant research has proposed the "Balanced Activity Teaching Method" and the "Activity-Based Teaching Method" and research has been conducted on teaching design based on "activity," which has provided a rich theoretical basis for teaching (Harmer, 2007). Aside from that, other foreign researches have obtained the evaluation of the Activity-Based Approach teaching effect through practical teaching feedback and empirical analysis and proved its effectiveness (Block, & Davis, 1996; Squires, & Bricker, 2007; Piper, 2010). Chinese scholars mainly

carried out relevant empirical research in reading and writing classes, and applied the Activity-Based Approach of English learning. Many researchers (Wu, 2018; Zhang, 2018; Ren, 2019; Chen, 2019; Zeng, 2020) designed reading teaching examples according to the three levels of the English Activity-Based Approach and pointed out that the teaching examples can not only cultivate students' reading abilities and train students' listening and speaking skills, but also stimulate students' interest in English learning.

The new curriculum reform also attaches great importance to activity teaching, but the current research on the Activity-Based Approach is theoretical and lacks empirical research. Besides, the actual classroom activities will be disturbed by many factors, and there must be a certain gap with the ideal classroom activities. From that perspective, the extent to which teachers understand this approach for teaching in the classroom will affect the progress of our national curriculum reform. Therefore, an empirical study of classroom activities designed by teachers and a study of teachers' actual implementation are of great importance to the practice of the English Activity-Based Approach.

### **Research Design**

In view of this, this study investigates high school English teachers' cognition of the Activity-Based Approach and its implementation in reading teaching through questionnaire survey and interview in an attempt to put forward some referential suggestions for better implementation of the Activity-Based Approach. The main research questions are as follows: 1) How do high school English teachers perceive reading teaching from the perspective of Activity-Based Approach? 2) How do the teachers implement the Activity-Based Approach in high school English reading class?

#### ***Research Participants***

The questionnaire adopted in this study has received thirty valid copies since it was distributed. Therefore, the respondents of this questionnaire are 30 English teachers from public high schools who participated in the study. The interviewees are four teachers randomly selected from the English teachers who answered the questionnaire.

#### ***Research Instruments***

The research instruments used in this study include questionnaire and interview. *The Questionnaire on the High School English Teachers' Cognition of Activity-Based Approach* is adapted according to the interpretation of the Activity-Based Approach in *English Curriculum Standards for General Senior High Schools (2017 Edition)* by Mei Deming and Wang Qiang (2018), as well as the needs of practical research. The questionnaire consists of 15 questions and is divided into two parts according to two dimensions: the objectives and the design levels of classroom activities. The first part consists of Q1-Q4, which is mainly used to investigate teachers' understanding of classroom activity objectives. Each question corresponds to four dimensions of objectives: language competence, cultural awareness, learning strategies, and thinking quality. The second part for Q5-Q15 mainly focus on teachers' cognition of the design by the way of the Activity-Based Approach, respectively, from three types of activity design, namely learning and comprehension, practical application, and immigration innovation. In addition, all the questions are evaluated by a 5-point Likert Scale, specifically "strongly disagree" with 1 point, "basically disagree" 2 points, "uncertain" 3 points, "basically agree" 4 points, and "strongly agree" 5 points.

The interview protocol, consisting of three parts, is also accordingly based on the research questions. The first part is the basic information of the interviewed teachers. The second part is a structured interview, which is carried out from six levels of classroom activity design. This part is also evaluated according to

the five-point Likert Scale. The third part is a semi-structured interview, consisting of eight questions, including the cognition of the Activity-Based Approach, the implementation of English learning activities (from aspects of classroom activity goal and type), as well as the problems encountered by teachers in the practice of the Activity-Based Approach in reading teaching and the required support.

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

Basically, the method used in this research is mainly qualitative research, supplemented by quantitative research. To be more specific, the data are collected mainly from two kinds of source: questionnaire data collection and analysis and interview content collection. First, the collected questionnaires were reviewed to remove the invalid ones. With those data generated by the valid questionnaires, SPSS software for online analysis obtained the sample data and related analysis was carried out. Then, with adding what could be found in the interview, the teachers' thoughts on the current situation of Activity-Based Approach in reading teaching, the difficulties encountered and the support needed in the interview process were concluded comprehensively and deeply, which finally reached the conclusion of this research.

## **Findings and Discussions**

### ***Teachers' Cognition of Activity-Based Approach in English Reading Teaching***

The researcher collected a total of 30 English teachers' basic information, including 7 male and 23 female teachers. Teachers with a teaching experience of 1-5 years accounted for 73.3%, those with a teaching experience of 6-10 years accounted for 20%, and those with a teaching experience of 11-15 years accounted for 6.6%. Among them, 15 teachers taught grade 1, 6 teachers taught grade 2, and 9 teachers taught grade 3. Teachers with a master's degree accounted for 75%, and teachers with an undergraduate degree accounted for 25%.

The first part of the questionnaire aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of the four dimensions of the classroom activity objectives. As shown in Table 1, the mean of each item was greater than 4, demonstrating that most instructors concurred with the 4 dimensions of teaching objectives based on the Activity-Based Approach in their teaching preparation and had a high degree of recognition for this. From the statistical standard deviation, the other values, except for "thinking quality," were relatively small, reflecting that the teachers had an expansive cognitive deviation within the English teaching that ought to target thinking quality. The "language competency" target corresponding to Question 1 showed the largest mean of 4.9 and the smallest standard deviation of 0.305, indicating that teachers were in favor of setting the classroom goal as language ability, and their views were relatively consistent.

**Table 1. Teachers' Cognition of Classroom Activity Goals**

Questions	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. The design of teaching activities should aim at cultivating students' comprehensive use of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in different social situations.	30	4	5	4.90	.305
2. The design of teaching activities should aim at cultivating students' cross-cultural awareness, cognition and behavior.	30	3	5	4.19	.810
3. The design of teaching activities should aim at cultivating students' logical, critical and creative thinking.	30	3	5	4.03	.904
4. The design of teaching activities should aim at cultivating students' ability to independently choose and adjust learning strategies and methods, and maintain their interest and motivation in English learning.	30	3	5	4.33	.606
Number of valid cases (in a row)	30				

The second part of the questionnaire is aimed at investigating teachers' cognition of the teaching methods guided by the Activity-Based Approach in English Teaching, questioning from the 3 design levels of instructional activities. The first design level of classroom activity is learning and comprehension. As shown in Table 2, most teachers concurred that instructors should create situations around themes, activate what students already know, and design teaching for the purpose of solving problems at the level of learning and comprehension. Moreover, they had more consistent views on Item 8. The second design level of instructional activity is practical application. According to the results analysis, teachers strongly agreed that language practice activities should be designed and carried out at the level of practical application, guiding students to use new knowledge to describe and explain facts so as to advance the internalization of language knowledge. The third level is migration innovation. The mean of this sort of activity is lower than the above two types, indicating that teachers' awareness of designing migration innovation activities in reading teaching still needs to be improved. In particular, the large difference in Item 12 indicated that there was a significant gap in cognition among teachers. The standard deviation of Item 14 had the lowest value, 0.486, which showed teachers' awareness of activities at the level of migration innovation generally needs to be improved.

**Table 2. Teachers' Cognition of the Types of Teaching Activities**

Questions	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
5. The establishment of the theme context in reading teaching activities should be close to the real life of students.	30	3	5	4.47	.730
6. The design of reading teaching activities should be developed around the theme meaning.	30	3	5	4.60	.724
7. When designing teaching activities, it is necessary to design activities that activate students' prior knowledge and experience and pave the way for language knowledge and cultural background.	30	3	5	4.37	.718
8. The purpose of reading teaching activities is to solve problems and encourage students to gain new knowledge from the text.	30	4	5	4.60	.498
9. Reading teaching activities should use combining, summarizing, and integrating information, establishing associations between information, and forming a new knowledge structure.	30	3	5	4.63	.556
10. When designing teaching activities, carry out communication activities such as description, interpretation, analysis, judgment, and gradually realize the internalization of language knowledge and cultural knowledge.	30	3	5	4.40	.621
11. When designing teaching activities, it is necessary to design activities that internalize language knowledge and cultural knowledge and promote language use.	30	3	5	4.20	.887
12. When designing teaching activities, one should appreciate and analyze the stylistic features and rhetoric of the text, and explore its connection with the theme.	30	2	5	3.60	.884
13. When designing teaching activities, critically evaluate the author's views.	30	3	5	3.67	.711
14. Through independent, cooperative, and exploratory learning methods, comprehensive use of language skills, multi-thinking, creatively solve problems in unfamiliar situations.	30	3	5	3.77	.486
15. When designing teaching activities, it is necessary to rationally express opinions, emotions and attitudes and reflect values.	30	3	5	3.97	.791
Number of valid cases (in a row)	30				

In addition, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with 4 high school teachers to further understand the teachers' cognition on the concept of the Activity-Based Approach in English Teaching. After analysis, it can be seen that all four teachers agreed with the concept of Activity-Based Approach in English Teaching, and they believed that activities are the carrier and platform for English learning. The form to implement the core competency of English, teaching through activities, is exceptionally accommodating to enhance the interest of students and mobilize their enthusiasm.

### ***The Implementation of Activity-Based Approach in English Reading Teaching***

The 4 teachers interviewed were all female; 2 were graduate students, 2 were undergraduates. There were half of the teachers who taught grade 1 and grade 2. Among them, 2 teachers had been teaching for 1 year

and 2 for 4 years. The purpose of the interview was to investigate the implementation of the concept of the Activity-Based Approach in English reading, including the following aspects: the 6 levels of reading activity design, teaching goal design, types of teaching activity, problems encountered, and required support. Findings from the teachers' answers to the interviews are as follows .

First, the statistics of the 6 levels of reading activity design showed that most teachers were doing well in the practice of Level One, "reading teaching activity design revolves around the theme to create context" and Level Two "reading teaching activity design including acquisition, sorting, and integration of information." However, teachers had a certain gap in the implementation of Level Three "The design of reading teaching activities includes learning, comprehension, and evaluation of discourse." One teacher chose "complete implementation," 1 chose "basic implementation," and 2 choices were "unclear." What's more, teachers had a low level of implementation in Level Five, "The design of reading teaching activities includes analysis, comparison, reflection, and judgment," and Level Six, "The design of reading teaching activities includes inferences about migration innovation." Two teachers chose "unclear" and 2 "basically not implemented." It is inferred that when teachers practice the Activity-Based Approach in English reading, the higher the level of activity, the worse the implementation. Second, the analysis of the design of teaching objectives showed that most teachers put the main teaching objectives on language knowledge and learning strategies. Teacher Shi said, *"In fact, there is a large proportion for each class of teaching language knowledge. If there are more distinctive texts, specific activities will be considered to cultivate students' thinking quality and cultural awareness."* Third, the analysis of the types of teaching activities showed that current senior high school English reading classes had the highest frequency of learning comprehension activities, followed by practical application activities, and immigration innovation activities had the lowest frequency. Teacher Xu and Feng stated, *"I often train students obtain article information through different activities in the reading class, such as skimming, scanning articles, etc., and also let students describe, analyze, and integrate text content to promote internalization of language knowledge and consolidation of new knowledge structures."* "But we rarely practice the immigration innovation activities," Teacher Shi and Wang explained. *"The constrained teaching time and the mismatching of examination and teaching objectives are the main reason."* Fourth, the analysis of the problems encountered by the teachers showed that the main problem was that the current high school reading teaching curriculum tasks were very tense. Teacher Feng and Wang said, *"Actually, it is very difficult to implement the four teaching goals at the same time in the teaching process. We desperately hope for some excellent lesson examples or resources for classroom records."* Fifth, the analysis of the support required by the teachers showed that teachers mainly needed support from two aspects, including the support of teachers themselves and school. *"I think it will be of great help to teachers, if the school can support to organize some related seminars and trainings in the process of implementing the Activity-Based Approach in English Teaching."* Teacher Feng said. Both Teacher Shi and Xu declared, *"I think teachers' own support is needed too. In the process of implementing the Activity-Based Approach in English reading teaching, the constant teaching reflection and adjustment, the study of periodicals and professional books is equally indispensable."*

### **Implications and Conclusion**

Based on the survey of senior high school English teachers' cognition and implementation of Activity-Based Approach in English reading class, it was found that senior high school teachers' cognition of the Activity-Based Approach is mainly reflected in the following aspects: First, the interviewed senior high school English teachers have a high degree of recognition of the four classroom activity goals of the

Activity-Based Approach. From high to low, the degree of identity is language competency, learning strategy, cultural awareness, and thinking quality. Second, the high school teachers interviewed have a high degree of cognition of the three types of activities in English reading class, relatively immigration innovation part need improving. Third, the interviewees have a certain understanding of the basic concepts of the Activity-Based Approach, but they are only superficial. For another, as for the situation of implementation: First, when teachers practice the Activity-Based Approach, the higher the level of activities, the worse the implementation. Second, when teachers design teaching goals, they mainly consider cultivating students' language competency and learning strategies; then, appropriate activities for cultivating cultural awareness and thinking qualities are carried out according to the students' level and the subject of the course. Third, the current high school English reading class has the highest frequency of learning comprehension activities, followed by practical application activities and immigration innovation activities are the lowest.

In light of the above findings, as well as the problems and support required in the teacher interviews, it is recommended that high school teachers need to improve their professional qualities from surrounding resources, and they should change their teaching beliefs and design multi-level reading teaching activities when teaching English reading.

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# **The Washback of the Summary Writing Task in the NMET Reformation on High School English Reading and Writing Teaching in Shanghai Municipality, China**

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*[Abstract] This study aims to explore the washback of the summary writing task in the NMET reformation in Shanghai municipality on high school English reading and writing teaching. With the document analysis, the questionnaire, the interview, and the class observation, the study found that the newly-added task has both positive and negative washback on high school English reading and writing teaching concepts and strategies, and it has not fully achieved its intended washback. Based on the findings, suggestions were provided for the test designers and the high school English teachers.*

*[Keywords] washback; summary writing; NMET reformation in Shanghai; high school English reading and writing teaching; intended washback*

## **Introduction**

The National Matriculation Test in China, referred to as NMT in this paper, is a very important test to both high school teachers and students. For teachers, the NMT guides their teaching in high school and makes them adjust their teaching to meet the requirements of the test, as well as get students prepared for it; for students, their scores of NMT could determine which university they could enter to a large extent and guides their learning. In China, English is also tested in the NMT, and the total scores of the National Matriculation English Test (NMET) are 150, the same as those of Chinese and math. Therefore, the NMET can have a strong influence on high school English teaching.

In 2014, the State Council of China introduced some policies to reform the enrollment system and the NMT in China (State Council, 2014). Due to their guideline and advanced positions in education in China, Shanghai municipality and Zhe Jiang Province were selected as the pilot places for the reform. In 2017, Shanghai municipality formally implemented the reform. In this reform, the questions in the NMET (Shanghai) have also experienced some changes. One change is that a new task, called summary writing, was added to the test. It requires the students to first read a passage and then summarize its main idea and its main point(s) in no more than 60 words, and the students should use their own words as far as possible (Xu, 2016). This task aims to test the students' comprehensive ability to read and write and is intended to guide the teachers and students to pay attention to the comprehensive use of skills (Wang, 2019), use various materials and read extensively (Wang, 2019), attach more importance to the features of a passage and the cultivation of the micro skills in reading and writing (Xu, 2016), and develop the students' higher order thinking abilities (Chen, 2016).

Since the NMET (Shanghai) is a very important test, a strong washback on high school English teachers would be expected in terms of its changes. Also, after four years' implementation, it is a question whether this new task has achieved its intended washback. Therefore, this research aims to analyze what washback the summary writing task has on high school English reading and writing teaching and see

whether the task has achieved its intended washback, thus proposing some suggestions to improve the test design and high school English reading and writing teaching.

### **Literature Review**

Washback, also referred to as “backwash,” generally means the influence of tests on teaching and learning (Hughes, 1989). According to Bachman and Palmer (1996), washback also includes the influence on the educational system, as well as the whole society. In addition, it is regarded as an indispensable part of test validity (Messick, 1996). In this study, washback means the effects of the summary writing task in the NMET reformation in Shanghai on high school English reading and writing teaching.

Washback works in different ways according to different scholars. According to the Washback Hypotheses (Alderson, & Wall, 1993), tests can have influence on many aspects of teaching and learning, including the contents, methods, rate, sequence, degree, and so forth, and tests with important consequences will have washback. In Hughes’ Washback Trichotomy (Hughes, 1993), tests first affect the participants’ attitudes towards the teaching and learning tasks, and these attitudes will affect the teaching and learning process and, eventually, the affected process will influence the students’ learning outcomes. What’s more, in Bailey’s washback model (Bailey, 1996), there also exists possible influence of participants on tests, which is called “washforward.” In sum, tests can have washback on various aspects of teaching and learning process, such as the participants’ teaching and learning concepts, as well as their outcomes.

Previous empirical studies of washback deal with various language tests around the world, and these tests are mainly important high-stake exams, like the IELTS, TOEFL, CET (College English Tests) in China, the NMET in China, and so on (Wall, & Alderson, 1993; Alderson, & Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Shohamy, et al., 1996; Watanabe, 1996; Andrew, 2002; Qi, 2004; Cheng, 2005; Green, 2007; Gu, 2007; Zhang, 2018). Most studies were conducted on the teachers and students involved in the tests, and some studies also included people like language inspectors, the judges of a test and test professors (Shohamy, et al., 1996). The research tools used most frequently in these studies were questionnaires, interviews, and class observation, and some scholars also adopted instruments, like document analysis (Shohamy, et al., 1996), and tests (Green, 2007) in their studies.

Since these empirical studies cover different language tests, they have drawn various conclusions on the washback of these tests. However, to take a closer look, these conclusions have something in common, and some common characteristics of the washback can be found. To name just a few, tests can generate both positive and negative washback (Gu, 2007; Pan, 2019); the effects of tests may vary in different aspects (Alderson, & Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Gu, 2007); and besides the test itself, other factors, like the teachers’ proficiency and the situations of the students’ learning, can produce stronger effects (Watanabe, 1996).

To conclude, all of these studies have provided us with valuable inspiration and insight into washback. Nevertheless, there is still some room for improvement in the studies of washback. For example, in the studies of the washback of the language tests in China, compared to the CET, the NMET has not been studied very frequently, and there is less attention to the reform of the NMET, as well as a certain task in the NMET. Besides, although the previous studies have found out the influence of certain tests on teaching and learning, not many of them have analyzed whether the test has achieved its intended washback. Therefore, this study focused on the newly-added task in the reformation of the NMET (Shanghai), explored its washback on high school English reading and writing teaching, and determined whether the new task has induced its expected washback, thus improving the test design and high school English reading and writing teaching.

## Research Design

### *Research Questions*

This research mainly focuses on the following two questions:

1. What washback does the summary writing task have on high school English teachers' reading and writing teaching concepts?
2. What washback does the summary writing task have on high school English teachers' reading and writing teaching strategies?

### *Research Subjects*

The subjects of this research are 54 teachers from different high schools in Shanghai municipality. To make the research results more accurate and comprehensive, the schools cover the key high schools of Shanghai, the key high schools of different districts in Shanghai as well as the ordinary high schools in Shanghai. Also, the teachers vary in genders, grades, and how long they have taught. All the teachers have finished the questionnaire, and 4 of them have participated in the interview.

### *Research Methods and Instruments*

This study adopted a mixed research method with both qualitative and quantitative instruments, including document analysis, questionnaires, interviews, and class observations. First, the author read and analyzed the documents and literature related to the new NMET (Shanghai), as well as the summary writing task, learned about the background of the NMET (Shanghai) reformation and the characteristics, the requirements, and the intended washback of summary writing. Next, based on the literature, the questionnaire, the interview, and the class observation table were designed. More specifically, the questionnaire was designed based on the Washback Hypotheses (Alderson, & Wall, 1993), the Washback Trichotomy (Hughes, 1989), and the research done by Chen (2016), Jin (2016) and Zhang (2018) to explore the current situations of high school English reading and writing teaching under the background of the new NMET (Shanghai); the interviews, aiming to learn about the changes in high school English reading and writing teaching since the new task was added, were designed according to the questionnaire and the similar research done by Zhang (2018) and Pan (2019); and the class observation table was designed by referring to Zhang's research (Zhang, 2018) to see the washback on the teachers' classroom teaching more directly and find out the proof for the results in the questionnaire and the interview. During the study, all the data were collected with the teachers' permission with the use of these instruments.

## Results and Discussions

### *The Washback of the Summary Writing Task on High School English Teachers' Reading and Writing Teaching Concepts*

According to the data collected, the summary writing task has generated positive washback on high school English teachers' reading and writing teaching concepts and has induced its intended washback that teachers should pay attention to the comprehensive use of skills (Wang, 2019).

**Table 1. Washback on Reading and Writing Teaching Concepts**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reading and writing should be taught separately.	54	1	4	1.94	.899
Reading and writing should be taught together.	54	2	5	4.22	.816

According to the questionnaire, most teachers agree with the integration of reading and writing in English teaching. By contrast, few teachers think these two skills should be taught separately. Also, the teachers' reading and writing teaching concepts have changed because of the new task.

*In the past, although I also agreed with this concept, after all it was not tested in NMET (Shanghai). Therefore, I seldom applied this theory to my teaching practice. Now that the integration of reading and writing is tested, I attach more importance to it. (Teacher C)*

### **The Washback of the Summary Writing Task on High School English Teachers' Reading and Writing Teaching Strategies**

First, the summary writing task has positive effects on reading and writing teaching materials and has achieved its intended washback that teachers should ask students to read extensively (Wang, 2019). On the other hand, it has also produced some negative washback.

**Table 2. Washback on Reading and Writing Teaching Materials**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Textbooks	54	2	5	4.20	.595
Reference books	54	1	5	3.94	.712
English newspapers, magazines and novels.	54	1	5	4.00	.777
Model tests of NMET (Shanghai)	54	1	5	4.06	.856
Past NMET (Shanghai)	54	1	5	3.69	1.195

**Table 3. The Use of Reading and Writing Teaching Materials in Different Grades**

	Textbooks	Reference books	English newspapers, magazines and novels	Model tests	Past NMET (Shanghai)
Senior One	4.14	3.86	3.79	3.57	3.71
Senior Two	4.24	4.00	4.08	4.12	3.56
Senior Three	4.20	3.93	4.01	4.40	3.87

Based on the questionnaire, we can see in reading and writing teaching, the teachers tend to use textbooks, the model tests of the NMET (Shanghai), and the materials, like English newspapers, magazines and novels, showing the variety of the teaching materials. Also, the Senior Two and Senior Three teachers prefer to use the model tests and the past NMET (Shanghai) than the Senior One teachers. However, these materials didn't change much since the implementation of the new task.

*I think there are no changes in our teaching materials. We still use our textbooks and English newspapers after the new task was implemented. And when teaching summary writing, we use the exercises, because there are no summary writing tasks in our textbooks. (Teacher A)*

Similar results can also be found in class observation. In the reading and writing classes observed, 59.1% of the classes used the textbooks, and 18.2% of the classes used English newspapers. Also, most Senior Three classes used model tests and the past NMET (Shanghai) more often than the other materials.

As to reading and writing teaching contents, the new task has produced positive washback and achieved its expected washback to some degree. From the questionnaire, it turned out that in reading and writing teaching, the teachers tend to cover language knowledge, discourse knowledge, higher-order thinking abilities, cohesive devices and synonymous substitutions a lot. Also, the Senior Two and Senior Three teachers focus more on the techniques of writing a summary compared to those in Senior One. These results were also reflected in the reading and writing classes observed. Moreover, according to the interview, the teachers' reading and writing teaching focuses have changed because of the new task, and they have laid more emphasis on synonymous substitutions and discourse knowledge. However, the new task has not fully achieved its intended washback. According to the questionnaire, some contents, like comprehensive ability to read and write and simplifying language, are not dealt with in reading and writing teaching.

What's more, in terms of reading and writing teaching activities, the summary writing task has generated positive washback and has achieved some of its expectations. According to the data of the questionnaire, when teaching reading and writing, the teachers tend to explain language knowledge, analyze the features of a passage, accumulate synonymous substitutions and teach how to use cohesive devices very often. These activities also appeared very frequently in the reading and writing classes observed. Also, the Senior Two and Senior Three teachers prefer to ask their students to do the summary writing exercises on model tests and the past NMET (Shanghai) and teach the techniques of summary writing. In addition, based on the interview, the teachers' reading and writing teaching activities have changed since the new task was implemented. Compared to the past, currently they tend to teach the students how to paraphrase and simplify language more often, and they also spend more time guiding their students to analyze the features in a passage. On the other hand, the new task also has some negative washback on the teaching activities and has not fully induced its intended washback. As is mentioned above, the Senior Two and Senior Three teachers tend to spend more time on the test-oriented activities. According to the questionnaire, the activities like read-to-write post-reading activities and reading extensively receive little attention from the teachers.

### **Implications and Conclusion**

Through the data analysis, the study found the washback of the summary writing task on high school English reading and writing teaching, including the teaching concepts and teaching strategies. Based on the above findings, suggestions are provided for the test designers and the high school English teachers to make the task induce more of its intended and positive washback.

First and foremost, test designers should carefully select the reading materials in this task. To be more specific, they should vary the genres of the passages, since the genres of the reading materials in this task in the past NMET (Shanghai) are limited to argumentation and exposition, according to the analysis done by Wang (2019). Besides, the designers should choose the passages that are meaningful and closely related to the students' real life so that the students' interest can be activated, and they will devote more to reading the passages. In addition, the passages should bear clear structures so that they can not only make the students grasp the main points accurately but also provide effective language input for the students and make them aware that English writings should be well-organized, thus developing their writing skills.

What's more, as for the high school English teachers, first they should realize that English should be a tool for language communication and culture communication rather than a simple tool for dealing with the test, and that English is the medium of developing the students' thinking and literature competences (Xu, 2016). It is also true for the summary writing task. The summary writing task in the NMET (Shanghai) can develop the students' various competences in reading and writing and help them deal with the situations

in which they need to finish certain read-to-write tasks in their future study and work (Wang, 2019). Therefore, apart from assigning drills to the students and focusing a lot on the preparation for the test, the teachers, especially the Senior Two and Senior Three teachers, should lay more emphasis on developing the students' various competences in reading and writing teaching, which is beneficial to the students' test performance and their English learning. Also, the teachers should focus more on the knowledge and skills that are neglected in current English reading and writing teaching, as well as carry out various activities to practice them because these knowledge and skills are also important to the students' mastery of English reading and writing. What's more, the teachers should practice the students' ability to summarize from Senior One. It's true that the students will be able to summarize a passage once they are equipped with enough language knowledge. However, the ability to summarize should be cultivated step by step gradually throughout the whole phase of high school English learning. Hence, in real teaching practice, the teachers should ask their students to try summarizing, and they can lower the requirements. For example, they can ask them to summarize a paragraph, allow them to use the expressions in the passage, give them key words, and so on. In this way, the students' ability to summarize can be developed more effectively, and their reading and writing skills can also be promoted.

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# Linguistic Philosophy and Writing Practice in Iris Murdoch's *Under the Net*

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**[Abstract]** *The discussion of language philosophy is a significant theme of Iris Murdoch's first novel, Under the Net. While referring to the theme, Murdoch not only presented her thinking through dialogues of the characters, but also embedded her philosophy of language in the way of creating narrative contradictions. By manipulating the narrative technique, Murdoch shows her complex and ambivalent attitude towards language, as she at the same time doubted its ability to acquire the philosophical truth and trusted its ability to reflect real life. She also pointed out that the key therapy to break through the net of language is to return to reality and cling to her moral philosophy of "un-selfing".*

**[Keywords]** *Iris Murdoch; Under the Net; linguistic philosophy; moral philosophy*

## Introduction

Iris Murdoch's first book, *Under the Net*, attracts critics by its philosophical meaning. As a result, thematical studies of this bildungsroman have been focusing on its contemplation over existentialism and Murdoch's moral philosophy ideas hidden beneath. The linguistic philosophy, as one of the prominent subjects, is also embedded in the study of the novel's philosophical significance, which was palpably reflected in its title. The title "Under the Net" takes the concept of "net" from the linguistic philosophy of Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein believes that language is unable to reflect things and concepts without experiences. It is deeply related to his concepts of language plays: "...the games take place in environments that are regulated (a net; boundaries of various kinds)" (Puchner, 2015). Human beings are under a net of language, which blocks them from the real world. The very implicature of the title determined the centric place of the language theme in this novel.

Both foreign and domestic researchers have paid some attention to the linguistic philosophy of the author and the novel. Among the foreign critics, John B. Vickery explores "the ambiguities of perception and language" in the work by connecting and comparing *Under the Net* with Sartre's *La Nausee*. He believes the work realized "the apprehension of art's existential role of epistemological exploration" (Vickery, 1971). Among the domestic critics, Yin Tiechao and Fan Lingmei explored the close relation between Murdoch's novels and Wittgenstein's linguistic philosophy (Yin, & Fan, 2005). He Weiwen made an overall review of Murdoch's linguistic philosophy, which was deeply influenced by Plato, Kant, and Wittgenstein, and against Derrida (He, 2008). Kou Shizhong pointed out Wittgenstein's influence on the specific novel, *Under the Net* (Kou, 2005).

However, few critics observe the language subject from both the perspective of theme and narration, the discussion of which has only involved the first-person male narration (He, 2004) and narrative space (Yang, 2009). Since literary works themselves are a play with language, Murdoch's dual identity of philosopher and novelist renders *Under the Net* a realization of language theme both in its form and content. That is to say, linguistic philosophy is not only discussed by the narrator, but also merged in the writing practice of the novel itself. So far, the only research concerning the connection between Murdoch's philosophy and her narration is a study made by R. L. Widmann, who discussed Murdoch's execution of her theory of writing novels in *Under the Net* (Widmann, 1967). He found both successful and contradictory

applications in her practice, yet missed the linguistic philosophy that connected her theme and narration. Actually, the consistency of her thematic and narrative linguistic philosophy in *Under the Net* can be proved between the lines. By writing the very novel, Murdoch introduced her contemplation over the net of language and the way to get rid of or get along with it. This paper will first investigate the theme of “unreliable language” and linguistic philosophy through characters and plots, then reveal the narrative significance on enhancing the theme and eventually disclose how Murdoch’s moral philosophy helps to understand the “unreliable language.”

### **The Problems of Language and Linguistic Philosophy**

All the thematic analysis in the study of *Under the Net* cannot make a detour to avoid the conversation about language between Jake and Hugo. In this conversation, they have a significant philosophical discussion on the essence of language, the relationship between language and truth, and the question of whether language is able to reflect the authentic life. Their conversation apparently indicates that Hugo and Jake hold two opposite attitudes towards language. Hugo doesn’t believe that written language can reflect reality, and neither does he trust writing, but would rather choose to communicate face-to-face by spoken language. On the contrary, Jake, as a writer, prefers written language. He compiles his conversation with Hugo into a book titled *The Silencer*. It is believed that Jake’s attitude towards language reflects his pursuit of epistemological truth, while Hugo represents the linguistic philosophy of Wittgenstein’s, believing language cannot approach the truth (He, 2008). Nevertheless, the characters’ view of language is also contradictory and is much more complex than binary opposition. It not only concerns the relationship between language and reality, but also involves the concepts of spoken language and written language, which was a heated topic in linguistic philosophy.

The conflict between spoken language and written language is primarily reflected on the various characters of *Under the Net*. First of all, it falls to the identity of Jake. He is a writer and translator who makes his living by writing, which heralds his belief in the written language. Most characters other than Jake are individuals who live on oral language. Hugo, a businessman, must negotiate and make transaction by oral conversations, and, personally, he is also obsessed in talking with people. Dave is an authentic philosophy professor, enlightening students with oral speech like the Greek philosophers; Sadie and Anna are singers and actors, who, as well, rely on spoken language to live. In his relationship with these people, Jake’s stance in language, influenced by his identity, is contrasted and exposed. His careers of writer and translator make writing the center of Jake’s life. He is unable to live without writing and translation.

His focus on writing language seems to be an echo of Derrida, who took the written language as the fundamental language. However, the protagonist fails to catch the core of the deconstructive idea. Rather, Jake takes the language system as a fixed, reliable cognitive manner to build his own world, which Derrida means to overturn. Jake’s insistence on writing language allows him to weave a set of fixed cognitive systems using his own signs in his own mind, and then deconstruct the referential ability of oral language by lying. Because of his distrust of the referential ability of oral language, he often doubts the authenticity of other people’s words that are inconsistent with his own “language system.” To solidify the language is undoubtedly to deconstruct its referring ability. By transforming dynamic and unstable oral language into authoritarian and systematic writing language, Jake intends to control his own life, yet he fails .

His failure also has much to do with his belief that written language is capable of seizing epistemological truth while it may fail in reflecting the real life. He believes that he would be the controller of language rather than be controlled by it. To prove it, he tries to find the truth through his written language.

At first, he hopefully expects the philosopher Dave would lead his way, thinking “he might tell me some important truths.” However, Dave, who holds the idea of practical philosophy, understands the difficulty and powerlessness of language in referring to the truth. He disagrees with Jake’s lifestyle and ideology of heartfully pursuing the truth with language but ignoring the practical events in life. Consequently, their discussion “never seemed to get past the word” and always ends in failure. Later, Jake resumes his search for truth in his conversation with Hugo, and feels encouraged by his inspiring ideas. However, when he really touches the “center of Hugo’s thought,” he finds it totally detrimental and destructive to his view of language.

While Jake’s linguistic philosophy partly inherits Derrida’s view, Hugo is the spokesman of Plato’s and Wittgenstein’s linguistic philosophy. Plato emphasized that truth is vaguely flashed in conversation. In his philosophy, the essence of philosophy lies in conversation, while writing destroys the direct connection between the “presence” and truth. It is their presence in the conversations that makes Jake feel “Hugo’s enquiries rarely failed to throw an extraordinary amount of light on whatever he concerned himself with...During these conversations I began to see the whole world anew.” In the conversation, Hugo usually plays the role of Socrates, asking questions repeatedly, driving Jake to think, demonstrating the infinite meaning behind a simple sentence. His role is meant to point out the limitation of written language – it cannot pursue the “extension” of meaning, while the oral language can.

When it comes to the relationship between language and truth, Hugo hints at Wittgenstein’s linguistic philosophy. In the very discussion about language, Hugo says: “All the time when I speak to you [.....], I’m saying not precisely what I think, but what will impress you and make you respond [.....]. The whole language is a machine for making falsehoods” (Murdoch, 2019, p.68). Wittgenstein’s concept of “language-game” can be inferred from it: “Communication through language is equal to the action in the game where people play to meet their ends and achieve their goals” (He, 2008). Wittgenstein believes that words can only present facts and are unable to bear or explain truth. The meaning of a word depends on the role it plays in the “language game.” The meaning will be lost as long as it leaves the very context. When Jake transforms their conversation into a written book, he realizes his action of depriving the context from words, as well as destroying Hugo’s philosophy. Feeling guilty, he stops contacting this loyal friend. Their diverging views upon oral language eventually call an end to their friendship.

The problems of language are not only presented through the characters. When writing this novel, Murdoch, who is also a novelist, intended to involve the readers in the language game with the help of Jake’s first-person narrative perspective to better reflect the problems of language.

### **The Deceiving Narration in *Under the Net***

The narration of *Under the Net* is a blending of traditional realistic and post-modern style. The setting of plot and overall narrative style remains traditional and realistic. It takes the first-person perspective of the protagonist, describing his encounter in a continuous and consecutive chronological order, with his psychological description and memories interspersed during the period, which makes it easy for the readers to become immersed in. However, the “facts” and ideas the narrative language announce its post-modernity. Jake’s narrative is full of self-contradictions, indicating the unreliability of the narrative language by confusing readers. Its self-contradiction can be detected and interpreted as two types: the contradiction and deviation between his narration and the objective facts of life, and the contradiction between his narration about himself, his thoughts as well as feelings, and his speech and actions.

Jake is confident that he knows his friends well and has things under control. However, the truth is, he often makes mistakes in descriptions of others and events, which gradually reveal themselves as a totally different fact. At the beginning of the novel, Jake regards Finn, the man seemingly inseparable from him, as a dependent person who “misses his inner world.” Yet, at the end of the novel, Finn turns out to be an independent person with dreams and goals to pursue. He has been saving money in order to return to his hometown, and he achieves his goal at the end of the novel, which greatly surprises Jake. Similarly, Jake thinks he knows Anna, Hugo, and Sarty enough to determine their emotional situation until he eventually finds out that everything is mistaken. These long-interval contradictory narratives shape characters in fixed images in advance. With the development of the plot, the language of the previous narratives is gradually subverted by the surfaced reality, and the readers will then realize that they have fallen into the trap of language by following the narratives step by step. On the other hand, contradictory narratives with short intervals cause immediate confusion. For example, while introducing Dave, Jake makes an impractical, “sarcastic and unsympathetic” image of him, yet Dave’s later performance, including urging Jake to find a stable job, being concerned about Jake’s life, and offering practical suggestions soon subverts the former image. The contradictory narrations reveal the deception of language.

While Jake’s contradictory narration about other people and the facts reveals the unintentional deceptive nature of language, the contradiction of his psychological narration reflects the intentional deception of language. Jake’s narratives related to his inner feelings will soon be overturned by totally opposite behaviors. While describing his attitude and feelings to Magdalen, Jake says, “I had become uninterested in Magdalen’s private life.” However, while confronting Magdalen, he questions her emotionally and made “a passable scene outside the bathroom door and even banged on the panel” (Murdoch, 2019, p.68). The inconsistency between language and Jake’s performance makes the previous narration unreliable and questionable.

To make the narration more confusing, Jake not only negates his previous narration through his behavior, but also constantly covers the old narration with new thoughts and psychological description. He does not try to please Magdalen in order to prevent being driven away, but he actually realizes “the whole essence of my need of her” and even a sense of responsibility that did not exist before being aroused in his head. Jake’s inconsistent attitude towards things reflects the deception of language and makes the former narration meaningless. While the readers are trying to understand the novel, which is full of contradictions, they get involved in the “language game.”

By managing the narrative skills to involve the reader in this language game, Murdoch intends to demonstrate the problems of language—its potential to deceive and its powerlessness in handling the truth. She makes Jake’s narration in *Under the Net* a kind of language game, weaving a net of language to confuse and enlighten not only the characters but also the readers. By distinguishing the truth and falsehood of the language, the readers learn about her linguistic philosophy and the moral philosophy behind it.

### **Reign Limited Language by Moral Philosophy**

By taking the postmodern narrative skills, *Under the Net* wasn’t meant to prove postmodern linguistic philosophies but, on the contrary, proposed a solution to reign the language through Murdoch’s moral philosophy. The protagonist gains the morals in Murdoch’s philosophy with the progress of narration, including the concern for “reality” and “un-selfing.”

At the beginning of novel, Jake’s purpose of controlling language is to seek epistemological truth. He hates and rejects real, daily conversations. He is particularly keen on the theoretical conversation, no matter

it is with the philosopher Dave or with Hugo but resists the routine talks with Anna. It is these two contrasting attitudes towards facts and theories that push the old Jake farther and farther from a moral lifestyle, as well as the real, practical world, which is the core to managing language in Murdoch's theory. After Jake's experience in Paris hit him with a series of truths, his attitude towards "truth" and "theory" gradually changes. Jake, who has long been trapped by language, eventually finds the truth and the authentic life through language. In his last conversation with Hugo, the real, oral language destructs Jake's self-woven writing language to pieces. It is subversive and painful, yet inevitable for Jake to experience the disillusionment. In this conversation, Murdoch brings language back to its original and basic function, which has been valued since its birth, yet has been challenged lately—language is a bridge of expression and communication; consequently, it is an indispensable approach to resolve the misunderstanding and deception.

Before Jake's awakening from his illusion, the immoral ego-centrism hinders him from realizing the fundamental function of language. It pushes Jake away from reality. His persistence in a self-writing language system is also an embodiment and result of egocentrism. Jake's language solidifies, which results in the disconnection between his cognition and reality, while the real language is meant to be flexible and changeable. He connects symbols and meanings in a fixed way, forms a fixed cognitive system in his mind, and refuses to accept new ideas expressed by the oral language that contradicted his writing system. In the novel, Jake admits "the substance of my life is a private conversation with myself which to turn into a dialogue would be equivalent to self-destruction." His view of language is reflected in his self-centered attitude towards life. Because of his fixed writing language system, he confines his identity as a "writer" or a "pursuer of truth," which makes practical jobs incompatible with the identity. So, when Dave kindly suggests that he be a hospital nurse, an official, a factory inspector or a primary school teacher, Jake thinks Dave is embarrassing him. Dave's comments clearly reveal his self-centered characteristics: "always you are thinking of your soul. Precisely it is not to think of your soul, but to think of other people."

The break of Jake's language predicament is realized based on the break of egocentrism. The novel ends in a conversation between Jake and the shopkeeper, Mrs. Tinck, about the unusual pattern of a newborn cat. When Mrs. Tinck is puzzled by the pattern, Jake starts with the old habit to search for reasons in his "writing systems." However, soon he finds the deficiency in this system and relinquishes his urge to search for a certain theory and replies: "I don't know why it is [.....]It's just one of the wonders of the world" (Murdoch, 2019, p. 286). His acceptance of others' opinions and the fact indicates the breaking through of egocentrism. This idea properly resonates in Murdoch's moral philosophy of "un-selfing." The concept of "un-selfing" is at the heart of his moral philosophy, which amounts to finding a way out of the claustrophobia of our self-regard by answering a call from outside" (Smith, 2019). In Murdoch's view, the only way to break through the net of language is "un-selfing." To reign language, one needs to jump out of the self-centered and obsession of metaphysical truths and turn to the facts and real life. One should give up the pursuit of the theory of logocentrism and accept the variability of the world.

As a novelist, Murdoch's view of language in her writing indicates that she does not agree with post-modern way of deconstructing language. Her writing reflects her contradictory view on language that is both skeptical and positive. She believes that though language is a net that separates human beings and the truth, it can't cover the reality under it. On escaping or resolving the net of language, Murdoch introduces her own moral philosophy of "un-selfing."

## Conclusion

Giving up the pursuit of the theory of logos centralism, the presence of metaphysics, and grasping an objective reality, Jake eventually gets rid of the net of language he has woven and sees the variability of the world, as well as the essence of specific trivial things. By presenting the language theme both in content and narration, Murdoch teaches a penetrating lesson on language philosophy. She brings a complex but bright vision that although the language may sometimes be powerless, it is not as nihilistic and unable to refer to the truth as it is deconstructed by post structuralism.

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# The Broken Mask – A Study of Black-White Relations in Eugene O’Neill’s *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*

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**[Abstract]** Eugene Gladstone O’Neill’s *All God’s Chillun Got Wings* is abundant with broken images – including the broken Congo mask, the segregated black and white communities, the different black and white music – all these reflect the tension and alienation of the black-white relations in American society in the 1920s. The paper uses an imagery approach and a new critical approach to analyze the broken black-white relations in the play and the conflicts of characters, Ella and Jim.

**[Keywords]** Eugene O’Neill; *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*; broken mask; black-white relations

## Introduction

Eugene Gladstone O’Neill’s (1888-1953) plays are centered upon family relations and personal losses and have tragic endings; they can be approached from various critical perspectives. Bigsby commented on O’Neill, “He had a lifelong argument with America and such arguments are hardly likely to be small-scale” (Bigsby, 2000, p. 15).

Scholars have conducted much research on *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*. In *The Plays of Eugene O’Neill: A New Assessment*, Virginia Floyd explored the social background of the United States in the 1920s: “...and this is in 1924, at a time when twentieth-century American racism reached a new level of intensity and extremism” (Floyd, 1985, p. 257). In *Contour in Time*, Travis Bogard wrote that in *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*, “O’Neill recast the materials of the earlier play [Welded] in a broader social context and focused on the marriage between a Negro and a white girl” (Bogard, 1988, p. 192). In *O’Neill’s Shakespeare*, Normand Berlin compared O’Neill’s and Shakespeare’s plays. In the second chapter of Part I, named “Black and White”, Normand Berlin made a thorough analysis of *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*. He believed that “Chillun is both a treatise on race relations and a clinical study of ‘two human beings’” (Berlin, 1993, p. 46). John Henry Raleigh, in *Eugene O’Neill: The Man and His Works*, compared the protagonist Jim in *All God’s Chillun Got Wings* and Huck in Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. He noticed Jim in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Jim Harris in *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*. He wrote, “by helping Jim [in Huckleberry Finn], whom he loves, Huck thinks he will go to hell because he helped a ‘nigger.’ Jim, on his part, can never think outside of racial terms: ‘I’d bust him over de head, dat is, if he warn’t a white man’” (Raleigh, 1969). Peter J. Gillett analyzed and explained the racial conflicts in *All God’s Chillun Got Wings* and other five plays with black characters. The paper also analyzed the Congo mask in *All God’s Chillun Got Wings* and studied Jim and Ella’s disillusionment (Gillett, 1972). Chinese scholars have also done some research on *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*. Yang Xiawei explored the black characters in *Thirst*, *The Moon of the Caribbees*, *The Dreamy Kid*, *The Emperor Jones* and *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*. Yet Yang Xiawei’s thesis did not discuss the Congo mask and its significant artistic importance (Yang, 2007, pp. 1-5). Tao Jiusheng analyzed the play from the psycho-archetype perspective and studied the tragic vision of the play using Nietzsche’s tragedy theories (Tao, 2006, pp. 1-7). Ren Xian made a thorough study of the masks in O’Neill’s plays (Ren, 2010, pp. 1-3).

The paper explores the black-white relations in *All God's Chillun Got Wings*. The broken Congo mask imagery is a central theme of the play. This paper analyzes the social background of American society, Jim Harris's broken dream and love and, Ella Downey's broken sense of superiority and love. Throughout the play, a sense of brokenness can be easily felt. The paper also analyzes the imagery in the play using the New Criticism technique. In so doing, the paper endeavors to investigate the then American society and the inner worlds of Jim Harris and Ella Downey.

### **The Broken Societal Spectrum**

*All God's Chillun Got Wings* was "written in late 1923 and first published in *The American Mercury* in February 1924" (Floyd, 1985, p. 257). The play was first staged in 1924 at the Provincetown Playhouse by Experimental Theatre, Inc. Jim's actor was an African American, the "statuesque, deep-voiced Paul Robeson" (Wainscott, 1998, p. 103) and Ella was played by a white woman, the "tiny, emotional Mary Blair" (Wainscott, 1998, p. 103). At the end of the play, Ella kissed Jim's hand "as a child might, tenderly and gratefully" (O'Neill, p. 315). The mere action caused a disturbance. Local authorities did not grant the right to use a group of children in the Act I, Scene 1. But, finally, the play premiered smoothly: James Light, the director of the play, read the first scene to the audience instead.

The settings in *All God's Chillun Got Wings* are full of the sense of brokenness. Act I, Scene 1 is set at "a corner in lower New York, at the edge of a colored district" (O'Neill, 1988, p. 279) where three streets meet and there live blacks and whites. "In the street leading left, the faces are all white; in the street leading right, all black" (O'Neill, 1988, p. 279). As the play rolls on, over a span of almost fourteen years, this corner stands nearly still. The blacks and whites, although living at the same corner in New York, the economic heart land of the United States, just do not have much interaction.

The songs in Act I, Scene 1, 2, and 3 are all divided: on one side of the street, black singers sing their songs; at the same time on the other side are white singers singing different songs. O'Neill employs words carefully; when the white singer starts to sing, the black singer always "replies": there is a certain degree of hostility and brokenness in this. By setting ironic contrast between the two groups of people, O'Neill is hinting at the broken black-white racial relations.

Moreover, as Virginia Floyd observed, the laughter of blacks and whites is also different:

*Laughter "express the difference in race": whites laugh in a constrained manner, finding it difficult to express "natural emotion." Blacks, "frankly participants in the spirit of the spring," respond joyous to life (Floyd, 1985, p. 260).*

The mental states of black and white are also different. The blacks in the community are vibrant in spring time, full of hope and energy. In contrast, the whites are not in their high spirits. The difference could be felt easily.

One prominent scene in *All God's Chillun Got Wings* is the wedding ceremony of Jim and Ella. The wedding scene is visually spectacular as the couple emerges from a church, blacks lining one side of the stage, whites the other. In Act I, Scene 4, when Jim and Ella marry in the church, the hostile social situations and racial tensions are much clearer.

More evident is the interactions between blacks and whites in *All God's Chillun Got Wings*. At the beginning of Act I, Scene 1, a total of eight children are playing marbles on the sidewalk. The children are evenly divided. There are four black children and four white children. It becomes clear that these people, including Jim and Ella, are influenced by racial prejudices. Mickey, a white man who grows up with Ella and Jim, is now a prize fighter and having an affair with Ella. When Jim knows Mickey is a playboy and

wants to ask him to be good to Ella. Mickey tells Jim not to forget about his race. Jim uses “colored people” to refer to himself, but Mickey straightly calls Jim “coons,” a disparaging word demeaning his skin color.

The broken relations between blacks and whites could not only be felt in the conversations between blacks and whites; the racial tension could also be felt in the black-black conversations. These could also reflect the social realities and the social tension. After Jim’s conversation with Mickey and Ella, Joe, a black man himself, is giving Jim a piece of his mind. Joe reminds Jim of the fact that their fathers are the same, the only difference being that Jim’s father saves the money he earns and Joe’s father drinks beer. Joe, in his conversations with Jim, repeatedly says the word “nigger” to reinforce the impression that Jim is but a part of the black race and all his efforts are useless. By grabbing Jim and shaking his body, asking “Is you a nigger or isn’t you? Is you a nigger, Nigger? Nigger, is you a nigger?” (O’Neill, 1988, p. 288). Joe is shaking Jim’s ambition and aspiration. Jim is forced to admit that he is only a nigger, and he is no different from Joe. “Yes. I’m a nigger. We’re both niggers.” The social reality is that blacks are blacks and whites are whites, the rift is clear and could not be trespassed.

Social tensions are also evident in Jim’s home. Mrs. Harris and Hattie basically could not accept their interracial marriage. When Ella lives in the Jim’s house, she dares not to go out of the house. She still wants to be with the white people. Ella’s monologue reveals the conflicts in her mind. She thinks Jim’s father, Mr. Harris, is “dolloed up like a circus horse” (O’Neill, 1988, p. 304). She thinks the mask is only not scary at all and Jim cannot pass the bar examination. Ella thinks “He [Jim] won’t pass, you wait and see. Not in a thousand years” (O’Neill, 1988, p. 304). She wants to see Shorty, but she is afraid of being seen in Jim’s house in the black community and laughed at by him. She is afraid of losing her identity in front of the white man she knows. The ambivalent state of mind is clear. The marriage between Jim and Ella has brought much psychological pressure on Ella. She is mentally unstable. She would hate Jim one moment, but she would love and miss Jim the next moment. Ella’s mental state also reveals the broken black-white relations in American society then.

Margaret Ranald, in *From Trial to Triumph (1913-1924): The Early Plays* notices:

*“However, Chillun has more to it than simple race relations. Its real theme is the destruction of a good man by a selfish or inappropriate wife. Almost alone among reviewers, Heywood Brown understood that fact: ‘this tiresome play...gives to a first rate Negro a third rate white woman’ documenting her slide into insanity (New York World, 16 May, 1924)” (Ranald, 1998).*

Eugene O’Neill is not merely recording racial relations in the play; he is considering the human tragedy in a larger sense. He is exploring the inner worlds of the husband and wife, Jim Harris and Ella Downey.

### **Jim’s Broken Dream And Love**

Eugene O’Neill had made it clear that the focus of *All God’s Chillun Got Wings* is to explore the inner hearts of the two protagonists, Jim Harris and Ella Downey. John H. Raleigh wrote, “...the play was not a racial play or about the ‘race problem’ but about two human beings and their tragic struggle for happiness; that by the last act Jim and Ella are mankind and its problems” (Raleigh, 1969).

In Jim’s life, there shows brokenness in his pursuit of dream. Like his father and sister, Jim, since childhood, has showed a strong sense of competition and wants to win on every occasion. As Jim Harris grows, he has met with many prejudices and discriminations in his life. He grows up and is aware of his black identity and the difficulties of being a winner in life. He is the only black in his class and is under a kind of psychological pressure that makes it difficult for him to fully demonstrate his abilities. In the all-

white atmosphere, Jim feels uneasy and depressed. The white students' looks makes him nervous, and he trembles, and all his previous preparations escape him. He says to Ella, "But I feel branded!" (O'Neill, 1988, p. 293). It is hard for him to get rid of the psychological pressure. The idea of being a lawyer is beyond his imagination, and he has to muster up all his courage to prepare for it

On the other hand, Jim's brokenness comes also from the outside. The pressure also comes from blacks and whites alike. In Act I, Scene 2, knowing Jim wants to be a lawyer; Mickey laughs at Jim. Joe grabs Jim and forces him to admit that it is no use to try hard in society. No matter how hard Jim tries, he is only a black person. Joe would not stop beating Jim until Jim admits "Yes, I am a nigger. We are both niggers" (O'Neill, 1988, p. 288).

Jim's brokenness is also demonstrated in his pursuit of love. For Jim, another dream in life is to be with his childhood playmate and his lover, Ella Downey. In Act I, Scene 1, when other children mock Ella as "Painty Face," Jim just wants to protect Ella and fights off other children. The two of them do not want to be apart after the marble playing. Jim makes up his mind to be with Ella when he is a boy. Yet, Jim clearly knows the difficulty of being with Ella and that he has to make himself "white." He even drinks chalk and water so as to be white in skin color. Later, Jim is trapped in an inferiority complex that makes it harder for him to perform well.

Jim has to stay in the house to study law. He is torn between the love for Ella and his ambition. It is hard for him to pass the bar examination. He also has to take care of Ella. Hattie detects Ella is abnormal and would not like to take care of her. Hattie advises Jim to send Ella to the asylum, but Jim refuses immediately.

The words "white" and "black" also have profound meanings in *All God's Chillun Got Wings*. For Jim and the black residents in the community, black is connected with inferiority, weakness, failure, and frustration. Being a black man means it is basically impossible for Jim to be successful in society. It is hard for a black man to be a leader in the white man's world. The black color naturally translates into inferiority. "Jim Harris, beyond his Negro race, is a symbolic embodiment of the 'black' or the dark side of man's nature, which conflicts with the 'white' or socially acceptable side" (Carpenter, 1979, p. 100). Jim has known that since he was a boy. He drinks chalk and water in the hopes of whitening his skin. In his eyes, white is better than black. He says to Ella, all love is white. He wants to be a white man in order to be with Ella. Even he could not change his black skin, but he could be a successful man in the white man's world. He would like to be the whitest of the white in order to win Ella's heart. In a word, Jim's American dream is to be a white man, to live the life that white people readily enjoy and to do great things for the black people.

By revealing Jim's broken state, Eugene O'Neill shows the reader how difficult it is for a black man to become successful in American society, and how difficult it is for a black man to marry a white woman. Jim's tragic situations are the result of the broken black and white relations. Although black men are supposed to rightfully pursue their dreams, society is not prepared to allow black people to enter mainstream American society. Black and white people all have stereotypes that are hard to change. This hurts Jim and Ella in the play. Jim's broken state just reflect the reality in society. Jim's determined love for Ella is what keeps him trying.

### **Ella's Broken Love And White Identity**

The broken state in *All God's Chillun Got Wings* not only appears in Jim's love and dream, it also appears in Ella's love and her white identity. The broken state of Ella is also worth analyzing.

Ella is a woman who wants to live a good life and have a good marriage. The broken state of Ella is evident in her love. A close look at her love of Jim reveals that she shows different attitudes toward Jim at different times. When they are young, she is not happy with the nickname of being called “Painty Face.” Jim comes to her rescue and fights off other children who mock her. The two of them love each other and agree to marry each other when they are older. Saying she wants to have black skin, Jim says it is not good to have black skin for she would be despised. Jim loves her white skin because white represents “purty” (O’Neill, 1988, p. 281). They talk late and unwillingly have to go home. Nine years later, Ella becomes a white woman. In this time, she is in love with Mickey. She refuses to have much conversation with Jim. The love of Ella is broken. She wants to have a baby with Jim, but she is also afraid of having a black child. She loves Jim, but this love has brought Ella much psychological pressure that she finds hard to handle. Ella has to accept a love affair that is much too different from other normal marriage patterns. She is under constant difficulties that make her crazy.

Another broken state of Ella is her broken white man’s identity and superiority. Ella admits that Jim is better than other white people. She thinks that Jim is a black person with a white heart, while other white people all have black hearts. She further confesses to Jim that “You’ve been white to me, Jim” (O’Neill, 1988, p. 293). Ella loves Jim and agrees to marry him. But after they get married, Ella still has to overcome her own white man’s sense of superiority. It is still not easy for her to get rid of the stereotype in her heart. Ella is not happy to live with a black man and starts to get weaker and unhappy. She finds it difficult to love a black man. She loves Jim, but she has to accept the fact that Jim is a black man. She is unable to face the people around her, fearing that other people discover that she married a black man. She starts to stay in the house and becomes unhappy.

Another important thing in the whole play is the Congo mask Hattie gives to Jim and Ella as a wedding present. The mask “is a Negro primitive mask from the Congo – a grotesque face, inspiring obscure, dim connotations in one’s mind, but beautifully done, conceived in a true religious spirit” (O’Neill, 1988, p. 297). The mask takes different meanings for Hattie and Ella. As for Hattie, she thinks the mask represents the energy and very soul of the black race; the mask is a work of art by the black artist. Hattie regards the mask as the fine artwork that is parallel to Michaelangelo’s works. Hattie is so proud of the black heritage and sends Jim and Ella the Congo mask to wish them well. But Ella does not like the mask. She thinks the mask is an ugly thing and cannot see anything precious in the mask itself.

The image of the mask is important in the play in the sense that the mask represents the black people’s proud tradition. But Ella finds it difficult to readily accept the black brilliance the mask represents. As the play goes on, when the room seems smaller and smaller, the mask becomes larger and larger. The mask, with its “grotesque face” (O’Neill, 1988, p. 297), stands out in the room and “acquires an arbitrary accentuation” (O’Neill, 1988, p. 297). It inspires the dark side in the watcher’s mind. Ella dislikes the mask at the first sight of it and comes to hate it.

In O’Neill’s *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*, Ella is a woman in a state of brokenness. Ella and Jim’s love affair is a broken state because the two of them have to face tremendous social pressures. Ella has to overcome the psychological pressure inside. She finds it difficult to overcome her racial discrimination and live restfully with Jim. The broken mask is a vivid manifestation of the broken state of Ella’s inner heart and the broken state of the society in regard of racial conditions.

## Conclusion

*All God's Chillun Got Wings* is considered by many critics to be one of Eugene O'Neill's most successful plays. It is not only a play on racial problems. T. S. Eliot comments on the play, "Mr. O'Neill has got hold of a 'strong plot'; he not only understands one aspect of the 'negro problem', but he succeeds in giving this problem universality, in implying a wider application" (Cargill, 1970, pp.168-169). Throughout the whole play, readers could feel the segregated state between the whites and the blacks. The different songs blacks and whites sing, the different lives the whites and blacks live, and the black people's different attitudes toward the white people and toward themselves all demonstrate a strong sense of brokenness. The broken social states are the outside reason of Ella and Jim's failed love story. Jim's dream and love are also broken. He has to overcome the fear in his heart and to try to take the bar examination. He has to try his best to become a successful "white man." Jim also has to wait fourteen years and sacrifice a great deal in order to be with Ella. He has to overcome his inferiority in front of Ella. Jim is in a state of brokenness that makes it difficult for him to enjoy life and love. Ella's love is also broken. She is mocked by other playmates as a child. Moved by Jim's fourteen years of waiting, she marries Jim in the end, but it becomes difficult for her to overcome the social pressure and the racial discrimination in her heart. For Ella, marrying Jim also hurts her sense of superiority and identity as a white woman. She finds herself constantly in a state of brokenness and becomes insane at the end of the play.

For other black characters in the play, including Hattie and Jim, the Congo mask represents the heart and soul, the excellence, energy, brilliance and hope of the black race. It symbolizes the upward spirit of the black people. On the other hand, for Ella, the mask is a grinning "grotesque face" (O'Neill, 1988, p. 297) that makes the married life of Ella and Jim harder. The Congo mask is the source of Jim's ambition of becoming a lawyer and becoming a successful person, but it is also a source of tragedy for Ella and Jim. Ella stabs the Congo mask and breaks it, which is symbolic. Also, as the settings become smaller with each scene, Ella and Jim feel more and more oppressed and depressed and have to retreat into their childhood to seek spiritual comfort.

*All God's Chillun Got Wings* successfully explores the conflicts of Jim and Ella and dramatizes the tension of social relations between black and white people in the early 1920s. The play reveals the influence of social discrimination and prejudice and also shows the great effort black people like Jim undertake. Eugene O'Neill, by depicting the interracial marriage, calls attention to the racial issues in American society.

John H. Raleigh commented on *All God's Chillun Got Wings*: "it is one of the most serious, compassionate, and profound artistic treatments of the racial problem in America ever written" (Raleigh, 1969, p. 110). In conclusion, by portraying American society in the 1920s and the interracial marriage of Ella and Jim, Eugene O'Neill achieves the purpose of presenting the two protagonists' "tragic struggle for happiness" (Gelb, 1965, p. 550).

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# Dilemma of Memory and Reconstruction of the Past in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*

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**[Abstract]** In *The Buried Giant*, memory is an essential element that undergoes phases of loss, restoration, and even reconstruction. What lingers between these phases is a dilemma of memory, since memory has an inclination to link the past, the present, and the future. The loss of memory is a result of and passive reaction to traumatic memories, while the restoration of lost memory is essential in the establishment of identity. The recovery of lost memory is not a simple reappearance of past events, but a reconstruction of individual memory and cultural memory, and they together contribute to the formation of the history of the individual and the community. The characters' attitudes towards lost memory, both individual and collective, and towards traumatic history, reflect possible approaches for human beings to deal with the contradiction between personal and communal histories. The dragon in the novel, thus, must be slain for the sake of the individual and the community.

**[Keywords]** *The Buried Giant*; memory; trauma; identity; reconstruction

## Introduction

Memory is a recurring element in the works of Kazuo Ishiguro (Tiedemann, 2018). For Ishiguro (2017) himself, "memory itself is like a lens through which things are viewed" (p. 109), and since the release of *The Buried Giant* in 2015, critics have approached memory writing in this novel through psychology, history, and trauma. Nevertheless, the previous study focuses primarily on one aspect of the above-mentioned approaches to explore "the 'buried giant,' a secret that is gradually exhumed with unsettling consequences" (Rich, 2015, p. 2). It should be noted that compared with Ishiguro's writing of memory in his previous works, *The Buried Giant* depicts a subtle contradiction between personal and communal memories in which trauma of the past is buried. Hence, this study aims at the theme of memory in *The Buried Giant* from the perspectives of trauma, identity, and cultural theory to make the discussion comprehensive. By employing German scholars Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann's cultural memory theory that explores the relationship between memory, identity, and cultural continuity (Kang, 2018), conflict between memory and historiography can be fairly discussed and, therefore, controversies in between posed by *The Buried Giant* can be cleared. This paper first analyzes the relationship between memory loss and trauma, second discusses the significance of memory to the identity of individuals, and finally argues that the traumatic past should be reconstructed instead of being buried.

## Memory Loss and Trauma: Does Forgetting Bury Trauma

Amnesia is a method of trauma recovery, but trauma is only temporarily recovered, and, meanwhile, nearly all is astonishingly lost because of the mist in *The Buried Giant* that puts people in an awful predicament between memory and trauma. In the novel, the characters lose not only the pain of trauma but the self, or one's entirety, since their "communicative memory" (Assmann, & Czaplicka, 1995) can never be preserved because of a mist that hangs over the land. Therefore, the awareness of qualities of everyday life cannot arrive at the characters. Without everyday life experience, whether trauma leaves or lingers becomes

insignificant. “As the characters move through the landscape, the meaning of their progress becomes more ambiguous” (Vernon, & Miller, 2018). The ambiguity comes from the memory dilemma with which they are confronted.

It is assumed by many that the characters suffer from trauma because of the war between Britons and Saxons, and the questions of what should be remembered and what should be forgotten are discussed through the relationship between the formation and healing of trauma from the perspective of lost and regained memory. It should be noted that there is a contradiction between personal memory and communal memory in *The Buried Giant*, and the inclination to either of them will lead to an explosion of the identity of personal and communal history, since they are inextricably linked with each other.

The characters are burdened with trauma both physically and psychologically. Villagers in the novel are constantly threatened by the chances of meeting with ogres, which will scratch and swallow them. According to trauma theory, physical trauma is the externalization of psychological trauma (Van der Kolk, 1991). Those who bear scars from the ogres are bearing traumatic memory, which seems to be buried by the mist-induced amnesia but actually is not. The traumatic event of a war between the Saxons and Britons keeps haunting the mind of the villagers. Furthermore, the condition of consistent amnesia wipes out the humanness of the characters, since they are numbed despite tremendous trauma of the past. They are exiles of a seemingly-existing community and of history. The characters are positioned in a featureless landscape (Toma, 2017) where the color of medieval England cannot be identified, which enables the characters to be juxtaposed with humans of any era. Such temporal dislocation and spatial dislocation (Jin, 2017) contribute to the loss of memory and violently deprive humans of feelings and emotions. It becomes not a problem of trauma recovery but the loss of humanity.

Nevertheless, not all memory is lost, and humanity has a chance. The mist that hangs over the land confuses the mind and creates a hazy memory, but it can hardly take away memory about life. For example, the old couple Axl and Beatrice do not forget their beloved son, and Beatrice does not forget the healer in a Saxon-village who can cure the pain in her legs. One’s own life and the descendants of this life are branded in the soul beyond the mist’s control. The pain in the legs is a traumatic destiny in the upcoming future, and the death of the son was a traumatic accident in the past, both of which are traumas that have little possibility of being recovered, and, accordingly, characters cannot easily be easily deprived of such memory.. Moreover, what cannot be forgotten is the impulse to quest for lost memory. Axl and Beatrice desire to have their memories back, so they have no objection to slaying the Querig together with a potential enemy, Wistan.

But to slay or not to slay, that is a question. The dilemma of memory is reflected from different reactions in the main characters who waver about slaying the dragon or not, which also reflects their attitudes towards traumatic events. Sir Gawain approves wiping out the traumatic memory, since it helps build a peaceful post-war world, while Wistan, the warrior, stands against such measures, for the past is closely linked with identity and conscience. Moreover, the question about why should one bother to awaken the “giant” from its slumber if memory loss buries trauma remains. During their journey, only if Axl and Beatrice can convince the boatman of their devotion to each other will he allow them to travel together to the island where their son is buried. The conflicts between trauma recovery and trauma re-discovery, between past and future, and between the individual and the community, are caged among the dilemmas of memory.

To what extent does forgetting bury traumatic memory then? Axl and Beatrice have a miserable past, and finally they forgive each other after a long period of amnesia. However, their forgiveness brings not happiness but perplexity of one's own and the other's possible past crimes. For them, and for all characters, the past and the present are not safe. Sanctuary is nowhere to be found, as they have no shared beliefs and memory. As Assmann notes, members of a community become aware of their similarities and differences by dint of his/her own self-image that are established upon the cultural memory, of which the essence is shared tradition of political identity (Jin, 2017). Therefore, forgetting solely cannot resolve the dilemma of memory and help recover from trauma.

### **Memory Restoration and Identity: Dichotomy between Amnesia and Remembrance Lingers**

It becomes clear that either amnesia or remembrance has no final say in the dilemma of memory in *The Buried Giant*. The power of forgetting can never be underestimated, as it helps overcome trauma, comforts the soul, and offers forgiveness (Deng, 2018), but whether oblivion opens a promising path to the future should be reconsidered when the question of identity intervenes, as the past of a person is tantamount to one's future (Toma, 2017). Memory loss is a disaster for the establishment of identity. For one thing, the loss of individual and communal memories causes discontinuity about self-image, as well as a community. For another, the incongruity between individual memory and communal memory causes confusion and doubts about one's own identity. Consequently, the dilemma of memory is also a dilemma of identity.

Amnesia, caused by psychological trauma, is not perpetual in the novel, which can be seen from the characters' recall of memory from time to time. With Axl and Beatrice's journey of searching for their son and their lost memory, the reader embarks on this journey with them so that one may piece together what happened before. The amnesia caused by physical material, namely the mist, will gradually recover when the material decays. "The memories come back in bits and pieces and the characters make seemingly unconscious attempts to weave these pieces together to make sense of their identity and their moral bearing" (Tiedemann, 2018). With the knowledge of his own past, Axl consequently quests for his and others' identities as we can see in Chapter Seven where Axl confronts Sir Gawain about King Arthur's order of holocaust against Saxons and, in this sense, without memory, without identity.

Chapter Six, in particular, demonstrates the approach of characters' memory restoration. Axl's consciousness involuntarily quests for memory twice, and the quest indicates two threads of restoration. One thread keeps up with time and pushes it back to the past bit by bit, and Axl fumbles along the tunnel of memory. The other thread keeps up with action by reacting to the immediate environment, and Axl stops awhile at one piece of rock in the tunnel of memory. As to the chronological anamnesis, there are two times of recall. For the first round, Axl first recalls the time when they left the Saxon village for the monastery; then comes the second phase when he fights with comrades for King Arthur, and then to the moment when he observed Beatrice for the first time in his life. For the second round, Axl recalls when they arrived at the monastery; combining the plot that Axl undergoes the anamnesis in the monastery, it can be observed that Axl forms a continuous memory frame of the past in which details of the past are, partially if not all, regained.

As to the plot, the reader may expect the exciting scene of a warrior slaying the dragon very soon so that one can peer into a new no-mist world. However, an anti-climax is presented when the characters trudge to the cave of Querig, who was an already dying. The scene is not there. The absence of such an exciting scene reminds us of something more important than the traditional ideas of Arthurian legend or Beowulf

epic: namely, the relationship between forgetting and remembrance and the formation and salvation of traumatic events under the contradiction of identities. There is a shift to the individual.

The easy killing of Querig indicates that the core of memory lies not outside but inside the individual. The easy dislocation of the dragon and of the mist contrasts the hard labor of the quest for memories of the characters who are searching for both the personal and communal past. In this sense, each individual is a “buried giant.” *The Buried Giant* can be regarded as a rewriting of Arthurian legend, while Ishiguro shuns describing grand warfare or brave images of knights; instead, he selects persons who have multiple identities or secrets, such as husband and wife, mother and son, warriors and civilians, oppressors and revengers etc. Ishiguro’s writing of these identities resonates in the novel’s title – where the immense and non-negligible experience of the individual is buried.

Apart from searching for personal identity, characters are figuring out their positions in a community. The clearing of the mist and the choice of Sir Gawain reflect the formation of British identity or, at least, a national identity. Sir Gawain once was one of the followers of King Arthur in deceiving and killing the Saxons mercilessly. After a holocaust, individuals, especially those who participated in it, depend highly on their cognition of memory when establishing their identities (Chen, & Sun, 2018). Meanwhile, if Wistan had no memory of the holocaust conducted by King Arthur against the Saxons, his identity as a Saxon warrior would immediately dissipate, and his mission to slay the dragon would become meaningless. The attitude of a community towards history corresponds to the communal identity in history.

The restoration of memory does not please the characters, but it is a starting point of establishing one’s identity and stopping the suffering of unnamable trauma. Memory justifies one’s identity, and identity justifies the meaning of one’s missions. The community that Wistan joins enables him to combine his individual memory and the communal memory together so that a national identity also stands for his existence. After all, “memory is a crucial component in creating and maintaining individual and communal identity” (Gillis, 1994. p. 3), so a temporary bitterness from restored memory should never bury everything perpetually with the excuse of communal peace or trauma recovery.

### **Memory Reconstruction: Towards Reconciliation between Individual and Communal Histories**

Therefore, to resolve this memory dilemma, one unit of the binary oppositions in this dilemma should be subverted at the price of breaking a formerly stable system so that memory would not lose in vain. A reflective reconstruction of the past, rather than a simple regaining of lost memory, is the ultimate goal. The quest for memory by the old couple, the warrior, and others symbolizes the reconstruction. Even though the past is full of trauma, it will not be everlasting when memory is correctly viewed. The dragon must be slain, the mist must go, and the “buried giant” must awake. Agony and trauma should not be deprived or forgotten violently. Individuals and groups have to reconcile and reevaluate the past, upon which they reflect and reconstruct, and then they together build a shared “monument” to position themselves and their groups in history.

The recovery from trauma must involve a direct confrontation with the past events where traumatic memory lingers. As Zheng (2018) has pointed out, “recovery from trauma asks for a reconstruction of history, which assists people with trauma in continuing the time that has been stopped by previous trauma, so that they may regain the connection with collectivity and the world” (p. 46). The question here is that the community in *The Buried Giant* suffers from a collective memory loss, and, consequently, the history of individuals cannot directly melt into the history of the community. The consequence is that people with

traumatic memory cannot not figure out the sources and results of their trauma. When the baffled memory is activated, previous traumatic events intrude violently into the present time, and the ensuing agony becomes monstrous. The goal of questing for lost memory is not to know exactly what happened before or experience trauma twice but to allow people a chance to control the feelings of fear and dreadfulness.

How can one confront with a regained identity with numerous traumas? After all, the innermost or giant secrets may suddenly disturb the status quo and challenge one's cognition of what has been long assumed as truth. When Axl is gripped by a vestige of memory that backwashes, he is terribly shocked (Ishiguro, 2016, p. 367). Whether Axl finally joins Beatrice on the boat or simply leaves, the story may not finish with a happy ending, which truly constitutes the dilemma of memory. Nevertheless, it is only a dilemma for Axl rather than for Beatrice, who feels that they must go to the island. Axl does not feel obliged to sail over to the island because the unleashed memory confuses his mind in terms of how to face the past, while as for determined Beatrice who can neither frame the nation's history nor her own history, the question becomes how, without past memory, one is able to face the future.

Querig the dragon is an imposter as a fixed point of cultural memory. According to Jan Assmann (1995), "cultural memory has its fixed point; its horizon does not change with the passing of time" (p. 129). The visibility of the dragon symbolizes the materialization of memory. When such an entity of memory is presented before Axl, Beatrice, Wistan, Edward, and Sir Gawain, there is no possibility of avoiding the confrontation against memory and an unknown future. They have to make a choice in the dilemma of memory as far as their individual history and the communal history are concerned, and they must reflect on how memory can be reconstructed to avert a further loss in the future.

To find a solution to this dilemma, individual memory and communal memory must be resolved respectively and simultaneously. Axl is such a character who starts to struggle with historical fear when he can frame his general history. He cherishes the past of great significance that backwashes him and takes them as a cornerstone of reconstructing his identity and personal experience so that he would not lose them amid the monstrous past and let them take over him. "Fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance)" (Assmann, 1995). From this perspective, Axl himself builds his own "texts and monuments" of his past by entitling the meaning of existence to previous events, which enables him to form an autonomous, self-contained personal history.

The resolution to post-conflict memory is to reconstruct the past like Axl, in which remembering is necessary, and, meanwhile, reconciliation requires a new view of what has, previously, had to be forgotten. To remember is not to put all personal memory together and allow it to be imposed on a community by making a sum of them. To forget is not to deny or even subvert truth and reality, but to allow those memories to melt into the cultural memory, which reminds and heals from a macrolevel. Although characters must struggle for a while at the end of the novel, no clear distinction or division appears between Axl and Beatrice or between the old couple and the warrior Wistan, who, respectively, epitomizes the reconciliation between private conflicts and communal conflicts. To look back upon history is not simply to recall the past but to reshape the past (McGrattan, & Hopkins, 2016). "Memories are not ready-made reflections of the past, but eclectic, selective reconstructions" (Van Dyke, & Alcock, 2003, p. 3). Thus, people have a chance to reevaluate the unspeakable past, whether personal or communal, and a cohesive community will be born. The sensation of the past, the present, and the future can finally be regained.

## Conclusion

In *The Buried Giant*, memory is an essential element that undergoes the phases of loss, restoration, and even reconstruction. What lingers between these phases is a dilemma of memory, since memory is linked with the past, the present, and the future. The characters' attitudes towards lost memory and traumatic history reflect possible approaches for human beings to deal with their past. The reconstruction of individual memory and cultural memory contribute to the formation of history of the individual and the community. Thus, the dragon in the novel must be slain for the sake of the individual and the community. Besides, the buried "giant" is not an entity like Querig the dragon that can be dissolved but is, instead, the immense secrets of nations and individuals. When the buried giant is released, all individuals and members of a community will gradually decide what should be recollected from the past by erecting a shared "monument" anew so that not all is lost in a possible explosion of identity and unity. The writing of memory in *The Buried Giant* functions as a grip upon past events because traumatic memory manifests itself from time to time. As the reconstruction of memory, namely when individual memory combines with communal memory, people reestablish bonds with others, transcend the shackles of the past, and come face to face with the present and the future.

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# A Quantitative Study on the Acquisition of Chinese Quantifiers in Early Childhood

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*[Abstract] This research studied 14-72-month-old Chinese children's quantifier acquisition. The findings showed that with the growth of age, the type and frequency of quantifier produced by children increased gradually. Children's quantifier acquisition was a dynamic and part-to-whole process, following a specific order.*

*[Keywords] quantifier; children's language; acquiring mechanism*

## Introduction

A quantifier in Chinese is one part of speech to express the quantity unit. Quantifiers are used to describe the units for persons, things, actions, or behaviors. Chinese has a rich group of quantifiers. Quantifiers can be divided into verbal classifiers (modifying verbs, such as “sing a song”) and noun quantifiers (modifying nouns, such as “an apple”). Noun quantifiers are further divided into individual quantifiers, collective quantifiers, temporary quantifiers, etc. Verbal classifiers are divided into special quantifiers, borrowed quantifiers, and homograph quantifiers. Chinese quantifiers are used between numerals and nouns. There exists some stereotyped combinations of quantifiers and nouns. Some nouns can be used with more than one quantifier. In short, the use of quantifiers is very complicated. Therefore, it is difficult for Chinese children to acquire quantifiers.

Domestic researches on children's acquisition of quantifiers mainly include experimental tests, questionnaires, and so on. Ying, et al. (1983) investigated the ability of 4-7-year-old children to produce individual quantifiers, collective quantifiers, and temporary quantifiers. The results showed that children's mastery of the three types of quantifiers is unbalanced with a certain order. The quantifiers they first acquired were individual quantifiers, followed by temporary quantifiers and collective quantifiers. Peng, et al. (1986) investigated 120 3-6-year-old Chinese children's acquisition of quantifiers with a similar method and reached the same conclusion as before: children's accuracy of mastering quantifiers increases with age; children of different ages master quantifiers in a certain order; children's acquisition of quantifiers is related to the development of their cognitive level. Fang (1985) used 12 commonly used quantifiers to test preschool children's mastery of quantifiers. The research found that 4-6 year-old children only mastered about 4 quantifiers, and when they were 6 years old, they mastered about 9 quantifiers. By conducting surveys and experiments, Ding (1999) investigated the output of quantifiers of children from 1-5 years old and found that children's acquisition of quantifiers is a process of dynamic adjustment. With the development of language ability and the concept of number, children's acquisition of quantifiers has two main characteristics: the simplification of the collocation between quantifiers and nouns and the generalization of quantifiers.

The previous research methods are mainly surveys and experiments, and, thus the number of quantifiers studied is limited. In addition, most of the existing research focused on the children aged 3 and above, and relatively little research has explored the acquisition of quantifiers of children younger than 3 years old. To better understand how early children learn quantifiers, the present study collected all the

quantifiers produced by preschool children aged 14 to 72 months. This study summarized the characteristics of the acquisition of quantifiers of children in different age groups by analyzing the data from a corpus and verified the results of previous studies.

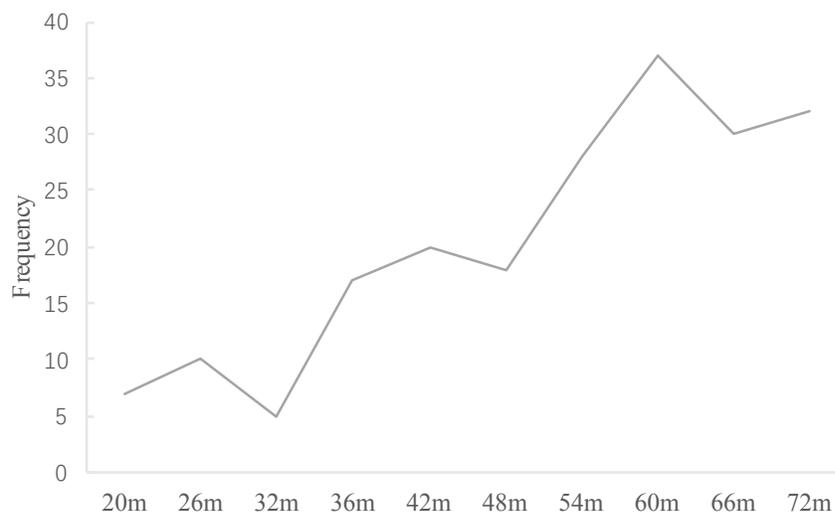
### Children’s Acquisition of Quantifiers

The raw material of this study comes from Zhou, a Chinese corpus in CHILDES (Child Language Data Exchange System), which contains the spontaneous language of Chinese children aged 14-72 months old. In this study, the frequency of children’s quantifier sentences (sentences containing quantifiers) of different ages in the corpus was counted, and the proportion of quantifier sentences is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Research Data**

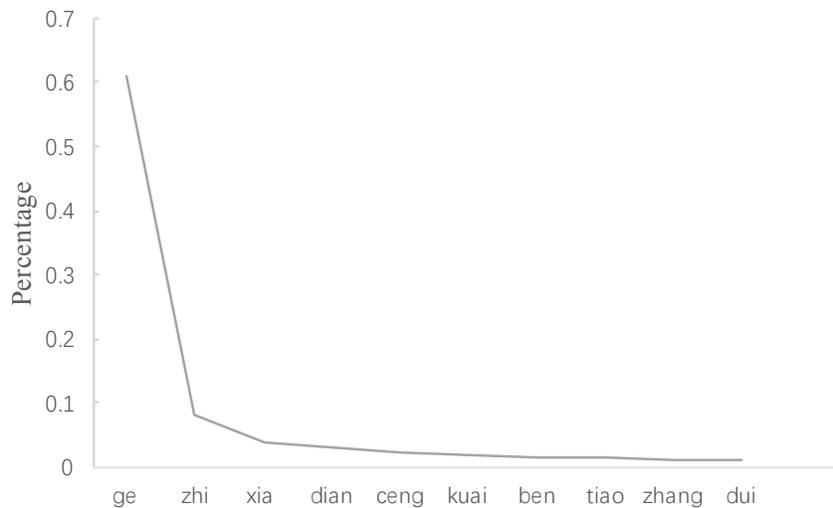
Age	Frequency of Children	Frequency of Quantifier Sentences	Frequency of all Sentences	Percentage
14	10	0	0	0
20	20	14	901	1.6%
26	10	61	1257	4.9%
32	10	61	972	6.3%
36	20	93	2801	3.3%
42	20	149	1906	7.8%
48	20	145	2675	5.4%
54	20	202	2425	8.3%
60	20	183	2366	7.7%
66	20	198	2087	9.5%
72	20	247	2107	11.7%

It can be seen from Table 1 that at the age of 20 months, children begin to produce quantifiers. With the growth of age, the frequency and proportion of quantifier sentences continues increasing. The overall growth is not a straight-line trend, but shows ups and downs. From 20 months to 32 months, the percentage increases from 2% to 6%, but decreases to 3.3% in 36 months, and then increases rapidly, reaching nearly 12% in 72 months.



**Figure 1. Quantifier Types**

The types of quantifiers were counted (see Figure 1). It can be found that the types of quantifiers rapidly increased from 7 to 32. At the age of 60 months, the children even produced 36 types of quantifiers. There were 78 types of quantifiers from 20 months to 72 months in total. At the age of 20 months, children produced 7 types of quantifiers: “*ge, zhi, pai, xia, fen, ben* and *tian.*” The top ten quantifiers are “*ge, zhi, xia, dian, ceng, kuai, ben, tiao, zhang,* and *dui*” of all the quantifiers. The proportion of the 10 quantifiers is shown in Figure 2. Among the 10 classifiers, there is one verbal classifier “*xia,*” and the other 9 are nominal classifiers, which indicates that preschool children used nominal classifiers more often than verbal classifiers. The proportion of “*ge*” is the largest, reaching 60%. The second is “*zhi,*” accounting for 8.5%. The percentage of the other 8 quantifiers is below 5%. The use of “*ge*” accounts for the vast majority of the total quantifiers, which demonstrates that “*ge*” is the quantifier children use most, which is consistent with the results of previous researches (e.g., Ding, 1992). Thirty-four of the other 77 quantifiers appeared only once, and 16 quantifiers appeared more than 10 times. Therefore, we think that although preschool children produced a large number of quantifiers, only a few quantifiers were used frequently.



**Figure 2. The Proportion of the Top Ten Quantifiers**

After a further analysis of the quantifiers used by children, we found that they produced 34 individual quantifiers, 4 collective quantifiers and 12 temporary quantifiers of the nominal classifiers, and 3 quasi quantifiers, 5 special quantifiers, 4 borrowed quantifiers, and 15 homomorphic quantifiers of the verbal classifiers. This result shows that children’s mastery of the 3 types of the noun quantifiers is unbalanced, showing a certain order. The first output is the individual quantifier, followed by the temporary quantifier and the collective quantifier. The acquisition of the verbal quantifiers is similar. Special quantifiers were first acquired, followed by homomorphic and borrowed quantifiers. This finding is consistent with the conclusion of Ying et al. (1983); that is, the quantifiers were not acquired by children simultaneously. Some of them were acquired first and others were learned later. There is a certain order of acquisition.

### **Acquisition of Noun Quantifiers**

As for the acquisition of noun classifiers, 2 characteristics have been mentioned in previous studies: the generalization of the use of “*ge*” (e.g., Zhang, et al., 2014; Kong, et al., 2004; Peng & Chen, 2016) and the simplification of the collocation of quantifiers and nouns (e.g., Kong, et al., 2004). From Table 2, we can see that children used “*ge*” to collocate with different nouns. The generalization of the use of “*ge*” was

found at all ages. For instance, “*ge*” was used to modify the nouns “car, mouse, flower, paper, lock, and fish” which should be collocated with the quantifiers “*liang, zhi, duo, zhang, ba, and tiao,*” respectively . As children grew older, they began to use correct quantifiers. We found that they used both false and correct quantifiers for the same nouns over a period of time. For instance, at the age of 60 months, they used both “*ge*” and “*duo*” with the noun “*flower.*” This indicates the development and change of children from using “*ge*” at the beginning to trying to use other quantifiers to match nouns with age. From the previous data analysis, we can see the growth of the types and frequency of children’s quantifiers, which also shows the process of children’s continuous learning and correcting the use of quantifiers.

**Table 2. The Nouns Collocated with “*Ge*”**

20m	Balloon
26m	car, painting, color, flower, building, paint brush, beard, building blocks, fish, caterpillar, bag
32m	bridge, mouse, cake, circle, girl, box, painting, robot, sun, rabbit, wheel, triangle
36m	lamp, rabbit, sun, apple, candy, circle, lock, fish, leg, ball, ear, stairs
42m	mountain, place, color, money, ant, dot, ball, lizard, balloon, square, giant, story, flower, semicircle, slide, rectangle, pen container, racket
48m	wall, hole, gift, line, circle, grass, star, dress, square, pen, ball, flower, people, carrot, Ultraman, rectangle, pen container, handrail, lollipop, cusp, immortal
54m	wire, plait, paint brush, house, sailing boat, color, flower, horn, ball, square, apple, triangle, mountain, mouse, cup, robot, arrow, clip, eyes, railway engine, pen
60m	mouse, bird, flower, worm, grass, circle, hospital, method, hole, wall, box, zoo, robot, man, turtle, horn, necklace, classmate, rabbit, eyes, story, toy, house, sun, building box, star, egg, sun, apple, mouth, giraffe
66m	forest, bird, balloon, mouse, head, pen, star, horn, foot, triangle, flower, box, rabbit, game, hammer, helicopter, swimming pool, sun, blue, red, tail, airplane, leg, story, swan, spoon, rocket, peach, paw, man, flower
72m	ladder, mouse, building, toy, football, square, ball, rocket, triangle, fist, head, robot, garden, paper, rectangle, story, circle, tail, car, mushroom, cake, hole, slide, color, giraffe, wolf, hat, box, fish, cloth, star, turtle, robot, desk

With regards to the simplification of the collocation of quantifiers and nouns, we found different results. For instance, at the age of 26 months, “*ge*” was collocated with 12 different nouns, which showed that there were various combinations between quantifiers and nouns. At the age of 72 months, a total of 34 nouns was used with “*ge.*” This means that they used quantifiers to modify more and more nouns as they grew older. Therefore, the collocation of quantifiers and nouns is very rich rather than simple.

### ***Acquisition of Verbal Classifiers***

“*Xia*” is the earliest special quantifier learned by children. It appeared at 20 months. The borrowed quantifiers appeared later. The borrowed quantifier “*beizi*” was used for the first time in 48 months. The quantifier “*xia*” is most frequent among all the verbal classifiers, followed by “*ci*” and “*bian.*” Although there were not many homomorphic quantifiers, they appeared in every age group. The number of borrowed classifiers was very small. Only “*mouth, head, eye and life*” were produced. The quantifiers “*xia,*” “*ci*” and “*bian*” were mainly used to collocate with the verb “*wait.*” Other verbs included “*count,*” “*correct,*” “*paint,*” etc. In short, the verbs collocated with verbal classifiers were limited. One reason is that children did not have a good grasp of the verbal classifiers, and, therefore, they were not able to use them flexibly. Another reason is that children did not know many verbs, so there were few verbs with quantifiers.

### ***Collocation of Numerals and Quantifiers***

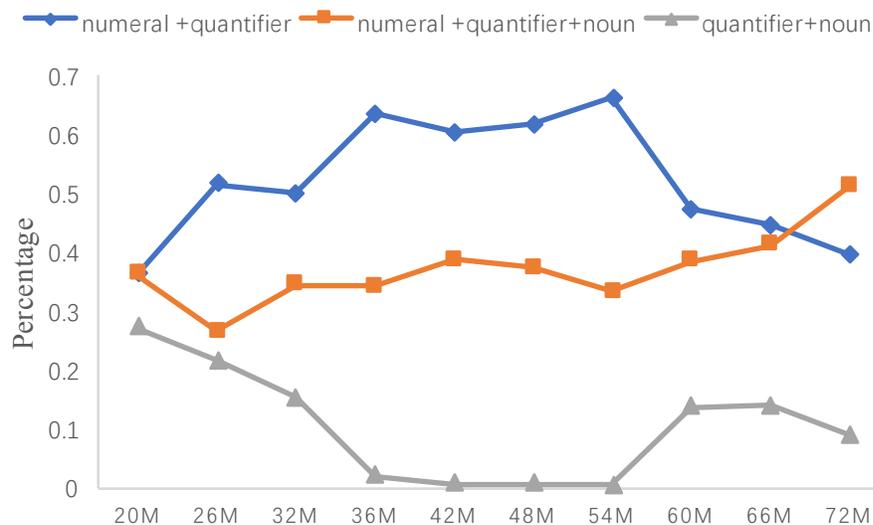
Regarding the collocation of numerals and quantifiers, some researchers used to think that the most often used numeral early children used was “one” (e.g., Kong, et al., 2004), such as “a book.” We found a similar result. At the age of 20 months and 26 months, the numeral before quantifiers was only “one.” At the age of 32 months, the quantifiers collocated with “one, two, three and nine.” At the age of 36 months, the numerals were “one, two, three, five and six.” When they were 42-months old, they used “one, two, three, four, five, six and seven.” At the age of 48 months, numbers 1-10 were all used. Therefore, we believe that with the progress of children’s acquisition of numerals, they learned to use different numerals to collocate with quantifiers.

In addition to the structure of “numeral + quantifier + noun,” there are also many cases of omitting numerals. Usually, the numeral “one” is omitted. As a result, the structure of “quantifier + noun” appeared. For instance, in the sentence “给个苹果” (meaning “give me an apple”), the numeral was omitted. The complete sentence is “给一个苹果.” This kind of omission will not affect the understanding of the sentence. Even adults use this kind of sentence. This kind of omission appeared in all ages. The possible reason for children to use such a structure is that they have not fully mastered the structure of “numeral + quantifier + noun,” or they imitated adults’ language.

### ***The Psychological Mechanism of Children’s Acquisition of Quantifiers***

Some researchers believed that children took “numeral + quantifier + noun” as a fixed combination and memorized them as a whole. For example, Fang (1985) thought that children memorized the fixed collocation between quantifiers and some nouns through mechanical memorization. With the improvement of their language ability, they gradually mastered the use of quantifiers. Ding (1999) held a similar view. She thought that children memorized and imitated the whole structure of “numeral + quantifier + noun” at the beginning, and then used them as a fixed structure in their own discourse.

If children begin to acquire quantifiers by memorizing the complete structure of “numeral + quantifier + noun” as a fixed combination, they may produce a large number of complete structures. However, we can see that from 20 months to 66 months more than 50% of structures were not the complete “numeral + quantifier + noun” structure (see Figure 3). Children produced a large number of “numeral + quantifier” structures. Therefore, we do not agree with the views about how children learn quantifiers. Children are not likely to start with acquiring the complete structure. The possible reasons are as follows.



**Figure 3. Proportion of “Quantifier + Noun”, ”Numeral + Quantifier” and “Numeral + Quantifier + Noun”**

First, quantifiers first appeared at 20 months in the present study and at 18 months in the research of Kong, et al. (2004). However, before the age of 2 years old, children mainly produce two-word sentences, according to previous studies (e.g., Zhou, & Zhang, 2009). Therefore, they are not able to produce sentences with “numeral + quantifier + noun” structures at the early age. Second, according to the law of children’s early language development, children’s language is gradually growing word by word, not acquired by a three-character phrase. Additionally, children have not yet formed abstract grammatical rules in their early stage (Ninio, 2011), and, thus, they cannot learn the complete structure as a whole. As shown in Figure 3, children produced many “numeral + quantifier” and “quantifier + noun” structures at an early age, indicating that children started learning quantifiers from incomplete structures. At first, they acquire part of the complete structure, and then they combine it into a complete “numeral + quantifier + noun.” It is a dynamic development process. In this process, children may produce the structure of “quantifier + noun,” which omits the numeral “one.” Children may produce the structure of “numeral + quantifier,” as well, because of the limitation of language ability or contextual predictability. In addition, children use “ge” to collocate with many nouns. With the improvement of children’s knowledge of numerals, quantifiers, and nouns, they gradually use correct quantifiers, produce rich combination between quantifiers and nouns, and develop the complete structure of “numeral + quantifier + noun.” In short, only after children’s vocabulary growth and mastering part of the quantifier structure can they begin to produce a complete structure, which is a process from quantitative change to qualitative change, and from part to the whole.

### Conclusion

Based on the spontaneous language of Chinese children aged 14 to 72 months in CHILDES system, this study analyzed the process of acquisition of quantifiers by preschool children. It was found that children produced quantifiers from 20 months old, and the type and frequency of quantifiers increased with age. As in previous studies, we found that children’s acquisition of quantifiers followed a certain order. Among noun quantifiers, individual quantifiers were first acquired followed by temporary quantifiers and collective quantifiers. In the verbal classifiers, special quantifiers were acquired first, followed by homomorphic quantifiers and borrowed quantifiers. The noun quantifier they produced most was “ge,” and the most verbal

classifier was “*xia*.” Generally speaking, children produced more noun classifiers than verbal classifiers, which indicates that children had a better grasp of noun classifiers.

We analyzed several key problems of children’s acquisition of quantifiers in previous studies. One of them was whether there existed the generalization of “*ge*.” The present study found that the answer was yes. The generalization of “*ge*” occurred at different ages, which was consistent with previous studies. As for the other question about the simplification of the collocation of quantifiers and nouns, our analysis gave different answers. We found that there were various kinds of combinations between quantifiers and nouns. After analyzing the different quantifier structures, the present study found that the acquisition of children’s quantifiers was a dynamic process from part to whole; that is, the structure of “quantifier + noun” and “numeral + quantifier” was acquired first, and then the structure of “numeral + quantifier + noun” was developed later.

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# **Between Imagination and Reality: Research on Medieval English Morality Plays**

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*[Abstract] Through examination of the specific imaginations, their functions, and the relationship between imagination and reality manifested in the plays, this research tries to demonstrate the plays' cultural connection with England's medieval times and the plays' aesthetic style. The training of the right way of using imagination in the plays also inspires the online teaching of literature during the Covid-19 pandemic.*

*[Keywords] medieval English morality plays; imagination; reality; teaching*

## **Introduction**

Medieval English morality plays were primarily produced in the Middle Ages, a period which is far-distant and different. As Hardin Craig (1936) and Carolly Erickson (1976) maintained, the period has its perception distinct from the modern one. Imagination frequently intervenes in the medieval perception, and medieval men and women have “greater difficulty than we do in drawing a boundary between material reality and imaginary reality” (Le Goff, 1988, p. 6). The term “imaginary reality” is Augustinian. To what extent imagination amounts to reality in the Middle Ages has been explored by many philosophers and needs explanation in the research. The complex connotations of imagination and reality aside, the medieval perception that mixes imagination and reality to a great extent forms an entry point of exploring the far-off period.

No study has ever been focused on imagination and reality in the medieval English morality plays. However, generally conforming to the characteristics of the times, medieval English morality plays embody the medieval perception through their representation of body, prayer, marvel, time, and space. All these aspects originate in perception of the material world, but extend to include fantastic imagination, which is not often considered as less real than the material reality. In this sense, the plays occupy a position between imagination and reality. The imagination not only come within all the qualities ascribed to the plays, but also further combines the plays as a coherent whole. Besides, with the perspective of imagination, the research offers no partial combination of the plays under the genre, as what is offered by the work of Davidson and Garner, Jr., and the combination is more detailed than in the analysis by Schmitt. What's more, this perspective provides solutions to such problems in medieval English morality plays as filthiness of language.

The paper, in the first place, examines the concept of imagination, which also includes imagination's function, its relationship to reality, and its ethical implications. Then, within the framework of imagination and reality, the plays' representation of body, prayer, marvel, time and space, which are difficult for modern people to understand, are interpreted. Their cultural connection with England's medieval times and their aesthetic style can also be demonstrated in the process. While classroom reaching is not available during the Covid-19 pandemic, teaching can capitalize on the learners' imaginations in the ways manifested in the plays.

## Literature Review

Commonly, five surviving texts are recognized by scholars as forming the corpus of medieval English morality plays. They are: *The Pride of Life*, *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Wisdom*, *Mankind*, and *Everyman*. Basically, they give moral instruction, feature abstract characters and allegorical action, insist on a union with God, reveal the conflict of virtue and vice, and have a tripartite structure of temptation, fall, and redemption. It is upon these common characteristics that a description of the dramatic genre is built. Such specialists in medieval drama as Robert Potter, E. N. S. Thompson, E. K. Chambers, and Bernard Spivack have contributed greatly to the description. However, despite that, the plays' "absolute cohesion as a group...is [still] bound to be questioned" (King, 2008, p. 235), which makes further combining them as a whole the research priority.

Actually, in addition to illumination of the allegorical properties, Bernard Spivack explored the vice of characters in the plays. He holds that the evil characters "with the farce, the satire and direct titillation of the audience, the whole range of mirth from gross indecency to edged wit" (Spivack, 1958, p. 121) are characteristic of the plays. He pointed out that "what distinguishes the mirth of the moralities from the medieval comedy of evil in general is its precise homiletic intention" (Spivack, 1958, p. 122). Thus, the comical vice characters, combined with moral instruction, make the moralities distinct from other dramatic genres.

Pamela M. King (2008), in her essay, "Morality Plays," which contributed to *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, mentions the conservative theology of the morality plays which advocates preservation of the social hierarchical order. "That order is represented as being under threat from a new materialism, associated with the growth of mercantile wealth, exerting pressure on the old feudal order" (King, 2008, p. 236), she argues. The "anti-modernness" intrinsic to the preservation of a feudal order becomes an effective factor of uniting the morality plays.

Though conservative in politics, the middle ages is rich in art. The architecture, the ornaments, the sculpture, the painting, and drama are abundant. Clifford Davidson, in his book *Visualizing the Moral Life*, constructively utilizes materials of the visual arts and integrates iconography and the research of morality plays. Through allusion to the Dance of Death, he concludes that "without the concerns raised by an awareness of the terminus of life, however, it is certain that the morality drama as it appears in the extant examples in the Macro manuscript would not have been written or staged" (Davidson, 1989, p. 113). With a consciousness of life's terminus in the period, death runs through all the three Macro morality plays and constitutes a distinguishing feature.

With respect to theatricality in the plays, it is also a perspective that is different from traditional ones. Stanton B. Garner, Jr. (1987) insists that the medieval morality plays are intended to be put on stages and explores the contrasting theatrical techniques of *Mankind* and *Everyman*. While *Mankind* adopts a traditional theatricality of distraction and entertainment to let the audience fall and thereafter to offer them moral warning, *Everyman* relies upon a kind of "anti-theatricality" to demonstrate a tenor of "contemptus mundi," which means abandoning the earthly world (Garner, Jr., 1987, p. 281). Seemingly contrasting the two plays, Garner, Jr. (1987) in reality reaffirms Potter's argument that the morality play can be "the archetype of the theatre of ideas in...western tradition of drama" (p. 244), and deeply fuses them together.

Natalie Crohn Schmitt still had a different vision. In her essay "The Idea of a Person in Medieval Morality Plays," she made explicit that traditional characteristics ascribed to the moralities like "allegory" "personified abstraction" and "universalized type" "do not account for the whole of the medieval experience

of the plays, nor for the whole of our experience of them either” (Schmitt, 1978, p. 23). Probing into the traditional characteristics, she digs out the psychology and human experience inherent in the plays, which penetratingly sums up all the medieval English morality plays.

These are important research ideas with a devotion to uniting the five plays. At the same time, it should be noted that almost all the research on the plays owes a lot to the foundation-laying work of W. W. Greg for his study on the manuscripts, that of Mark Eccles, Montrose Moses, Roger Sherman Loomis, Henry W. Wells, Richard Beadle, David N. Klausner, Kathleen M. Ashley, and Gerard NeCastro for their work of transcription, translation, or exegesis.

Foreign studies on the medieval English morality plays are many. However, in China, research on this dramatic genre is in a fledging period. Only Xiao Minghan gives an introduction to the achievements of this dramatic genre, Ma Heng elaborates on the characteristics of the plays, the character Mankind and the death in the plays and the performance of *The Castle of Perseverance*, Central Academy of Drama translates the play *Everyman* into Chinese, Guo Xiaoxia does a research on ethical values of late medieval England and the medieval English morality plays, and Wu Yongna analyzes the plays’ influence on Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*.

The study of medieval English morality plays is, on the whole, insufficient. New ways of exploring the plays can be boldly attempted. The imaginations not only come within all the qualities ascribed to the plays, but also further combine the plays as a coherent whole. Besides, with the perspective of imagination, the research offers no partial combination of the plays under the genre as what is offered by work of Davidson and Garner, Jr., and it is more detailed in analysis than what is made by Schmitt.

### **The Concept of Imagination**

Michelle Karnes (2011) ever asserts that “imagination figured prominently in medieval thought – there is a sense in which it is fair to call the period an age of imagination” (p. 3). This assertion is reasonable, especially when knowledge of imagination in this period is illuminated. The concept of imagination has a long-term and significant development in the classical and medieval times, with ideas of the classical antiquity laying the foundation for ideas of the middle ages. As Murray Wright Bundy (1927) makes clear, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, the Neoplatonists, the mystics, and the descriptive psychologists have shed light upon the concept. Their doctrines, already interacting, converge in the thoughts about imagination of Augustine, Aquinas, and Dante. Though it is not the task of the research to trace all the thinkers’ ideas, the main problems inherent in the evolution of the ideas about imagination should be explained, as they form the conceptual basis of the research.

The problems of the relationship between imagination and reality, imagination’s function, as well as imagination’s ethical implication, are always involved in the description of imagination. First, Bundy (1927) concludes in his book *The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Mediaeval Thought* that the imagination,

*regarded sometimes as a state of mind and sometimes as a product of the mind, it became the center of the basic epistemological problem of the genuineness, the reality, of our mental experiences, the correspondence of the phantasy or appearance to an object external to the mind. (Bundy, 1927, p. 270)*

Imagination’s reality is a central problem, and the correspondence between imagination and external object is the criterion. Besides this, the problem of imagination’s reality also depends on the understanding

of reality. For example, when matter, which is distinguished from the Ideal, is considered by Plato and the traditional mystics as unreal, in their view imagination is not reality, or even doesn't exist. However, when matter and perception of matter are recognized as real existence by Plato in his later works, Aristotle, the later mystics, and the Neoplatonists, imagination is regarded as capable of reflecting reality. The understanding of reality determines the position of imagination and the attitude toward imagination, which is testified to by Bundy (1927)'s statement that:

*those who insisted upon the immutable and eternal character of reality had no place in their thought for a concept of phantasy; but those who conceived of reality as that which was progressively coming into existence, 'becoming' rather than 'being', as the Greek phrased it, had for the phantasy an important function. (Bundy, 1927, p. 271)*

Here, it should be pointed out that "imagination" is the English translation of the Greek "phantasia" (Watson, 1988), and the English word "phantasy" often represents "imagination" in medieval philosophy.

Second, with regard to the specific function of imagination, generally, except the earlier ideas of Plato and the thoughts of the traditional mystics, all the philosophers, to various degrees, ascribe to imagination the function of linking the material and the incorporeal. Such thinkers as Aquinas, Maimonides, and Dante attribute to imagination the function of "transmitting divine inspiration to men" (Watson, 1988, p. XII).

In turn, recognized as having such functions, imagination is considered as partaking the nature of both the material object and the incorporeal ideal. Thus, whether the matter is treated as real or not, imagination attains to reality to some extent.

Third, although philosophers admit imagination's reality to various degrees, they are at the same time aware of imagination's liability to err, that is to unfaithfully reflect the object, such as in the case where a stick doesn't look straight in the water. The ethical implication appears.

The ethical implication is seen clearly if a more complicated situation is considered. In the *Confessions*, Augustine refers to the inability to reflect God incorporeally as an enormous error of imagination. He says that, "when I wanted to think of my God, I could not think of him save as a bodily magnitude—for it seemed to me that what was not such was nothing at all: this indeed was the principal and practically the sole cause of my inevitable error" (Oulter, *Confessions* V 10). Like Augustine, medieval thinkers generally show their fear of imagination's misleading effect. As Simpson summarizes, "the later Middle Ages [is] an age wholly subject to, and dangerously infantilized by, the rule of imagination" (qtd. in Karnes, 2011, p. 2).

### **Medieval Morality Plays within the Framework of Imagination and Reality**

Bundy (1927) explained one of the Augustinian ideas as follows:

*[The imagination] exemplified by the pictorial representations accompanying the reading of history, the composition, reading, and criticism of fiction, myth, and allegory...and finally the phantasy in the service of reason, [supply] the schemata of thought... "to facilitate the process of reasoning." (Bundy, 1927, p. 160)*

This idea extends imagination's meaning beyond philosophy into aesthetics. Then it is feasible that imagination is exploited in medieval literary criticism. In combining and interpreting the medieval English morality plays, the representations of body, prayer, marvel, time, and space in the plays, which reflect the medieval concept of imagination with its reality, function, and ethical implication included, serve as the schemata of thought.

1. The medieval English morality plays mention the body's shitting, leaking and deformity to such an extent that they are accused of occasionally being filthy in language. However, through the imaginations about body, it can be seen that the body is rejected by the self, and the filthiness is expelled from the plays; thus the accusation can be dispelled.

While the body's shitting, leaking, and deformity are corporeal experiences, they are associated with rich imagination. When one encounters the filthy "Crystemes song" in *Mankind*, one may get an impression that resembles what is received through looking at the misericords featuring shitting at St Mary's, Fairford, and St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle (Chunko-Dominguez, 2017); when one thinks of the body's leaking, one may relate it to the four elements forming both the body and nature; and when one reads the description of the deformed and ugly shape of a fallen soul in *Wisdom*, one may call to mind the devil with his mouth shaped like an anus in the stained glass at St Mary's, Fairford (Davidson, 1989).

Beyond the objects, senses, and impressions, there are also conceptual thoughts. Chunko-Dominguez (2017) writes that "to the medieval Christian, the human body was gross, weak, prone to bouts of sickness and disease, and vulnerable to pain. Bodies got hungry and thirsty, grew old. They bled and, in the end, they died" (p. 198). With the body's fragility, medieval men realized the unreliability of the body, "the outer man," in seeking union with God. Augustine says that "there is in me both a body and a soul; the one without, the other within. In which of these should I have sought my God...the inner part is the better part; for to it, as both ruler and judge" (Confessions VI. 9). In the play *Wisdom*, Mercy appeals to Anima to conquer the enemy Flesh. Treated as an enemy, the body is projected to the external, is rejected, and is subordinated to the inner self. With this, the imagination about body attains reality. It links the sensational to the conceptual, and is by no means less real than the material experience.

2. Prayers are important in the actions of the English morality plays. A sign of Mankind's fall is that he gives up his evening chant; the reason why Anima in *Wisdom* becomes frail is that Mind, Understanding, and Will abandons prayers; and when Mankind, Anima, and Everyman seek forgiveness, they pray to God for mercy. Generally, the medieval English morality plays advocate a kind of contemplative life, of which prayers have an essential role. Christians may regard the prayer as everyday life experience, in which they kneel, carry the bead, read the rosary, sing the praises for Christ's suffering, show the love for and gratitude to God, and ask for their salvation. However, according to Karnes (2011), "in medieval theology, [Christ's] incarnation gave the mind its ability to understand eternal things, and the mind that thinks about his life simply follows its own cognitive disposition" (p. 142). It is argued that prayer's huge effects reflect imagination's function of implanting God's divinity to men, and the daily repetition of prayer is the training of this imagination.
3. Marvels appear in the medieval English morality plays in that the protagonists get to dream and have illusion as a result of the temptation of the vice characters. For example, in *Mankind*, Mankind dreams that Mercy is hung, which is a total falsehood resulted by the lies whispered to Mankind's ears by Titivillus when the former is sleeping. As Karnes (2011) holds, marvels are imagination-based, and veridical dreams' "dependence on imagination was uncontroversial" (p. 334). What's more, "commonly believed to be the vehicle by which demons could tempt the would-be virtuous Christian, whether in dreams or outside of them, imagination could easily be a force for evil" (Karnes, 2011, p. 3). Actually, in Le Goff's view (1988), the marvelous tradition is incongruous to the Christian belief. While the Christians develop a belief in miraculous

salvation, they leave no room for the heretic marvels. Represented in the medieval English morality plays as the devil's tricks, marvels display the misleading effect of imagination and are censured in the plays. The false use of imagination is thus warned against.

4. As Clifford Davidson (1989) asserts, "life implies what is beyond life" for medieval Christians (p. 126). It can be inferred that what extends life beyond are imaginations about the eschatological time and the eternity after the resurrection, which also form the main moral instruction offered by medieval English morality plays.

Medieval English morality plays appeal to Christians to live with the consciousness of the eschatology and the final judgement so that they do right things to strive for living in heaven eternally after the judgement. The imagination about eschatological time and eternity in this instruction combine the daily experience with the uncertain future, the body's activities with the soul's perfection. According to Le Goff (1988), "the Middle Ages also knew many kinds of time: liturgical time, bell time, the time of rural labors, the time of the urban worksite, the academic year, the calendar of holy days" (p. 13). However, in the different kinds of time and the various kinds of activities according to them, the imagination about eschatological time and eternity find a place. Thus, a spiritual life with the hope of the soul's ascension to heaven, which is distinguished from the daily activities, at the same time is determined by them. The earthly times and activities where the imagination about eschatological time is rooted also are directed to the eschatological time. Regrettable is it that the soul's destiny is still uncertain.

Sometimes, the medieval men rely on prophecy, the extreme kind of imagination, to look into the future. What's more, as Aristotle holds, memory "may be called a kind of perception with the idea of time added" (qtd. in Bundy, 1927, p. 73). "Phantasy may stand in relation to the future as memory to the past" (Bundy, 1927, p. 97). It will be shown that the imagination about the future makes reference to the memory about sacrifice and time of the Garden of Eden.

5. The "feldys ferne" (*The Castle of Perseverance*, line. 1094), "dale of dole" ("The Castle of Perseverance," line. 1247), "peynys pyt" (*The Castle of Perseverance*, line. 1245), "pyttys brynke" ("Wisdom," line. 896), "dede in the cryke" (*Mankind*, line. 776), "heavenly sphere" ("Everyman," line. 212), and "In bred and in leint" ("The Pride of Life," line. 34), all these are descriptions of space in medieval English morality plays. Generally, they denote the hell, the heaven, and man's strength. As "time and space [are] tied to each other" (Schmolinsky, 2013, p. 94), imaginations about space enrich imaginations about the future and memories of the past. Hell and the heaven are the open spaces in eternity, and man's strengths play a part in this world, which will be finally proved to be insignificant as the eschatology is taken into consideration.

There are also the spaces of the stage. "The stage is largely bare" ("Everyman," p. 208) and "Make rom, sers, for we have be longe" ("Everyman," p. 332) are the representatives. It is argued that the imaginations about spaces of the stage are influential aspects determining the actions and plots of the medieval English morality plays.

## Conclusion

By placing the medieval English morality plays within the framework of imagination and reality, it can be seen that the reality expressed by the plays attains sacred meaning, and the imagination that is capitalized on by the plays has the function of either attaining or hindering sacredness. The plays' depreciation of body and transcendence of space and time are means to obtain sacred reality. The plays' emphasis on prayers is

a kind of training of imagination, which helps receive the transcendental significance. The plays' repulsion of the marvelous is the controlling of improper use of imagination. All these give the medieval English morality plays a distinct aesthetic style. Imagination and reality manifested in the plays also inspire the online literature teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. While classroom teaching is not available at the moment, online literature teaching should take advantage of the training of the imagination to transcend the space and time, to avoid the misuse of imagination, and, finally, to attain reality.

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# Exploring Strategy Use of Chinese Postgraduates' Group Peer Feedback in a Translation Class

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**[Abstract]** The study intends to explore the peer feedback strategies 66 Chinese first-year postgraduates used in an English-Chinese translation activity on the basis of Activity Theory. Data were collected through recorded videos of this process and semi-structured interviews of 8 participants selected from random sampling.

**[Keywords]** group peer feedback; the use of strategies; translation; cooperative group activity

## Introduction

With the change of the teaching concept from teacher-centered to student-centered, China's growing emphasis on student participation in the classroom has resulted in many student-centered activities, such as peer feedback. However, although peer feedback, as a formative assessment (Topping, 1998, 2009), is not only a vital communication tool among students in second or foreign language classes (Zhang & Cheng, 2017), it is also an evaluative tool to diagnose others and their own articles (Zong, Schunn, & Wang 2020). Currently, it is widely used in English writing classes but is of less concern in the field of translation and interpretation (Kiraly, 2000). Moreover, the research about peer feedback has already achieved abundant results, but there have been only a few studies that addressed (Yu. & Lee, 2016) finding which strategies students use to revise their peers' work. Therefore, because of a paucity of research on these two points, the authors focus on finding strategies students use during peer feedback in a translation class through videos.

## Theoretical Framework

AT is an extension of Sociocultural Theory (SCT), which originates from mediation, referring to relationships with the world and society (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). According to AT, peer feedback is a cooperative activity in which the subjects (students) adopt various cognitive and sociocultural ways to act on the object (drafts from their peers), and then eventually achieve an output (English learning). However, its smooth process has to combine with some artifacts: *mediating artifacts* (e.g. online information and paper dictionaries), *rules* (e.g. classroom requirements and translation techniques), *community* (e.g. classmates), and *division of labor* (e.g. translator and feedback giver) (see Figure 1).

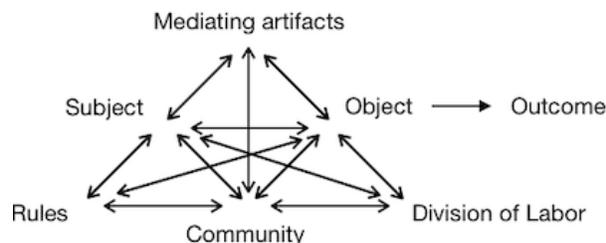


Figure 1. Activity System (based on Engeström, 1999; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006)

Peer feedback involves students' evaluation and judgments on the work of their peers (Nicol, Thomson, & Breslin, 2014), which demands students are enabled to provide comments and diagnose problems. Hence, students are required to be equipped with a certain level of English language proficiency (student feedback literacy) (Carless, & Bound, 2018). However, attention is mostly paid to undergraduates students (Chang, 2016), rather than to graduate students.

Villamil and Guerrero (1996) investigated the strategy of peer revision by 54 Spanish intermediate ESL college learners when attending a writing class. They found that students were inclined to use mediating artifacts (using L1), community (asking teachers or neighboring students for help), and rules (creating strict rules while revising). Similar research was still done by them in 2006 (Villamil, & Guerrero, 1996, pp. 23-41, mainly exploring three kinds of mediation. Then, Nguyen (2008, pp. 41-66) studied pragmatic strategies through 36 Vietnamese EFL adult learners via a peer feedback task. The conclusion was drawn that significant differences arose between EFL and native English students. Yu and Lee (2016, pp. 1-11) performed relatively comprehensive research on the use of strategy in which four participants were selected to conduct group feedback activities; the process was recorded by video. Moreover, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews and stimulated recalls were applied to gather the data, which were later analyzed according to AT. Due to its limited case sample, Zhang, & Cheng (2018, pp. 57-63) further deepened Yu and Lee's research and expanded its scope, exploring the strategy and the usage frequency by non-native English learners in China.

## **Methodology**

### ***Participants and Materials***

Sixty-six first-year English graduate students (57 females, 9 males) from two classes of a normal university (out of the key universities) in mainland China participated in this study. Participants in the first group of Class One were numbered from 1A1 to 1E1 on the basis of their Cet-6 (College English Test Band 6) scores from high to low; meanwhile participants in Class Two were from 2A1 to 2E1. Moreover, in order to reduce the impact of irrelevant variables, the experienced instructor of this lesson, who has been teaching translation for several years, asked participants to be divided into seven groups randomly. Each had about five students.

As there are seven-week English-Chinese translation classes, the present study was conducted in the fourth week. There were three different groups (an international political text, a military text, and a medical text); a fourth was less difficult than the previous two.

### ***Peer Feedback Procedures***

Students first chose a team leader for general control and then negotiated to assign tasks because of the quantity of homework. Then, members finished their first draft and uploaded it to the designated member to be revised. After that, all of them gathered to interact about problems occurring in the first draft; this lasted 20 minutes or more. Finally, a final draft was completed. However, because of the limited time in class, all of the tasks above should be finished after class. To check students' accomplishments, a report based on their peer interaction was prepared; it was which presented in front of the whole class and graded by the instructor. Furthermore, all work was finished within a week (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Procedure of Group Peer Feedback**

As training is a key element of successful peer feedback (Min, 2005), in the first class the instructor introduced standard translation procedures the students needed to follow (reception, translation, correction, typesetting, and the final draft). Then, he used a number of examples in line with the content, structure, proofreading, and grammar of articles to illustrate how to revise and what should be paid attention to during interactions; the instructor provided methods and techniques. Participants can operate after it. In the second class, the supervisor commented on the performance of each group in a targeted manner in class, letting them know their strengths and weaknesses.

### ***Data in this Study***

Data in this study is comprised of recorded videos and semi-structured interviews. There are 14 videos, a total of 532 minutes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted of 8 students, lasting 10-20 minutes; the interviews included ten questions for the sake of exploring students' use of strategies and their motivations. All of the data resources were transcribed into words for better analysis.

## **Findings**

After analyzing the data in terms of AT, we identified five main types of strategy use: 1) using L1 (mediating artifacts); 2) using external resources (mediating artifacts); 3) asking for the supervisor and peers help (community); 4) using translation rules (rules); and 5) the role shift between peer feedback givers and receivers (division of labor).

### ***Using L1 (Mediating Artifacts)***

Students were more likely to use L1 when interacting because they claim L1 is their subconscious choice when interacting with a native speaker of Chinese.

*We used L1 to discuss as a default. We took it for granted that we should talk in L1 because it would be strange when a person abruptly spoke in English. (Interviews from all of the interviewees.)*

In addition, the choice of L1 for some students was to avoid misunderstandings in communication and to improve the efficiency of communication.

*I'm afraid I cannot express my ideas in English clearly. (Interviews from 1D2)*

### ***Using External Resources (Mediating Artifacts)***

As a major branch of artifacts, external resources play an important role in mediating students' communication. Short of medical expertise, external means were adopted to broaden students' scope of knowledge to allow them a better understanding of the article.

**Online information.** When exposed to uncertain words or expressions, most students' first reaction was to search on the Internet or to look the words up in a dictionary. On the one hand, thanks to the convenient access to the network and the diversity of network information, when conducting peer feedback, students were apt to solve problems.

*ID7: I searched a major 21st century medicine paradigm shift (the original text) online and I'm aware that it actually has its own fixed form in translation. There is no need to translate in accordance with your words.*

On the other hand, some students treated the online information as an auxiliary tool. When a word was not included in the dictionary, they would turn to the Internet for help.

*IC4: You didn't explain the acronym.*

*IA4: Yes. Because I didn't find the word in the dictionary, I kept the word original in the text so as not to make errors.*

*IC4: But I searched it on Baidu (a search engine like Google) and found that it meant... If it appeared again in the rest of the article, you could use its short form.*

In this text, medical professional terms also came into play in understanding the whole passage. Unfamiliar with such knowledge, some participants chose to search for the keyword on a professional journal website.

*IC1: Skin and eye involvement is a medical term. I don't agree that the word involvement still has its literal meaning. We can search related papers on the Internet to verify it.*

*ID1: Emmm, let me see. Oh! It means.... It really has another meaning ! !*

*IB1: Thank you for you two to point it out.*

**Using paper dictionaries.** Authoritative paper dictionaries is another very effective and authoritative way to explain some words with less common sense.

*IE7: After looking up the dictionary, I realized that the word promoter is a medical term. It shouldn't be used as its general meaning but its medical meaning here.*

### ***Asking Peers for Help (Community)***

Many first-draft translators took the initiative to bring up their own problems, which were caused by inadequate knowledge or insufficient understanding of the text, and let the group members solve the problem.

*IA1: What's the meaning of like a stock company in a series of dramas here? The former part centers on cells; why does there exist drama abruptly? I cannot understand it when I translated. Please help me.*

### ***Asking the Instructor for Help (Community)***

When certain words, especially technical terms, cannot be found either in dictionaries or on websites, students at the time tended to put the problem in question aside and then asked the instructor for help.

*IB3: I've noticed that there is an English expression, BAL, in your article.*

*ID3: Yes, I knew it was the name of the cell. I have looked it up in the dictionary, but I haven't found the word. So, I decided to preserve the source text.*

*IB3: I also looked it up in the dictionary and researched it on the Internet. Unfortunately, I found nothing, either.*

*IC3: So, let's mark it and ask our instructor.*

### ***Using Translation Standards (Rules)***

When commenting, what attracts people most is the use of grammar and the comprehension of the original text. Since this was a class whose aim was to train translation skills, most suggestions students offered were basically from that perspective.

#### **Omission and error translation.**

*IB2: There is one word missing in this sentence.*

*IC2 (first-drafter): Which one?*

*IB2: Basis. Without it, these two part (the subject and object) are lack of relevance.*

*IC2: Basis can be regarded as "cause"?*

*IB2: But you didn't translate it into that.*

#### **Free translation.**

*2D6: I know what the author wants to express, but I do not know how to organize the language to convey it.*

*2C6: You can just convey the meaning in your own words. Don't care too much about the sentence structure. Only ensure to copy the writer's thoughts is enough. Emmm, the free translation, you know?*

#### **Literal translation.**

*ID3: There is no underlying meaning of drama after retrieving it on the Internet. I think it just denotes "a play." As a result, when we deal with it, we merely adopt a word-by-word literal translation since we cannot catch its core.*

#### **Contextual cues.**

*IC4: In the translation of offspring, I prefer "cub" to "descendant," because the former one is more suitable for the context.*

#### **Sentence analysis.**

*ID5: This sentence is too long. It's hard to read. Would you mind simplifying it?*

*IA5: In fact, you can divide it into two short sentences. Just extract the subject and use the pronoun "this" refers to it.*

*IC5 (peer feedback receiver): Oh, yes! It is more fluent and easier to understand in this way.*

### ***Explicit Rules (Rules)***

Other than rules mentioned above, explicit activity rules cannot be ignored, either. For instance, the division of this activity and the sequence of comments is decided by the students themselves.

*IB6: Who is the first?*

*ID6: How about according to the order of the passage?*

*IB6: Ok. Then we can give suggestions based on the circle we sit in.*

### ***Roles between Group Peer Feedback Givers and Receivers (The Division of Labor)***

Since the original material is nearly 10,000 words, it is infeasible for one group member to translate the whole passage within a week. As a result, all members should participate as translators. Moreover, a person

who serves as a receiver tends to answer questions, while the one who serves as a giver will pay more attention to looking for errors or inappropriate expression.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

The present study intends to summarize and classify the strategies EFL learners employ when conducting peer feedback. It reveals that students indeed tend to adopt different strategies to strengthen this cooperative activity. Informed by AT, students act on group peer review by choosing various ways of mediation artifacts, community, rules, and division of labor, and they finally improve the level of translation and the ability of autonomous learning. Compared with peer feedback in writing, in English-Chinese translation participants used L1 more frequently. The extensive use of L1 and external resources indicate that they do play an important role, so teachers need to pay attention to it. Students can do well without teachers, reflecting to some extent that teachers are not of great importance during this process. Furthermore, these strategies can be applied by teachers as one kind of training when a peer feedback activity is needed in a translation class.

The present study has some limitations. It only investigated students' performance in English-Chinese texts and is lacking in Chinese-English texts. Further study can be considered to explore how they behaved in Chinese-English translation. Moreover, since students did feedback after class, we could not conduct whole-process monitoring. Therefore, there may exist errors between groups.

### **Acknowledgement**

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# The Influence of Association Strength, Phrasal Frequency and Contextual Predictability on the Processing of Chinese 4C Collocations

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**[Abstract]** Chinese 4-character (4C) collocations (e.g., “公布答案”, meaning “release the answer”) are widely used in the Chinese language. However, compared with English collocations, Chinese 4C collocations have received less attention. This research explored the role of association strength, phrasal frequency, and contextual predictability on the processing of Chinese collocations in reading by using an eye-tracking paradigm. The main effects of phrasal frequency and contextual predictability were found with shorter reading times for high-frequency collocations than low-frequency collocations and for collocations presented in predictable context than in a neutral context. These results were consistent with the findings of English collocations.

**[Keywords]** association strength; phrasal frequency; contextual predictability

## Introduction

People frequently use formulaic sequences (i.e., recurrent strings of words) in written or spoken communication. Formulaic sequences are believed to be holistically stored and processed (Wray, 2002). Thus, the processing of formulaic sequences reduces the burden of working memory and increases processing efficiency (Millar, 2011). As one class of formulaic sequences, collocations (frequently co-occurring associated word combinations) are pervasive in English discourses (Hill, 2000) and vital for language use in L2 acquisition (e.g., Wray, 2000). There is strong evidence indicating that collocations (e.g., black coffee) are processed faster than matched novel language (Sonbul, 2015).

It was found that phrasal frequency, contextual predictability, and association strength play an important role in the processing of English collocations. Phrasal frequency provides a raw count of how often words are used together. A large number of studies indicate that frequent collocations are processed faster than infrequent collocations (Sivanova-Chanturia, et al., 2011; Sonbul, 2015). For instance, in an eye-tracking experiment, Sonbul (2015) explored the processing of two *synonymous* adjective–noun collocations differing in frequency (e.g., fatal mistake, awful mistake) and one novel phrase (e.g., extreme mistake). The results showed that the reading time of low-frequency collocations was longer than high-frequency collocations, but shorter than non-collocations. The effect of phrasal frequency occurred in the early eye-movement measure (first-pass reading time). This effect was also found in the studies of other formulaic sequences, which were longer than two-word combinations (e.g., collocations). For instance, in an eye-tracking experiment, Sivanova-Chanturia, et al. (2011) found that binomial phrases (e.g., bride and groom) were processed faster than their reversed forms (e.g., groom and bride) which differed in phrasal frequency. The effects of phrasal frequency were found in both early (first-pass reading time) and late measures (total reading time) and fixation count.

In addition to the effects of phrasal frequency, contextual predictability also plays a significant role in language processing. Contextual predictability can be measured by Cloze tests. Typically, when Cloze value is 0.6 or above, the context is regarded as highly constrained, and if Cloze value is less than 0.1, the context is considered as neutral or unconstrained (Rayner, & Well, 1996). It was found that the word

embedded in a more predictable context was processed faster and skipped more often than the one in a neutral context (e.g., Rayner, & Well, 1996). This effect was found on early eye-movement measures (Frisson, Rayner, & Pickering, 2005), and late measures (Rayner, & Well, 1996).

Word association strength is a statistical association between two words indicating how likely the existence of one word predicts the other word. Word association strength can come from word association norms, such as the Edinburgh Associative Thesaurus (Luka, & Van Petten, 2014) or be computed using some statistical methods such as mutual information (Hunston, 2002), transitional probabilities (McDonald, & Shillcock, 2003a) and so on. There have been debates about the role of word association strength. Some argue that it is part of contextual predictability (Luka, & Van Petten, 2014; Frisson et al., 2005). While others think that it is independent from contextual effect (McDonald, & Shillcock, 2003a, b).

Previous studies to date mainly focused on English collocations. Relatively less attention has been paid to Chinese collocations, especially Chinese 4C collocations. Chinese is a logographic script. Different from alphabetic scripts, written Chinese is made up of box-like characters. A Chinese word composes of one to several characters. Studies show that reading of Chinese appears to be both word based and character based (Li, et al., 2013). Chinese 4C collocations are widely used in Chinese written and spoken language. They are like idioms consisting of four characters. A 4C collocation (e.g., 前途光明) can be decomposed into two 2C words (e.g., 前途: future, and 光明: bright). However, most Chinese idiom can't be further divided into two words. Unlike idioms, collocations only have literal meanings. In a lexical decision-making task, Lv and Shi (2016) explored the processing of verb-noun word pairs. The stimuli included 4C collocations (e.g., 采取措施: take measures), synonymous (e.g., 采用措施) and irrelevant non-collocations in which the verbs were synonymous and semantically unrelated with the one in the collocation respectively. The results showed that the reaction times were shortest for collocations, longer for synonymous non-collocations, and longest for irrelevant non-collocations, indicating that Chinese native speakers were sensitive to the frequency of Chinese 4C collocations. However, it remains unclear how they are processed in reading. Inspired by the previous studies on English collocations, the present study examined the role of association strength, phrasal frequency, and contextual predictability on the processing of Chinese 4C collocations in reading. The present study aims to explore the processing mechanism of Chinese 4C collocations by employing an eye-tracking experiment. The eye-tracking paradigm is believed to detect the online cognitive processing of collocations in natural reading (Rayner, 2009).

## Method

### *Participants*

Thirty-six young adults (29 female) aged 18-22 years ( $M = 19.5$  years,  $SD = 1.1$ ) from Ningbo Tech University took part in the experiment. All of them are native Chinese speakers with normal or corrected-to-normal vision.

### *Materials and Design*

Stimuli were 36 pairs of Chinese 4C collocations. Each pair comprised the same noun combined with a different verb (e.g., “公布答案”, meaning “release the answer,” and “寻找答案”, meaning “look for the answer”). Song and Li (2019) developed a database consisting of 3290 commonly used 2C words and thirteen types of feature scores for these words, such as familiarity and so on. Additionally, 3290 words were used as prime words in single word association tasks. Each word produced a main response. The database provided the main response of each word and the association strength between them. Some of the

prime words and their responses formed 4-character collocations, which were the data source of our stimuli. Based on the scores of the association strength, the stimuli were divided into two groups. Groups 1 and 2 consisted of 18 pairs of strongly associated collocations ( $M = 0.24$ ,  $SD = 0.020$ ) and 18 pairs of weakly associated collocations ( $M = 0.06$ ,  $SD = 0.004$ ), respectively. There is significant difference in association strength between the two groups ( $t(70) = 8.93$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In each group, each pair of the stimuli was categorized as high- and low-frequency collocations (see Table 1). The phrasal frequency of the stimuli came from the BCC Corpus (Gou et al., 2015) created by Beijing Language and Culture University and the Institute of Big Data. This corpus contains a 15-billion-character Chinese texts from a wide range of genres. The phrasal frequency between high- and low-frequency collocations differed significantly (Group 1:  $t(34) = 2.815$ ,  $p = .008$ ; Group 2:  $t(34) = 2.757$ ,  $p = .009$ ). The verbs of high- and low-frequency collocations in each group were matched for transparency, verb frequency, numbers of strokes, age of acquisition, concreteness and familiarity.

**Table 1. Summary of Stimulus Characteristics**

Stimulus Characteristic	G1		G2	
	High-frequency Collocation	Low-frequency Collocation	High-frequency Collocation	Low-frequency Collocation
Transparency	5.2 (.1)	5.4 (.1)	5.4 (.1)	5.4 (.1)
Concreteness	4.1 (.2)	4.0 (.2)	4.2 (.2)	4.3 (.2)
Number of strokes	16.9 (1.2)	17.3 (1.2)	16.6 (.8)	18.4 (1.0)
Age of acquisition	2.5 (.1)	2.7 (.1)	2.5 (.1)	2.3 (.1)
Similarity	5.6 (.1)	5.7 (.1)	6.0 (.1)	6.1 (.1)
Verb frequency	644.1(80.2)	410.2 (99.6)	1145.9 (231.7)	827.1 (231.3)
Phrasal frequency	1335.7 (386.2)	230.4 (70.8)	1476.8 (392.4)	343.4 (122.6)

The experiment was a 2 (phrasal frequency: high, low) \* 2 (context: predictable, neutral) \* 2 (association strength: strong, weak) mixed design. Each pair of targets was presented in both predictable and neutral contexts. A modified cloze test was used to assess contextual predictability of the sentences. Forty participants (who did not take part in the experiment) were presented sentence fragments before the collocations and then asked to write down the first word or words that came into their minds. The completions were assessed for the use of the collocation. The results showed that the predictable context is more predictable than the neutral context (Group 1: 66.1% vs. 0.3%,  $t(34) = 14.73$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Group 2: 65.2% vs. 1.5% in,  $t(34) = 20.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Another group of 20 native speakers evaluated the sentences for naturalness (using a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = not natural and 5 = very natural). A two-way ANOVA confirmed no significant difference in naturalness ratings across neutral and predictable contexts,  $F(1, 19) = 1.784$ ,  $p = .197$ ,  $\eta^2 = .086$ , or between sentences containing high- and low-frequency collocations,  $F(1, 19) = 2.955$ ,  $p = .102$ ,  $\eta^2 = .135$ , with no interaction,  $F(1, 19) = .890$ ,  $p = .357$ ,  $\eta^2 = .045$ . High- and low-frequency collocations, therefore, appeared equally acceptable in neutral and predictable contexts. An example sentence is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. An Example of Chinese Sentences Used in the Experiment**

Condition	Sample Sentence
PH	英语考试结束后有人在网上 <b>公布答案</b> 让考生核对。 After the English test, someone <b>posted the answers</b> on the Internet for examinees to check.
PL	英语考试结束后有人在网上 <b>寻找答案</b> 让考生核对。 After the English test, someone <b>looked for the answers</b> on the Internet for examinees to check.
NH	我们刘老师昨天说这周末会 <b>公布答案</b> 让大家参考。 Our teacher Liu said yesterday that we would <b>release the answers</b> this weekend for your reference.
NL	我们刘老师昨天说这周末会 <b>寻找答案</b> 让大家参考。 Our teacher Liu said yesterday that we would <b>look for the answers</b> this weekend for your reference.

*Note. Target words are in bold. PH-predictable context/ high frequency; PL-predictable context/ low frequency; NH- neutral context/ high frequency; NL-neutral context/ low frequency.*

Each pair of the targets were presented in four sentence frames as shown in Table 2. The stimuli were divided into two lists. Each included half the predictable sentence frames and half the neutral sentence frames. Half the sentences of each list came from Group 1 and the other half came from Group 2. For each pair of targets, two of the four sentence frames with the different collocation or context appeared in the same list. This ensured an equal number of high-and low-frequency collocations in neutral and predictable frames were viewed. In addition, each list contained 72 filler sentences and 8 practice sentences. The practice sentences were presented at the beginning of the experiment. The other sentences were presented randomly. Each participant read 152 sentences in total.

### **Apparatus**

An EyeLink 1000 Plus tower-mounted eye tracker was used to record gaze location every millisecond, recording right eye movements during binocular reading. Sentences were displayed in Song font on a 19-inch monitor with a 1024 × 768 pixel resolution. The stimuli were presented as black text on a light grey background. At 71 cm viewing distance, each Chinese character subtended about 0.8° of visual angle.

### **Procedure**

Participants were tested individually. The eye-tracker was calibrated to their eye movements using a three-point horizontal calibration procedure to ensure spatial accuracy less than 0.35°. Calibration accuracy was checked prior to each trial and the eye-tracker recalibrated as necessary to maintain high spatial accuracy. The participant was instructed to read normally and for comprehension. After finishing reading, the participant pressed a response button and a sentence disappeared, replaced by a yes/no comprehension question on one-third of trials. The experiment lasted approximately 30 minutes for each participant.

## **Results**

The comprehension accuracy averaged 95%, indicating that participants understood the sentences well. Prior to data analysis, adjacent fixations were combined and short fixations (less than 80 ms) and long fixations (more than 1000 ms) were deleted following a standard procedure (affecting 5.2% of the data). In addition, fixations more than 2.5 standard deviations from the mean per condition for each participant were removed as an outlier (affecting 3% of data). The remaining data were analyzed using linear mixed effects models (LMEM, Baayen, et al., 2008) conducted using R (R Core Team, 2015) and the lme4 package (Bates, et al., 2012). For all analyses, participants and stimuli were specified as crossed random effects, with association strength, phrasal frequency, and contextual predictability specified as fixed factors. Contrasts

comparing levels of the fixed factors were specified using the “contr.sdif” function in the MASS package (Venables & Ripley, 2002). The “emmeans” function was used for the simple effect analysis. For all analyses,  $t/z > 1.96$  were considered significant.

The following eye movement measures on the collocations were computed: first-pass reading time (**FPRT**, sum of all first-pass fixations in a region); regression-path duration (**RPD**, the sum of all the fixations from the first fixation in a region up to but excluding the first fixation to its right, and so including time spent re-reading); fixation count (**FC**, the total number of fixations on the target words); total reading time (**TRT**, sum of all fixations in a region) (Liversedge, et al., 1998).

Means and standard errors for collocation analyses are shown in Table 3. The results of the LMEM are summarized in Table 4. Main effects of phrasal frequency were found in first-pass reading time, regression-path duration, total reading time and fixation count. These effects were due to longer reading and more regressions and fixations for high-frequency than low-frequency collocations. No main effects of association strength were observed. Main effects of context were found in first-pass reading time due to shorter reading times in predictable compared to neutral contexts. The three-way interaction between context, association strength, and frequency was found in fixation count. The simple effect analysis showed that for high-frequency collocations with weak association strength; they were fixed significantly less in predictable than in neutral contexts. For collocations with high association strength, high-frequency collocations were fixed less than low-frequency collocations, regardless of context. Compared with low-frequency collocations, high-frequency collocations with low association strength were fixed and reread less in predictable context.

**Table 3. Eye Movements for the Collocation**

Conditions			Measures			
Context	Association Strength	Frequency	FPRT	TRT	FC	RPD
Predictable	Strong	High	385 (244)	732 (595)	2.7 (2.1)	598 (569)
Predictable	Strong	Low	438 (293)	791 (585)	3.2 (2.2)	624 (546)
Predictable	Weak	High	397 (232)	600 (402)	2.3 (1.5)	511 (380)
Predictable	Weak	Low	442 (266)	698 (454)	3.0 (1.9)	585 (420)
Neutral	Strong	High	412 (265)	746 (478)	3.0 (1.8)	615 (492)
Neutral	Strong	Low	462 (318)	823 (605)	3.3 (2.2)	647 (490)
Neutral	Weak	High	447 (281)	712 (484)	3.0 (1.9)	564 (411)
Neutral	Weak	Low	515 (323)	753 (468)	2.9 (1.9)	620 (427)

Note. Standard Error of the Mean is shown in parentheses. FPRT = first-pass reading time, TRT = total reading time, FC = fixation count RPD = regression path duration.

**Table 4. Summary Statistics for the Collocation Phrase**

	Statistic	FPRT	TRT	RPD	FC
Intercept	$\beta$	431.32	727.06	588.90	2.94
	SE	18.38	40.67	29.51	0.14
	t/z	23.47	17.88	19.96	20.35
Context	$\beta$	41.17	53.74	34.31	0.24
	SE	17.34	35.08	29.4	0.16
	t/z	2.37*	-1.53	1.17	1.55
Association Strength	$\beta$	8.78	42.34	49.54	0.17
	SE	28.03	59.12	46.30	0.24
	t/z	0.31	0.72	1.07	0.72
Frequency	$\beta$	51.87	72.16	47.07	0.36
	SE	9.71	16.01	16.71	0.06
	t/z	5.34*	4.51*	2.82*	5.79*
Context x Association Strength	$\beta$	34.14	57.24	17.79	0.12
	SE	34.69	70.16	58.83	0.31
	t/z	0.98	0.82	0.30	0.38
Context x Frequency	$\beta$	10.23	29.79	9.81	0.36
	SE	19.42	31.99	33.41	0.12
	t/z	0.53	0.93	0.29	2.90*
Association Strength x Frequency	$\beta$	0.12	5.12	25.25	0.12
	SE	19.43	32.01	33.42	0.12
	t/z	0.01	0.16	0.76	0.93
Context x Association Strength x Frequency	$\beta$	23.47	76.68	33.64	0.53
	SE	38.84	63.99	66.81	0.25
	t/z	0.60	1.20	0.50	2.15*

Note. Asterisks indicate statistically significant effects,  $p < .05$ . FPRT = first-pass reading time, TRT = total reading time, FC = fixation count RPD = regression path duration.

### Discussion

The current study explored the influence of context, association strength, and phrasal frequency on the processing of Chinese 4C collocations in reading using eye-tracking methodology. The effects of phrasal frequency were found in first-pass reading time due to shorter reading times for high-frequency collocations compared with low-frequency collocations. This indicates that phrasal frequency influenced an early stage of collocation processing. This is in line with previous studies on English collocations (Sonbul, 2015; Siyanova-Chanturia, et al., 2011). In addition, the effects of phrasal frequency were also found in late measures of regression-path duration, total reading time, and fixation count, which is consistent with the findings of Siyanova-Chanturia, et al. (2011), indicating that this effect influenced a late stage of collocation processing, as well. The effects of phrasal frequency found in the present study are in line with the finding of Lv and Shi (2016).

The early effects of contextual predictability were detected in the first-pass reading time. It was found that the reading times for collocations were shorter in predictable than neutral contexts, which is in line with previous researches (e.g., Rayner, 2009; Frisson, Rayner, & Pickering, 2005). No main effects of association strength were found, but there were three-way interactions between context, association strength, and phrasal frequency. This indicates that association strength is not a separate statistical measure but a

form of contextual constraint. This result supports the findings of Luka and Van Petten (2014) and Frisson et al. (2005).

The effects of phrasal frequency found in the processing of Chinese 4C collocations in reading are consistent with English collocations. This finding indicated that Chinese readers were sensitive to the phrasal frequency of 4C collocations. One possibility is that the 4C collocations are used together so frequently that they are effectively lexicalized and processed as a single lexical unit (Siyanova-Chanturia, et al., 2011; Wray, 2002). Previous studies argue that the reading Chinese is based on characters and words (Li, et al., 2013). The current study indicated that the processing units of Chinese readers can be 4C words. Such findings are valuable to computational models of eye movement control in Chinese reading.

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# A Corpus-based Stylistic Study on Subtitles of *Game of Thrones*

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**[Abstract]** This paper investigates the English subtitles of the American drama, “*Game of Thrones*”, from a stylistic perspective with corpus linguistic methods by comparing them with the subtitles of “*2 Broke Girls*”, a drama of very distinct style, which serves as a cross reference. The background, theme, and linguistic style of *Game of Thrones* are meticulously elaborated on in the study.

**[Keywords]** subtitles; “*Game of Thrones*”; “*2 Broke Girls*”; stylistics; corpus linguistics

## Introduction

In recent years, an increasing number of researchers in diverse realms have regarded the subtitles of American dramas as valuable resources, for these subtitles always entail abundant native English expressions and mirror the social culture and traditions in America. Significantly, subtitles have also gained the preference of many linguistic scholars, such as translators (e.g. Nedergaard, 1993). However, few studies are related to stylistics and the analysis methods are sometimes too backward. Therefore, the present study is aimed at conducting stylistic analysis of the subtitles of the American drama, *Game of Thrones*, by comparing them with *2 Broke Girls*, which serves as a cross reference, since the two dramas are of very distinct theme and style. Additionally, the blossoming of corpus linguistics makes it possible to carry out stylistic studies in quantity. Specifically, by constructing the corpora of the subtitles and making use of the computer software, this paper resorts to technical methods to discover stylistic features of the subtitles and identify the differences of the subtitles between the two dramas in stylistics.

*Game of Thrones*, a medieval epic fantasy TV series produced by David Benioff and D. B. Weiss, is an adaptation of *A Song of Ice and Fire* by George R. R. Martin. The subtitles of this series embody a very unique linguistic style due to its complicated plots and refined dialogues, resulting from the special theme, as well as the numerous characters. On the contrary, *2 Broke Girls* (stylized *2 Broke Girl\$*), a popular American sitcom, is a representative of modern colloquial drama. The plots surround the lives of two young women who are both waitresses, financially poor, and who make efforts to have their own cupcake business. The stories between the two leading characters have been praised for its relaxing and cheerful atmosphere, which is totally different from *Game of Thrones*. Therefore, it serves as the best choice of reference in our analysis. Besides, both of the dramas premiered in 2011, ensuring that they have the same social background. Because this paper is based on the corpora of the subtitles of the two dramas, the findings attained from this research will be far more objective than the previous studies and lay foundations for later corpus-based stylistic surveys, particularly in subtitle language.

The paper embodies five chapters. Chapter One is an introductory part that attempts to give a snapshot of the research background, the research objects, namely, the two dramas, as well as the significance of the research. Chapter Two focuses on the theoretical framework of the present study, stylistics and corpus linguistics, and reviews the relevant research in these two areas. Chapter Three, entitled “Methodology,” exhibits the corpus building, analysis tool, and approaches. Chapter Four conducts the analysis of the subtitles of the dramas on background, theme and style. Chapter Five summarizes the main conclusions of the research, points out the limitations, and makes expectations on the future work.

## Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This chapter covers the theoretical ground for the present study and the previous research in the area of corpus stylistics. The definition and studies in stylistics and corpus linguistics will be introduced.

### *Stylistics*

Stylistics has been one of the vigorously-studied fields in linguistics for quite a time. Generally speaking, it investigates language use in particular contexts and attempts to identify the characteristics that mark the language use of individuals or social groups. Turner (1973) defines stylistics as “the study of style, with a suggestion, from the form of the word, of a scientific or at least a methodical study” (p. 56). Widdowson (1975) indicates that stylistics views “literary discourse from a linguistic orientation” (p. 3). Traditionally, stylistic studies are centered on the qualitative descriptions and rely on the intuition of the researchers, particularly for literary analysis. Until fairly recently, however, the aims of stylistics are no longer confined to qualitative descriptions of marginal linguistic phenomena but have become wider and deeper in all levels with the emergence of corpus linguistics.

### *Corpus Linguistics*

As an innovative and booming field in language study, corpus linguistics, whether it is regarded as an independent discipline or just as a research method, has unparalleled significance for linguistic research. Particularly, with the arrival of large-scale corpora and various sophisticated data-processing techniques, it has become indispensable for language studies in recent years. Corpus linguistics can be defined as “an empirical discipline which aims to draw conclusions based on the analysis of external data, rather than on the linguistic knowledge pertaining to researchers” (Sandrine, 2020, p. 1). Therefore, quantitative descriptions provided by corpus linguistic methods have been becoming increasingly dominant in stylistics, for they provide us with more concrete and convincing explanations of stylistic features. By way of illustration, Fischer-Starcke (2010) analyzed Jane Austen’s work with a corpus of Austen’s six full-length novels. Mahlberg and McIntyre (2011) also carried out a corpus-based study of Ian Fleming’s novel *Casino Royale*. Besides, Mahlberg’s (2013b) studies of the fiction of Charles Dickens uses the corpus of Dickens’s fictional prose.

## Methodology

In the following chapter, we will describe the research methods adopted in the present study, including corpus construction, research instrument, and textual analysis, an equally important method.

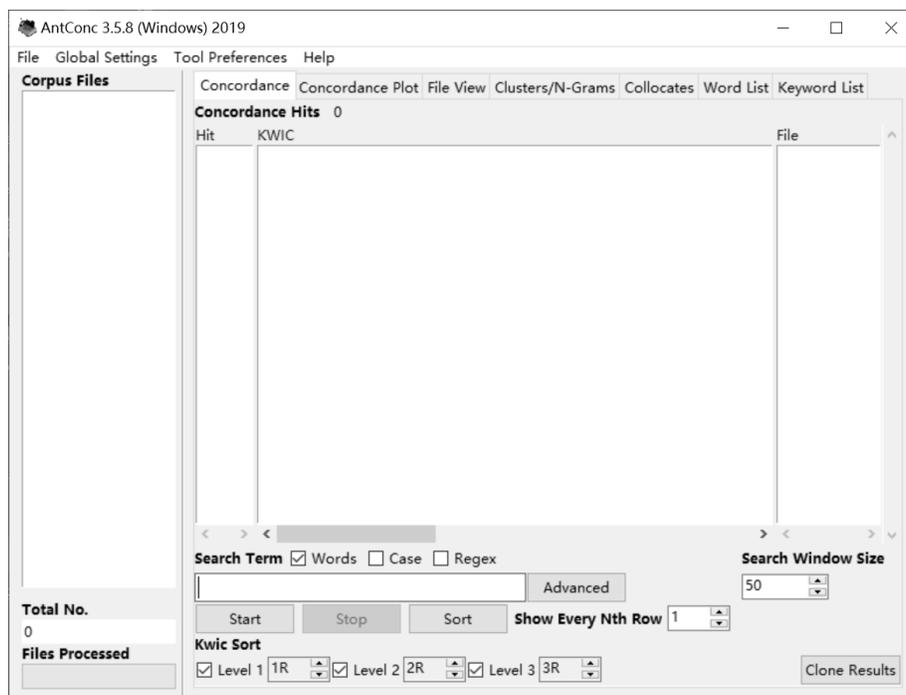
### *Corpus Construction*

As Sinclair (2005) has remarked, to build a corpus, the contents of language materials collected should be in accordance with the research purpose. This study aims to take a contrastive perspective on linguistic features of English subtitles of *Game of Thrones* and *2 Broke Girls*, and hence, the subtitles of *Game of Thrones* from season 1 to 8 and *2 Broke Girls* from season 1 to 4 are collected from the subtitle website <http://www.zimuku.la/>, both containing similar sizes of word tokens after data cleaning (corpus of the subtitles of *Game of Thrones* includes 317,404 word tokens; corpus of subtitles of *2 Broke Girls* 314,550).

### *Research Instrument*

AntConc, a free corpus analysis software developed by Laurence Anthony, is employed in the present study (see Figure 1 below). In a user-friendly fashion, AntConc is endowed with multiple powerful functions, including Word List, Concordance, and Keyword List, etc. Word List counts all the word types in a corpus

and presents them in an ordered list according to their frequency of appearance; Concordance can provide search results in “KWIC” (Keyword in Context) format, which allows one to see the co-text of certain items in a corpus of texts; Clusters Tool can be used to show the clusters based on the search condition by summarizing the results generated in the Concordance Tool; Collocates can reveal the collocations of a search item; Keyword List shows the words with unusual frequencies in a corpus in comparison with the words in a reference corpus. The extent of unusual frequency can be quantified by the keyness value of the word, which is calculated using either the chi-squared or log-likelihood statistical measures (Kilgarriff, 2001). In this paper, we will utilize log-likelihood as keyword statistics and the threshold of p value will be set at less than .01 and, accordingly, tokens with keyness values above 6.63 can be considered significant.



**Figure 1. Main Interface of AntConc 3.5.8**

### ***Textual Analysis***

Having constructed the corpora of subtitles of the two dramas, we can input them into AntConc for analysis. The subtitles of *Game of Thrones* are the main study object and *2 Broke Girls* serves as the reference corpus. Corpus analysis methods, including word frequency, concordance, and keyword, etc., are especially useful in our study.

In addition, though we have highlighted the significance of quantitative analysis above, qualitative analysis based on personal intuition should also be valued. McIntyre and Walker (2019) suggest that qualitative analysis is an integral component of good corpus stylistics. Sandrine (2020) also emphasized the complementarity between quantitative and qualitative approaches in linguistic studies in order to benefit from their advantages and limit their disadvantages. Therefore, in this paper, quantitative and qualitative methods are both adopted for providing comprehensive and reliable results.

## Analysis

As mentioned in the above chapter, the corpora of the subtitles of *Game of Thrones* and *2 Broken Girls* have been established. The research based on data as well as on textual analysis in this chapter attempt to explore the background, theme, and style in these two dramas as to find out the possible reasons accounting for the differences.

### *Analysis of the Background*

Gathering lines from all the 8 seasons of *Game of Thrones*, altogether 73 episodes, we built a corpus comprising 317,404 word tokens. With the aid of AntConc, 9,530 word types are retrieved, among which “you,” “the,” “I,” “to,” and “a” rank as the top five in terms of frequency. Reasonably, functional words, such as pronouns and articles, appear much more frequently, since they are necessary units for constituting syntactically complete sentences. However, it is still a significant try to focus on these functional words. For example, the high frequency of “you” and “I” actually indicates that it is in the form of dialogues that the linguistic materials we gathered appear, resulting from the fact that what we are researching into are subtitle languages.

The content words “king” and “lord” are listed among top 50 in terms of word frequency, each ranking 47<sup>th</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup>. By the analysis of keyness of the subtitles of *Game of Thrones* with those from *2 Broke Girls*, these two words rank as the top two and enjoy the keyness index of 928.02 and 915.27 each, which is in accordance with the theme of *Game of Thrones*. The setting of this storyline lies in the Medieval Age and is concerned with political issues among nobles. Thus, words as “king,” “Lord,” “Grace (ranking 92<sup>nd</sup>)”, “queen (ranking 101<sup>st</sup>)”, “Ser (ranking 120<sup>th</sup>)”, “knight (ranking 406<sup>th</sup>), etc., are pivotal and unique elements of this series, so they have the very high keyness values shown on the keyword list.

It should be noted that some common words are likely to be, also, special to the series, even though they are not marked by high keyness in the corpus analysis. For example, the word “lady” (ranking 94<sup>th</sup>) not only serves as an expression referring to “woman” in a more polite manner, but also a title used by a woman who is a member of the nobility, or by somebody who has been given the title “lady” as an honor. The wives and daughters of some members of the nobility and the wives of knights are also called “lady.” Compared with the word “lady” in *2 Broken Girls*, in which “lady” is only used in terms of its basic meaning and never shows up with its first letter uppercased, most cases of “lady” in *Game of Thrones* are used as titles, with 302 of them uppercased, which gets proved through concordance analysis. For example, in Episode 1 of Season 6, Brienne swears fealty to Sansa and offers her service once again. It is a solemn moment when an intense sense of power, safety, and relief occurs, as well as an unbreakable allegiance is established. In that case, the dialogue happens as, “Lady Sansa, I offer my services once again. I will shield your back and keep your counsel and give my life for yours if need be. I swear it by the old gods and the new.” Meanwhile, with the aid of cluster and collocation analysis, we could conclude that, apart from being modified by “my,” the word “lady” most appears together with “Stark” and “Sansa,” both referring to one of the main characters in this TV series.

In addition, the storyline follows the bloody struggle among nine noble families who build a web of alliances and conflicts. Through word frequency analysis, we could figure out which family contributes to the plot the most and which the least by listing them in order. The words referring to the family of the House Stark are found to appear most frequently, while the words referring to the family of the House Martell has the least number of appearances. In the same way, we could figure out the main characters in this series, even though it is assumed that there are dozens of leading roles in this fictional world. They are Jon Snow

(ranking 169<sup>th</sup>), Joffery Baratheon (ranking 203<sup>rd</sup>), Sansa Stark (ranking 217<sup>th</sup>), and Cersei Lannister (ranking 229<sup>th</sup>), which is basically in accordance with the setting of the series.

### ***Analysis of the Theme***

*Game of Thrones* is an extraordinary work, characteristic of its multiple themes incorporating fantasy, epic, love, war, religion, and corruption, which can be shown by word frequency analysis and cluster analysis. Fantasy is one of the most charming elements of this series. For instance, “dragons” (and “dragon”) and “walkers,” through collocation analysis, were found to show up with “white” in most occasions to refer to a kind of evil existence and are two special creatures in this series. Another theme involved in the series is war. Therefore, a multitude of war-related words frequently appear in the corpus, including “dead”/ “die”/ “death”/ “died” (ranking 122<sup>nd</sup>/ 140<sup>th</sup>/254<sup>th</sup>/ 370<sup>th</sup>), “kill”/ “killed” (ranking 132<sup>nd</sup>/ 176<sup>th</sup>), “fight”/ “fighting” (ranking 137<sup>th</sup>/ 242<sup>nd</sup>), “war”/ “wars” (ranking 157<sup>th</sup>/ 779<sup>th</sup>), army/ armies (ranking 188<sup>th</sup>/ 655<sup>th</sup>), sword (ranking 224<sup>th</sup>), blood (ranking 224<sup>th</sup>), fire (ranking 136<sup>th</sup>) and battle (ranking 347<sup>th</sup>). All of these tokens rank among the top in terms of keyness with the corpus of *2 Broken Girls* as the cross reference. In addition to war and fantasy, religion is also a big topic of *Game of Thrones*. In the series, “gods” and “god” appear in dialogues 253 and 93 times, respectively, ranking 183<sup>rd</sup> and 411<sup>st</sup> in terms of word frequency. Through concordance analysis we could find that the conception of religion fills the mind of every person in this fictional world, regardless of their class, religion, or education. Furthermore, the word “gods” appears together with the modifier “old” or “seven” in most cases in that “old gods” and “seven gods” are the gods worshiped by most people in the series.

### ***Analysis of the Style***

Different from common literary works, such as poetry, the novel, and prose, usually presented on papers, subtitles usually appear in a dynamic fashion and vanish immediately in the end of speeches. In such a situation, viewers can only keep in mind a fleeting memory of the previous subtitle so long and obscure subtitles will probably cause difficulty in understanding. Additionally, audiovisual works are destined to be the art in a popular style since its birth, thereby requiring the language to be widely comprehensible, which, in turn, contributes to its popularity in some sense. Due to these factors, brevity, and conciseness of language ought to be especially manifested in subtitles of movies and TV series. One of the major functions of audiovisual works is entertainment, so difficult words and complex sentences will definitely defeat the purpose. Therefore, apart from those works, which aim to meet the specific demand of specific audience, language in audiovisual products is generally supposed to be colloquial since oral language is not only clear and coherent, but casual and can be easily understood regardless of the age, gender, and education background of audience.

However, due to the distinctive personalities of roles and intricate relationships of the characters, linguistic features of subtitles in *Game of Thrones* vary greatly according to the occasion where dialogues occur. Besides, because the setting of the story lies in the Medieval Age and is concerned with political issues among nobles, the overall linguistic style of this series tends to be comparatively formal. Even a daily conversation among family members seems not to be as colloquial, as it is supposed to be. For example, through word frequency analysis and keyword analysis, we find that the word “father” appears in dialogues with extremely high frequency, ranking 67<sup>th</sup> and appearing 813 times with high keyness. By contrast, “dad” and “daddy” only appear twice each in the whole 8 seasons. This is different from the modern colloquial language in *2 Broken Girls*. Similarly, the word “mother” (ranking 126<sup>th</sup> and appearing 385 times), serves as another remarkable example of the formal linguistic style of subtitles in this TV series. Additionally, the

occurrence of many old-fashioned expressions in dialogues also constitutes this unique linguistic style. One of them is “aye” (ranking 303<sup>rd</sup> and appearing 135 times with high keyness), an outdated word for confirmation, casting light on the time background of this series. “Lady” and “ser” are another two words with the similar indication. Moreover, curse words prevail in the dialogues from *Game of Thrones*, as well. For example, “fuck” ranks 310<sup>th</sup> and appears 132 times, together with “fucking” (ranking 420<sup>th</sup> and appearing 92 times), shit (ranking 463<sup>rd</sup> and appearing 82 times) and bloody (ranking 488<sup>th</sup> and appearing 76 times). If we take the aid of concordance analysis and search for the context of the dialogues, we will find that most of those filthy expressions are uttered by males, especially soldiers who confront dangers in battles and thereby do not care about courtesy that much.

A multitude of fictional elements and newly created words unique to the series can also be found, thus leading to the novelty of the subtitle language in this series. The most remarkable novel items are toponyms. As a series based on war, *Game of Thrones* has invested heavily in creating a magnificent virtual world in which a large land consisting of several dominions is vividly depicted. Every toponym in *Game of Thrones* is loaded with its corresponding geographical features or historical and cultural characteristics. The notable examples include Winterfell (ranking 171<sup>st</sup> and appearing 269 times), Westeros (ranking 324<sup>th</sup> and appearing 125 times) and Meereen (ranking 489<sup>th</sup> and appearing 75 times). In addition to toponyms, Maester (ranking 318<sup>th</sup> and appearing 129 times), a neologism referring to advisers or scientists to the nobility, wildlings (ranking 374<sup>th</sup> and appearing 105 times), people living outside the mainland, khal (ranking 769<sup>th</sup> and appearing 39 times), a title used to designate the Dothraki (ranking 456<sup>th</sup> and appearing 84 times) warlord who commands a tribe of tens of thousands of mounted warriors, are all unique to this TV series. What’s more impressive, the language spoken by Dothraki inhabitants is created by David J. Peterson, a linguist hired by HBO (Home Box Office) such as “valar morghulis” which means “all men must die” and “valar dohaeris” meaning “all men must serve.” Interestingly, there are also many special expressions formed by two or more existing lexical words but containing unusual meanings, like “white walkers.”

### **Conclusion and Limitations**

This paper aims to figure out the applicability of corpus methods into a stylistic study of subtitles and probe into the background, theme, and linguistic style of the subtitles of *Game of Thrones* in comparison with the subtitles in *2 Broken Girls* with the aid of AntConc. Based on the previous literature, fundamental information pertaining to stylistics, corpus linguistics, as well as specific analysis methods of AntConc, are introduced in the first half of the paper in an effort to provide the theoretical framework for the study. Through detailed analysis in terms of word frequency, concordance, and keyword, the authors manage to draw several findings in the latter part.

However, this paper fails to cover a comprehensive study on the style of subtitles in these two dramas, since the size the corpora is still small, and the analysis techniques are not that advanced. Besides, the examples selected for case analysis are just certain typical ones, which may not be able to mirror the overall situation of a certain stylistic characteristic of the subtitles.

Therefore, with the aim of promoting systematic research on stylistic study of subtitles, more efforts are required from the perspective of corpus stylistics. Actually, a multitude of audiovisual products are qualified to be the research objects in this academic field, and many of other stylistic features of subtitles in *Game of Thrones* are worth analyzing. For example, in terms of the vocabulary related to sex and cursing, how to make a trade-off between the stylistic restoration and avoidance of straightforward expression poses

a great challenge for the subtitle translators, and, thus, it may be significant to carry out a comparative corpus-based study on source text and its corresponding translation text.

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# A Translation Analysis of “Frozen” Texts in Legal English under the Guidance of Register Theory

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*[Abstract] Nowadays, countries' legal systems have collided and rubbed against each other according to global economic communication. Through the accurate expression of foreign laws, the translator builds a bridge of communication between Chinese scholars and other scholars, legal personages, and even a more comprehensive range of people abroad. This paper was mainly based on systematic register theory in functional linguistics of Halliday to guide the study of “Frozen Text” in legal English; to analyze the field, tenor, and mode of “Frozen” texts in legal English translation; to study the translation strategy; to verify the feasibility of Halliday's register theory in legal translation.*

*[Keywords] legal English, English Translation, Register theory, “Frozen” texts*

## Introduction

The studies of the register theory have been through a long, evolving period. According to Zhou Lin (2011, p. 17), the famous anthropologist called Brainslaw Malinowski, made great significance to start the contextual studies. After Malinowski, Firth succeeded in his career and continued his contextual studies until Halliday generalized and put forward the register theory. From Halliday's perspective, he defines the register as a variety of language that corresponds to a variety of situations, and he uses the terms “field,” “tenor,” and “mode” to interpret it (Halliday, 1985, p. 38). Halliday (f, p. 32) also suggests that the register's main function is to attempt to uncover the general principles that govern the variation. After the appearance of register theory, it influences the methods of analysis in linguistics profoundly. In stylistic research and literature translation, register theory has played an important role. Moreover, register theory is also applied in the study of cognitive science, and the researchers used the register theory of semiotic representation to analyze and study the mathematical cognition and instruction of future high school students (Pino-Fan, Guzmán, Duval, & Font, 2016, p. 2). However, the application of the register theory to legal English is still relatively rare. Many studies are devoted to exploring the solutions in translation activities of legal English. However, the author believes that to translate legal texts well, it is necessary first to study the characteristics of legal English. According to Li Ping (2017), legal English is an instrumental language for specific purposes. Therefore, legal English has its professional characteristics (p. 30). In another study, Xie Kaili (2016) briefly analyzes the lexical features of legal English and discusses the basic principles of English-Chinese legal translation. To further derive specific strategies suitable for translation of legal English, some researchers have adopted the perspective of context theory to study and analyze the context characteristics of legal English translation. Some scholars are dedicated to investigating the translation strategy of legal English from a cultural background. However, Professor Halliday's application of the register theory and the formality theory have not caused widespread attention. Martin Joos once claimed five formats of literary style: the frozen style, formal style, consultative style, casual style, and intimate style (1962). The frozen style is the most formal and severe of these five styles.

Moreover, since the legal language refers to a particular-purpose communication between specialists (Sarcevic, 1997, p. 9), the legal texts have become a typical representative of frozen texts due to the rigor,

complexity, and seriousness of their professional use. The structure of this paper is divided into two parts. The paper first, from the perspective of “Frozen” style, identifies and describes the characteristics of frozen texts from the lexical aspect and syntactic aspect. Second, it exemplifies and analyzes the translation of legal English according to the equivalence of field, tenor, and mode of discourse of the register theory. Finally, it applies register theory to examples cited to further study the translation strategy of “Frozen” text in legal English.

### **Frozen Text**

Martin Joos (1962) once claimed five formats of literary style: the frozen style, formal style, consultative style, casual style, and intimate style. As classified as frozen style, legal English often appears with professionalism, dignity, rigor, and accuracy in the text. The solemnity and judicial nature of the legal text require translators who are engaged in the translation of legal styles to be familiar with the basic features of the law.

#### ***Frozen Text in Lexical Aspect***

First, language is constantly changing, while many Old English and Middle English vocabularies have survived in legal language. They are usually built on the root of an adverbial word, such as “hereafter,” “therein,” “thereby,” and “whereof,” because of a specific purpose to protect the formality and solemnity of legal English. Some archaic words are persevered from other languages, including French and Latin. For example, the term “trial de novo,” which can be explained as a new trial in which the entire case is retried as if no prior trial had occurred, came from a Latin word “de novo.”

Second, in order to be professional, many common words in legal English have specific professional meanings. Legal language is considered a particular communication between specialists of law, which is hard for ordinary people to understand (Harvey, 2002). Take “article” for example. “Article” refers to the legal provisions stipulating the legal rules in the law, rather than the article referring to a piece of writing in ordinary life. Furthermore, “complaint” refers to a written statement of the plaintiff in legal English rather than cries of pain or anger or sorrow.

Third, for the formality of legal English, couple-synonyms is usually applied to describe the same subject or situation, which provides a specific message to the reader. Therefore, the law field still retains this form in legal English by convention, although Zhou Lin once pointed out that the couple-synonyms in legal English can be replaced by a simple word, such as “null and void,” in legal English can be replaced by “invalid” (2011, p. 24) because they both convey the same thing about invalidation.

#### ***Frozen Text in Syntactic Aspect***

First, long and complex sentences are often applied in legal English to convey complex meaning and, thus, to make the message more precise. David Mellinkoff (1963) once claimed that it is common that there is a sentence with 13 pages in legal English. In long and complex sentences, the subjects and applicable requirements are repeatedly arranged, coupled with conjunctions to represent logical turns and connections.

Second, the passive voice became another critical type of syntactic feature due to its feature of objective and rigorous. The Chinese language focuses on people’s subjective feelings, while English does not (Ju, 2020). Different from Chinese, legal English pays more attention to the expression of the initiator and the receiver of an action. This is because the legal text is essentially the expression of legal rules, and legal rules are a kind of relationship that can be accurately described by emphasizing it.

Third, no matter how the context changes, modal verbs could always convey a fundamental message (Li, J., 1998). In everyday English, there are about 11 modal verbs such as “may”, “shall”, “should”, and so. In legal English, the most frequently used modal verbs are “shall”, “may”, and “must”“ Some experts thought that the function of “shall” could be equivalent to “must”, “be asked to”. The standardized command tone expressed by “shall” conforms to the position of law as a social norm. According to Martin Joos’ theory of the degree of formality, this term belongs to the degree of “Frozen”, in which “shall” and “no” were combined to express resounding rejection.

Fourth, due to its seriousness and rigor, the legal text in English is described as detailed as possible when describing the subjects or objects of the law. People who read legal texts can find provisions that meet the actual situation arranged in parallel structure. Therefore, the author does not dare to change the parallel structure of the original text without authorization but directly leaves the format and punctuation in the original text in the text.

## Field Equivalence in the Translation

### **Formalness**

There is a characteristic of formalness in legal language, whether it is the legislator or civilians, and even the violators of the law in legal language are carried out in a formal tone. Therefore, formalness deserves the laurel as the most significant feature of the field in legal English. There is an example from the case *Ora Lee Williams*, which is cited from *Law 101* (2014).

#### *Example*

*The amount ... to be made by Purchaser ... this present lease shall be inclusive ... each installment payment to be made by purchaser ... now and hereafter made by the purchaser shall be credited ... at the time each such payment is made.*

*购买者...数额都应当包括购买者...分期付款款项, ...从现在开始支付的所有款项应当根据每一笔分期付款款项支付时依据...所欠公司的款项进行记账.*

The word “hereafter” here is an archaic word that refers to the time not come. In this sentence, it means the effectiveness of the contract can cover the payment in the future and all payments made by the purchaser would be credited. The appearance of archaic words makes this article distinguished from everyday English with a more formal characteristic. Furthermore, as “shall” can be replaced with a plain expression “would”, the selection of modal verb “shall” makes this article farther away than everyday English. Moreover, the use of the passive voice of “to be made” in the clause makes the relationship between the legal subject (法律主体) and the legal object (法律客体) clearer and makes the legal text more serious.

### **Precision**

The emphasis on Precision enables legislators to better articulate legislative intent and facilitates judicial use of the law according to its ability to clarify legal relationships by differentiating the legal subject and legal object with their rights and obligations. Therefore, compared to other characters in legal text, precision is an essential requirement.

#### *Example*

*This contract is entered into on August 5, 2009, by and between Party A and Party B.*

*本合同由甲方和乙方于2009年8月5日签订.*

This article is an example of passive voice, and passive voice can reflect the precision because it clearly expresses the relationship between the initiator and the receiver. The “is entered” expressed an accurate meaning of “the contract is made, the rights and obligations are affirmed”. In this translated version, the translator put “签订” in the sentence to be equivalent to “is entered”, and that is precise and vivid. For translators, it is necessary to choose appropriate vocabulary and phrases flexibly in Chinese.

### **Conciseness**

Frozen texts in law are determined not only by the characteristics of rigor, precision, and formalness, but also by conciseness, which contributes to the degree of formality of the legal texts. Given the massive number of rules that a legal clause needs to contain, it is necessary to simplify the legal language concisely to express enough information as possible. An example is as follows:

#### *Example*

*In the event of an accident whereby loss or damage may result in a claim against the sellers, notice shall be given to the seller’s agent as mentioned hereunder.*

*如果由于损失或损害可能导致向卖方提出索赔，应通知卖方下述代理人。*

Another type of legal text which can reflect conciseness is archaic words. In this sentence, the archaic words “whereby” and “hereunder” highly condense the message when this clause comes into force and who bears the liability to compensate. The word “whereby” is equivalent to “by which” and “by accident” in English and “由此” in Chinese, and “hereunder” is equivalent to “下述” in translation. Comparing with “by which”, “by accident” and “as follows below”, “whereby”, and “hereunder” would be more concise than others.

## **Tenor Equivalence in the Translation**

### **Modal Verbs for Authoring Provision**

According to the difference of provisions, it can be divided into authoring provisions and obligatory provisions. The authoring provision is a provision that regulates the right of people to do something. Otherwise, it also enables people to abandon. However, there is some right not allowing abandonment like education and work. In this section, the authoring provision would be mainly introduced. There is an authoring provision cited from *Trade Act 1974* (Senate and House of Representatives of the U.S.A., 1974).

#### *Example*

*(1) during the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, may enter into trade agreements with foreign countries or instrumentalities thereof; and*

*(2) may proclaim such modification or continuance of any existing duty, such continuance of existing duty-free or ...to carry out any such trade agreement.*

1) 自本法颁布之日起的5年期间, 可以与外国或其机构签订贸易协定: 和

2) 可以宣布对现有义务进行如此修改或继续执行, 如继续执行现有的免税或...执行任何此类贸易协定的要求或适当履行其他义务。

In authoring provisions, the severity of modal verbs would be taken into account. This text of the laws and regulations in this section, the essential characteristics of the authoring provision are reflected. After confirming that this is the authoring provision, it can be observed that the modal verbs used here are “may” rather than the “shall” and “must”, which are common in everyday English. The word “may” can be

translated into “可以” while others are “应该”, “必须”. In the translation of the authoring provision, the translator should put emphasis on the selection of the modal verb.

### ***Modal Verbs for Obligatory Provision***

The obligatory provision is referred to as a provision that regulates the obligations of people. These provisions are mandatory. People constrained by obligatory provisions enjoy no right to abandon the obligation, which means they must fulfill the obligation; otherwise, he would take legal responsibility.

#### *Example*

*the Trade Representative shall ...and shall take ... the President may direct ...such act, policy, or practice.*

贸易代表应...总统授权下应采取所有其他适当和可行的行动, 总统可指示 ... 此类法令, 政策或惯例.

This clause is a typically obligatory provision that requires trade representatives to take counter-measures when laws, policies, and practices are issued in other countries that are detrimental to the interests of the United States. The modal verbs here include “shall” and “may”. The “may” has been introduced above, which is equivalent to “可” in the Chinese version. Furthermore, the modal verb “shall” in this text is an obligation for the trade representative to obey, which means the use of “应” is more appropriate than the former. In obligatory provisions, modal verbs become more severe, and the frequency of “shall” and “should” increases significantly. This is because the obligatory provision itself is the legal subject’s obligation and cannot be refused. Therefore, “shall” and “should” become the most appropriate modal verbs in obligatory provision.

## **Mode Equivalence in the Translation**

### ***Third-Person Perception***

According to different perspectives, language activity can be divided into first, second, and third-person perception, which refers to “me”, “you”, and “he or she”. It is once stated that authorlessness is a feature of legal language (Souriaux, & Lerat, 1975, pp. 44-46). As the solemnity it has, third-person perception is always involved in creating a sense of alienation, which gives the objectivity of the legal text.

#### *Example*

*No person shall be a Representative. . . and who shall not ... be an inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.*

凡年龄... , 或于... 而非该州居民者, 均不得任众议员.

#### *Example*

*The House of Representatives shall choose their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole power of impeachment.*

众议院应选举该处议长及其他官员; 只有众议员有提出弹劾案的权力.

This section is taken from Article 1, paragraph 2, of the U.S. Constitution (2007, p. 2), which provides for the eligibility of the House of Representatives of U.S. This section uses a third-person narrative throughout, or the whole Constitution, except for the first-person “we” at the beginning. This is because the third person breaks through the limits of “you” and “me” and has a broader scope of application, which is determined by the nature of the law as a social norm. In the original text, nouns “person” and the personal pronoun “he” is presented to refer to the public citizen who lives in the U.S. In the second example, the

phrase “their speaker” is also concretely demonstrated that the third-person perception could not only break the uncertainty of who can be but also indicates a solidly specific function the law needs. A translator should focus on the equivalence of third-person perception between the target language and the source language to achieve equivalence in the mode of discourse.

### ***Verbalization and Nominalization***

Taking the differences between the Chinese language and the English language into account is necessary for the course of translating. The Chinese language and English language have different expressive tendencies. The Chinese language focuses on the action, while English on the concept. Verbalization refers to the process in which the original nominal words are translated into verbs in the Chinese version. At the same time, nominalization is the phenomenon in which Chinese verbs are translated into English nouns.

#### *Example*

<i>Execution</i>	执行
<i>Settlement</i>	解决
<i>Negotiation</i>	协商

It is not difficult to find that among the contents intercepted, “execution”, “settlement”, and “negotiation” are correspond to “执行”, “解决” and “协商” in Chinese. These verbs in Chinese are translated into nouns in English and, vice versa, the nouns in English could also be translated as verbs into Chinese. It is believed that some nouns should also be made into verbs in the process of English translation into Chinese to achieve the equivalence of mode. The verbalization or nominalization is relatively connected, and the translator should make a choice to make his works more accurate and conformable to the target language.

The verbalization analysis of mode equivalence mainly focuses on the verbalization of nouns in the Chinese language and the nominalization of verbs in English. The Chinese language usually pays attention to the expression of action, so in the process of legal English translation, it is indispensable to make the original concept verbalized. Therefore, the translator should consider the translation of verbalization of nouns and nominalization of verbs in the translation process.

### **Implications and Conclusion**

Legal English is a specialized language of communication between professionals, but it does not deviate from the framework of language. The register theory of systematic functional linguistics of Halliday puts forward a new perspective, and it still can be applied to deconstruct this unique language. Furthermore, with Martin Joos’ five degrees of formality, the legal texts can be classified as the “Frozen” style. This paper selects the “frozen” texts in the legal English text. The register theory is used to analyze the field, tenor, and mode of discourse in the legal English translation and study its equivalent theory to achieve better translation results.

The analysis of the translation of legal English in this paper introduces and analyses several features of “Frozen texts” in legal English, such as “archaism”, “common words with uncommon meanings” and “couple-synonyms” of lexical aspect; and “long and complex sentence”, “passive voice”, “modal verbs”, and “parallel structure” of syntactic aspect. Based on the features of legal English, the register theory of Halliday in this paper is applied to subdivide the register equivalence into the equivalence of field, tenor,

and mode. In the translation analysis of legal texts, the equivalence of field, tenor, and mode provides a practically theoretical framework for the translator's translation of legal English.

In the view of field equivalence, translators need to emphasize the accurate interpretation of the formalness, precision, and conciseness; they need to ensure the preservation of the original distinctions in the field of discourse. Furthermore, from the perspective of tenor equivalence, translators need to highlight the difference between the two types of legal provisions, which refers to authoring provisions and the obligatory provisions.

In translating these two different legal rules, it is necessary for a translator to be focused on the use of modal verbs. Authoring provisions rarely use modal verbs such as “shall”, “must”, and others alike because they are more like an enforced command, which requires the translator to avoid applying these words in authoring provisions. However, it works in obligatory provisions. In consideration of the mode equivalence, translators should consider the translation of perceptions. Furthermore, the choice of verbalization and nominalization in legal texts should also be emphasized as the nominalization in Chinese-English translation and the verbalization in English-Chinese translation.

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