

The logo for The Asian ESP Journal is a dark red horizontal bar with a white oval shape in the center. The text "The Asian ESP Journal" is written in a dark red, serif font across the bar, with the white oval partially overlapping the letters.

**The Asian ESP Journal**

# **The Asian ESP Journal**

**August 2008**

**Volume 4, Issue 2**

**Editors: Paul Robertson and John Adamson**



The Asian ESP Journal: Volume 4, Number 2

Published by the Asian ESP Journal Press

Asian ESP Journal Press  
A Division of Time Taylor International Ltd  
TTI College  
Episode Building 682  
Daen Dong  
Pusan  
Korea

<http://www.asianespjournal.com>

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Editors: Dr. Paul Robertson and Dr. John Adamson  
Journal Production Editor: Marcus Otlowski

[ISSN 2206-0979 \(Online\)](#)

# The Asian ESP Journal

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# The Asian ESP Journal

## Foreword

We are happy to present the second edition in 2008 of the *Asian ESP Journal*, which contains five papers written by ESP practitioners from a wide variety of working contexts.

The first three contributions cover various aspects of the teaching of writing in ESP which will be of both practical use and provide theoretical insights to our readership. The fourth paper looks at move structures in textbook prefaces, and the final study investigates an ESP project for tour guides.

The first paper by Damian Rivers at Kanda University of International Studies, Japan, is a conceptual work entitled “English as an International Business Language: The Need for an Increase in Theoretical and Practical Research on Written Business Communications Across Cultural Boundaries in Relation to Multinational Corporate Language Selection.” Rivers provides a comprehensive analysis of the current situation related to English as the language of international business, when business communities “are not just adopting English, but they are actively shaping it for their own benefit to align more closely with their native language.” The author uses this analysis as a foundation to put forward a theoretical model for teaching written communication considering it a core form of business exchanges today in light of more technological developments in the future.

The second paper on writing “Academic Writing in Nursing: Genres, Marking Criteria and Course Design” by Julio Gimenez from Middlesex University, United Kingdom, considers the writing genres used in nursing. Based on his previously outlined “descriptive-argumentative cline”, Gimenez offers a genre taxonomy to be used as the foundation for a system of general marking criteria from readability and correct grammar and spelling to referencing, logical organization, balanced argument, and critical evaluation. Of great practical applicability is the sample course outline for teaching writing to undergraduate students of nursing. Though claiming no universality in this study, Gimenez offers an efficient framework for developing ESP courses in writing.

David Dalton, teaching at the Petroleum Institute in Abu-Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, presents a study of chemical engineering student-generated memo reports evaluated according to their subject teachers’ perception of text ‘readability’. In his paper “The Foreign Language Engineering Writer: What Makes a Readable Memo Report?”, Dalton investigates engineering documents in terms of the essential linguistic elements of noun phrase formation, infinitive clause formation, use of text moves, and lexical range. The objective of “sensitizing weaker writers to the contextual nature of elements of text discourse” can be achieved by means of the approach proposed, yet could be enhanced, as Dalton suggests, by collaboration between engineering and language teaching faculty, as well as encouraging students themselves to adopt more autonomous means of self-editing.

Davud Kuhi from the Islamic Azad University, Iran, in his study entitled “An Analysis of the Move Structure of Textbook Prefaces” offers an alternative angle to genre competence, analyzing the schematic structure of academic book prefaces. Various combinations of the four basic moves (Announcing Objectives, Identifying Audience, Outlining Organization, and Acknowledging Others’ Contribution) are found in order of use to “meet the expectations of actors involved in textbook discourse.” The outline and textualization of the 4-Move Structure, presented in Kuhi’s paper, are of great value for course design in Applied Linguistics, English for Academic Purposes, and study skills.

The last paper in the Summer 2008 issue is “The Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of an English Tour Guide Project” by Ya-fen Lo and Chuen-maan Sheu, both working at the National Kaohsiung University, Taiwan. This comprehensive outline of a tour guide project has been developed in a content-based instruction context and is closely connected with specific real-life events providing an extrinsic factor to motivate hospitality students in their ESP course. Lo and Sheu draw significant conclusions for the implementation of such projects in content-based hospitality language courses.

We hope that you enjoy reading these five contributions in this edition and look forward to receiving your own contributions for 2009.

**Tatiana Slobodina**

**Associate Editor**

# The Asian ESP Journal

## **English as an International Business Language (EIBL): The Need for an Increase in Theoretical and Practical Research Focusing on Written Business Communications Across Cultural Boundaries in Relation to Multinational Corporate Language Selection.**

**Damian John Rivers**

*Kanda University of International Studies, Japan*

### **Biodata**

Damian Rivers has been teaching English in Japan for 8 years. He has worked at major multinational corporations such as Panasonic, Toshiba, Honda, and Cosmo Oil. His research interests are currently based around the cross-cultural communication issues associated with virtual teams in business related environments. He is currently a Lecturer in the International Communication Department at Kanda University of International Studies in Chiba, Japan.

### **Abstract**

The current paper sets forth the need for an increase in research which examines the role of corporate language selection and the effectiveness of cross cultural business communications in specific reference to written genres. It highlights the fact that the English language is now spoken by more non-native speakers than native speakers which signals a threat to the current economic superiority enjoyed by native English speaking countries such as the U.S. The paper predicts a grim future for the native speaker and suggests that the once idolized models of the English language will become a language minority not ideally suited to the changing world of international business. The aim of the paper is to draw attention to the issues which surround such a future and how written forms of business communication can be successfully negotiated for all speakers in such a changing language environment.

**Key words:** multinational corporate language selection, written genres of business communication, cross-cultural communication, language adoption and evolution

## **Introduction**

There was once a time when global corporations were considered giants within the business world. With resources and finances stretching to the far reaches of the planet they were the envy of smaller regional and national businesses. These days the term global corporation is readily attributed to the majority of businesses and is seen as a prerequisite for modern day business success. Over the past two decades the physical distance between such global or multinational corporations has shortened with technological revolutions such as email, the Internet, fax, video conferencing, and other forms of instant communication. Such a reduction in distance has created business opportunities where perhaps it was not possible before such modes of communication became mainstream. The revolution of electronic communication essentially means that there is not a single country in the world which cannot communicate instantly with one on the other side of the planet. Given that communication across the planet is now accessible, fast, and commonplace, it is important to consider the content of such communications. According to the U.S. Bureau of Intelligence and Research (2006), there are currently 193 independent countries in the world. Within these 193 countries it is estimated that the number of languages spoken stands at approximately 6,000 (Grimes, 1992). With so many languages being spoken within such a limited number of countries it is inevitable that languages and people will overlap and integrate with little regard for national boundaries and physical distances. Add to this the fact that over the past 50 years the number of people living outside of their country of origin has doubled, rising to 191 million (Warttman, 2005). Such technical and geographical shifts have had a significant impact on national and international economies, employment trends, and international business behaviors. Whilst these factors have revolutionized the style, speed, and format in which businesses communicate, the majority of communications still rely on basic human interactions through verbal exchanges and written messages.

According to Crystal (2003) the number of native English speakers in the world is approximately 375 million, which is also the same figure attributed to the number of non-native English speakers. Whilst there is a balance, it can be predicted that such a balance will not remain as the number of EFL learners currently stands at around 750 million. Should this number remain constant or increase, native speakers will essentially become a minority group in the near future. The majority group could represent new basic values, new rules of communication, and evolve independently of the cultural and linguistic norms of the native speaking minority. The signals of this future shift have been present for many years and have

come about in part due to the spread of English. In the current language climate it would not be unreasonable to imagine a Spanish executive doing business in Bangkok, an African diplomat constructing laws in Strasbourg, or a Malaysian biochemist at a conference in Sweden, all using English to communicate. House (2002) attributes the mass spread of English to the expansion of the British Empire, the political and economic prowess of the US, the rapid development of information technologies, and the increase in international mergers and acquisitions. Perhaps one consequence of the English native-speaker becoming a minority group will be a change in economic power. Clearly such language issues should be considered important at the highest levels of government.

Such linguistic phenomena, though, are not only observable within the business world. The very communities where business is conducted are not just adopting English, but they are actively shaping it for their own benefit to align more closely with their native language. So-called New Englishes are acting to reshape identities and the perceptions of what speaking English means to different people. Notable examples include Englog, the Tagalog-infused English spoken in the Philippines; Japlish or Engrish, the emotion conveying cryptic English used in Japan; and Hinglish, the mix of Hindi and English found throughout India. Although such New Englishes are typically observed in spoken exchanges, they also play an important role in the transference to written forms—people are naturally more prone to write in the manner in which they speak rather than speaking in the manner in which they write. This can be observed in the newer genres of written communication such as email, private forums, chat groups, and written communication between familiar people such as work colleagues and friends. These international variants of the English language, the social context in which they occur, and the form which they take, should be seen as critical factors in determining not only the success of business communications between multinational corporations within the twenty-first century but also the future superiority of the native English speaker and the economic power which this superiority has afforded (see China and India as examples of growing multilingual societies which are challenging U.S. economic superiority).

This paper aims to draw attention to this growing linguistic and economic shift by analyzing how international business is conducted through written forms of English. The emphasis of this paper is on written communication. Instant messaging, texting, faxing, and emailing are all currently at the core of business communications and one could predict that future advances in technology will only solidify the importance of written exchanges. Firstly, the paper will examine some of the contemporary issues associated with business communication in relation



to language. A critical tone is presented which aims to highlight the contempt major corporations have shown to language selection and usage. The theoretical standpoint of Kachru (1985) and Perlmutter (1969) will be used as an anchor and as a basis upon which to make future predictions. Secondly, this paper will analyze the nature of written communication more closely, focusing on the role of social acceptability and shared knowledge. Research findings will be discussed in relation to corporate policy. Finally, the various aspects discussed will be brought together to formulate a new theoretical model for the future which reflects the global shift in language behaviors as well as the solid foundations previously laid out by other researchers.

### **Business Communications and Language**

Whilst both international business and English have received considerable research attention, they are rarely analyzed as an interconnected concept. Bloch & Starks (1999) identified the specific area of English intralanguage variation related to international business as currently lacking, and stated that business people within the English speaking world often neglect the significance of language skills in general, especially important variations within the English language itself. In Ball and McCulloch's (1993) publication entitled *International business: The challenges of global competition*, there were a mere eight pages devoted to issues concerning language and translation within corporate settings and only half a page focused on English. Likewise, Cateora (1993) completely overlooked intra-language variations in English in *International marketing*. Even those publications more directly related to topics such as *Intercultural marketing and negotiating with the Japanese* seem to treat intra-language variations as irrelevant or a side issue (see Hofstede, 1993; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Hodlin, 1975; March, 1990). Within the study of international business communication the concept of language has been referred to as the orphan of international business research (Feely and Harzing, 2002). More recently, it has been argued that the issue of language should be addressed equally with other fundamental business issues such as the management of multinational corporations (Marschan et al., 1997; Dhir and Savage, 2001; Dhir and Goke-Pariola, 2002; Dhir and Savage, 2002). Yet, research examining the functions of language in relation to business strategy is extremely rare, and in the few cases where it exists, a great deal of what is reported is merely anecdotal (Hood and Truijens, 1993; Coleman and Cree, 2002).

Corporate attitudes toward language within an international business framework can be analyzed using Perlmutter's (1969) typology of multinational corporations. Perlmutter identified three types of multinational company: ethnocentric, polycentric, and geocentric. This

basic typology was supported by Porter (1986) who made the distinction between global and multi-domestic companies whilst Bartlett and Ghoshal (1987) contrasted the decentralized federation with the integrated network. Those companies which fall into the ethnocentric category are typically dominated by the cultural and linguistic norms of their home society; these norms are then applied like a blanket across the corporation with little or no consideration for variation or difference. Polycentric corporations have a more developed awareness of cultural and linguistic differences between the home company and its subsidiaries, and this type of company will allow each faction to develop their own system of communication and business behavior in order to maximize effectiveness. The final classification is that of a geocentric corporation that can be seen as a truly global enterprise. This typology extends beyond the first two and represents a fluid, multinational corporate environment. Perlmutter's typologies act to imply the most appropriate form of corporate language selection and usage for each type of company. Within Europe, for example, the adoption of the English language alongside a native language has seen many European companies progress from typically ethnocentric to geocentric entities. Charles (1998) points out that such companies are now operating in a multilingual reality.

A number of Asian corporations can be identified as ethnocentric. However, some are aiming to follow their European counterparts in this respect, insisting on high levels of English proficiency from all employees, creating a second corporate language. However, this proficiency is measured through the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), which offers no measure of communicative competence and does not provide an assessment relevant to effective cross-cultural communication. With emphasis placed on TOEIC assessment it seems strange that very few companies have formal foreign-language training systems, a gap which reinforces the point that language should be addressed on par with other corporate issues such as management strategies, mentioned above. Unfortunately, many corporations believe that English language ability, as measured on a standardized test such as TOEIC, equates to intercultural communicative ability. Whilst TOEIC and its related drawbacks are not going to be discussed here, this highlights problems associated with English language education and adoption.

Many Asian societies place a heavy emphasis on structure, procedure, formality, and standardized behaviors. The huge popularity of TOEIC in Asia can be attributed to its characteristics as a testing tool. It acts as a mirror image or symbol of modern day society - the concepts seen in TOEIC are highly valued within the wider social forum. It is because of this

that TOEIC can be seen as a relative component in the language policies of Asian multinational corporations, especially as they are attempting to shift away from the ethnocentric to the geocentric typology. Whether such a rigid test of language will also be able to make the transition is unlikely.

Rather than adopting a second language to be used alongside the native language, other global corporations have attempted to adopt a single, non-native corporate language as a means to increase profits and aid globalization; this has rarely been a success (see, Fiat Palio Project (Feely and Harzing, 2002), Kone (Marschan et al, 1998), Nordea (Bjorkmann et al, 2005)). Nickerson (2005) highlighted the complexities of language labeling and implementation by stating that the actual communication event is significantly more complex than the label of English as Lingua Franca would have us believe. Welch et al. (2001) previously had warned that imposing a common corporate language might hinder or alter the flow of information and transfer of knowledge within a corporate environment. Dhir and Goke-Pariola (2002) also proposed the use of considered language policies within multinational corporations. They argued that the process which constrains a company to a standard language may actually deny it access to critical resources unique to the members' own diverse training and experiences, and that diversity in cultural and linguistic representation may indeed offer opportunities to a global organization not available to its competitors. Multilingualism should, therefore, be an organizational ideal of any multinational company. There also exists the argument for global standardization in language practices. Dhir (2005) stated that there was a strong analogy between language and currency, as both represent a means of exchange. He said that "a standardized language, used both at home and in local markets, facilitates efficient communication, and minimizes misunderstanding between various units of the organization."

Although it is not clear if Dhir also meant to include international markets in this analogy, it is apparent that such an ideology has a number of questions to answer. Even within a single language, operating within a single country, the massive variations that are present can cause numerous communication problems. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) had previously illustrated the complexities of intranational communication variation by listing five distinct varieties of English spoken within Hong Kong. If only one of these variations were adopted as the sole corporate language then the company would be denying itself access to valuable knowledge from those language groups who had been isolated and marginalized. It would also be limiting itself to an ethnocentric typology.

At the core of previous global English language research lays the paradigm put forth by Kachru (1985). Through analyzing the global usage of English, he identified an inner circle, an outer circle, and an expanding circle of countries based on their relationship to, and their functional usage of, the English language. Those countries on the inner circle are countries where English is used as the first or native language (i.e., Great Britain, the United States, Canada, and Australia). Traditionally, these countries have been looked upon as models of correct and desirable speech by non-native speakers. Lippi-Green, (1997) referred to this native speaker envy as linguistic discrimination. This is most apparent in those countries where EFL tuition is widespread (usually expanding countries such as Japan). The preference of many employers for native-only instructors is not only problematic in terms of international business communication but also poses a threat to the progression of that particular country's own language development. The number of English speakers within the inner circle has been estimated at 320-380 million (Crystal, 2003). The outer circle of countries represents those countries in which English has some official status such as a second language and is often used within local communities (i.e., India, Singapore, Pakistan, and Kenya). Many of these outer circle countries have developed their own grammatical and textual forms of English communication to better reflect their own cultural experiences and knowledge (Chishimba, 1984). This outer circle of countries contain 150 – 300 million English speakers (Crystal, 2003). Finally, the expanding circle includes those countries where English is needed for specialist purposes such as business and higher education but serves no real function in the local community (i.e., China, Japan, Russia, and Korea). Within these countries there are an estimated 100 million to 1 billion speakers (Crystal, 2003).

Whilst the work of Kachru (1985) has been highly influential, the three circles proposed do have major flaws in their design if we consider the development and progression of English in the global arena over the past 20 years. They make the assumption that all of those countries contained within the inner circle will essentially communicate using the same variety of the English language. Indeed, MacArthur (1994) argues there is a fair degree of standardization between many English-speaking countries, particularly those that fell into the inner circle. Such a generalization blankets over a multitude of regional, inter-personal, and semantic differences that exist between those countries within the inner circle. Trompenaars (1993) addressed this issue by stating that “as we all know, even the English and Americans are separated by a common language which is used quite differently in different contexts and which has some serious differences in the meanings of individual words.”

The terminology used by Kachru (1985) has also been criticized as divisive. Mufwene, (2001) stated:

the danger of subscribing to such a position lies in us linguists perpetuating biases similar to the distinction inner circle versus outer circle, which presents some varieties as peripheral or marginal, and in accepting distinctions which are social but not academic nor useful to understanding language evolution. (p.139)

Whilst this criticism holds true and our understanding of language evolution is seriously restricted by the Kachru paradigm, it was proposed in 1985 before the major boom period in EFL tuition and TESOL practices. It would also be of great interest and value to see how countries are able to shift between circles based on the increase in the non-native English speaking population. Theoretically, those countries within the expanding circle will converge and intermix with the outer circle of countries. The most interesting aspect is that those inner circle countries which are traditionally untouchable models of correctness may indeed be removed from the inner circle (if we take the inner circle to represent the most favorable position). They may be replaced by other forms of English which have become more widespread and more accessible than monolingual native forms. This again represents an area of further research which will help in predicting language models for businesses of the future.

An additional consideration central to English as an International Business Language (EIBL) is communication between native and non-native speakers. Unlike other forms of communication within the international business arena, the native speaker is often disadvantaged due to the fact that their variety of English is deeply embedded in a sociocultural framework, whereas many non-native speakers are speaking English only within the realm of international business; their English was learned in order to function in a business environment as the primary goal. Because of this, Bone (1998) identified native speakers as less effective communicators than non-native speakers within a number of business environments. One problematic issue here is that many non-native speakers tend to demonstrate behaviors associated with their native language through the medium of English, which often causes confusion and misunderstandings. Kameda (2005) believed this was a particular problem for Japanese managers operating in others parts of Asia. Regardless of the degree of fluency in English, Sims and Guice (1992, p.23) believed that “merely knowing how to speak and write a language does not ensure effective communication.” In order to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries, a deeper analysis of the processes involved in exchanging ideas is required.

### **Written Communication, Social Acceptability, and Shared Knowledge**

One of the earliest paradigm breakers with reference to written communication was Kaplan (1966). He put forth the idea that paragraph and sentence structures were both language and culture specific; this suggests that context plays an important role in developing second language writing skills. Kaplan's proposals also led to the realization that writing is much more than orthographic symbolization of speech; it is, most importantly, a purposeful selection and organization of experience (Arapoff, 1967, p.33). This links well to the previously mentioned issue of accessing knowledge based on language choice; different speakers will have different experiences only accessible through that particular language – from this it is possible to speculate that when speakers of different L1 languages from different cultural backgrounds come together to communicate in English, they are doing so based on prior experiences in their L1 which are transferred to the L2.

Successful written communication across boundaries requires a considered approach. The kind of document considered appropriate in one culture may be considered inappropriate within another. Beamer (1994) observed that lines of text written by Chinese students often show commas at the beginning of the sentence due to the Chinese top to down, right to left writing style. Asian written behaviors are generally contextually framed, much like the previously mentioned Asian social interaction; there is an emphasis on who you are communicating with and their position in relation to the writer. In instances of written communication where the face or nationality of the reader is unknown, it becomes difficult for an Asian businessman to create this social picture, and this influences their communicative success. DeSilva (1982) illustrated that Spanish, English, and Japanese procedural discourses have different organizing characteristics. Thus, the fact that rhetorical techniques for business letters differ across cultures should not surprise us. What should surprise us is the lack of literature which combines all of the above mentioned issues and applies them to practical and theoretical research.

Hilton (1992) emphasized the need for comprehensible, unambiguous, and acceptable written communication in international business communications. However, such a goal is not easily obtained and takes a great deal of cultural and introspective awareness, not only an ability to construct grammatically correct sentences based on native speaker norms.

Within the context of cross-cultural written communication, there are a number of culturally bound issues, such as a lack of shared knowledge, which can create obstacles to understanding.

Nystrand (1986) stated that:

Text is not just the result of composing, it is also the medium of communication, the very information structure of written communication, for example, depends not just on the writer's meaning and purpose but rather on the extent of match between what the writer has to say and what the readers needs to know, i.e., the extent to which writer and reader share knowledge (p.36).

The assumption that there are clear and definable norms of written English is highly problematic. As previously mentioned, those languages within the inner circle have great differences among them (Braddock, 1974; Connor, 1995; Eason, 1995). The British for example tend to prefer politeness strategies that use negative politeness. Sifiano (1989) believed that they equate indirectness, the main motivation of negative politeness, with politeness, and this contributes to the elaboration of the structure and the tentativeness of messages, a technique rarely used by Americans. Jordanians on the other hand prefer to adopt direct politeness techniques, which rely on sounding as optimistic as possible. This seems to conform to the theoretical views previously mentioned by Widdowson (1983), who believed that writing is an artifact which has to meet certain standards of social acceptability. Whether this social acceptability is to be judged within the target culture or the home culture is unclear. Al-Khatib (2001) assumed the theoretical standpoint that second language writing should target the cultural norms and values put forward by the readers' native culture and language (assuming they are both the same). Therefore, any second language writing effort will contain peculiarities or errors which are likely to be due to the fact that different speech communities have different ways of organizing ideas in writing which reflect their cultural thought patterns (Kachru, 1997). This, however, is not always possible for a number of reasons:

Countries such as the UK and the U.S. are multinational and multiracial societies. Thus, when communicating with a UK or U.S. business, there is no guarantee that the person receiving the communication will be a native speaker or even a citizen of that country. This is very much the case with outsourcing and call centers in places such as India. This makes targeting cultural and linguistic norms problematic.

It would be impossible for a businessperson to have an in-depth knowledge of all those cultures with which he/she conducts business. Multinational companies are unwilling to invest such large amounts of money and time into an issue which has until recently been considered almost insignificant. The idea of having a member of staff who must make textual and structural changes to a standard business email depending on the county it is being sent to seems ridiculous but at the moment a solid, reliable alternative is not available.

Multinational corporations do though spend large amounts of money on language training and translator services. The field of semantics addresses areas such as incorrect translations and interpretations, which can lead to misunderstandings. This fact suggests that learning English grammar and syntax alone is not enough for a full appreciation of meaning and communication objectives. Sorenson (2005) commented on those companies who adopt a common corporate language yet fail to enforce its use in a practical manner:

...paradoxically, the opposite of the intended has been achieved: the cost of the translation has been doubled; the dissemination of communication has become laborious and has been delayed. Moreover, an element of misinterpretation has been added as there is a risk of altering the sense of a text each time it is translated (p.59).

Other areas that are outside standard English language tuition such as business clichés, idioms, and slang are also important issues to consider. Indeed, Jandt (1995) wrote, English is particularly replete with idioms. These idioms are notoriously problematic for non-native speakers. Kameda (2001) suggested that a combination of Japanese style communication along with an idiom free English may be the future of global business interactions. Idioms, however, cannot simply be overlooked and ignored as they do represent a major part of English communication. Another specific area of concern for written business communications is the necessary ambiguity of business exchanges. Janis (1966) defends what he calls common business letter expressions, so-called clichés, as necessary, suggesting that ready-made expressions are more efficient in that they reduce uncertainty and the need for time consuming individual invention. How they are used in business communications between native and non-native speakers relies heavily on linguistic ability, shared knowledge, and a shared appreciation of other factors such as context and tone. It is clear that the concept of shared knowledge and to a lesser extent social acceptability have the potential to address many corporate language problems which have so far focused on the act of choosing a corporate language rather than specific issues related to that decision.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the research presented above it seems that practical research based within the field of international business communication through written English is lacking. There have been many research efforts that have touched on a number of peripheral ideas that are linked to this theme, but none which address it directly in relation to the shifting trends of language ability and development. What is lacking is a theoretically based research project which aims to



provide practical solutions to address the specific problems which occur when communicating in written English. Such a project would need to address written communication between and within inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle countries. It would need to pay particular attention to those communications between non-native speakers of English with respect to finding a theoretical space in which successful communication could occur. One variable which could be introduced to such a project is the difference between face-to-face and anonymous communication. It is possible to hypothesize that written communications in which the two parties communicating have a facial image of the other would be smoother and deeper engrained with their own cultural fabric than anonymous communications. Anonymous written communications may be less oriented around social acceptability and shared knowledge and more in line with the kind of native speaker norms which are preached through textbooks and other English language learning resources.

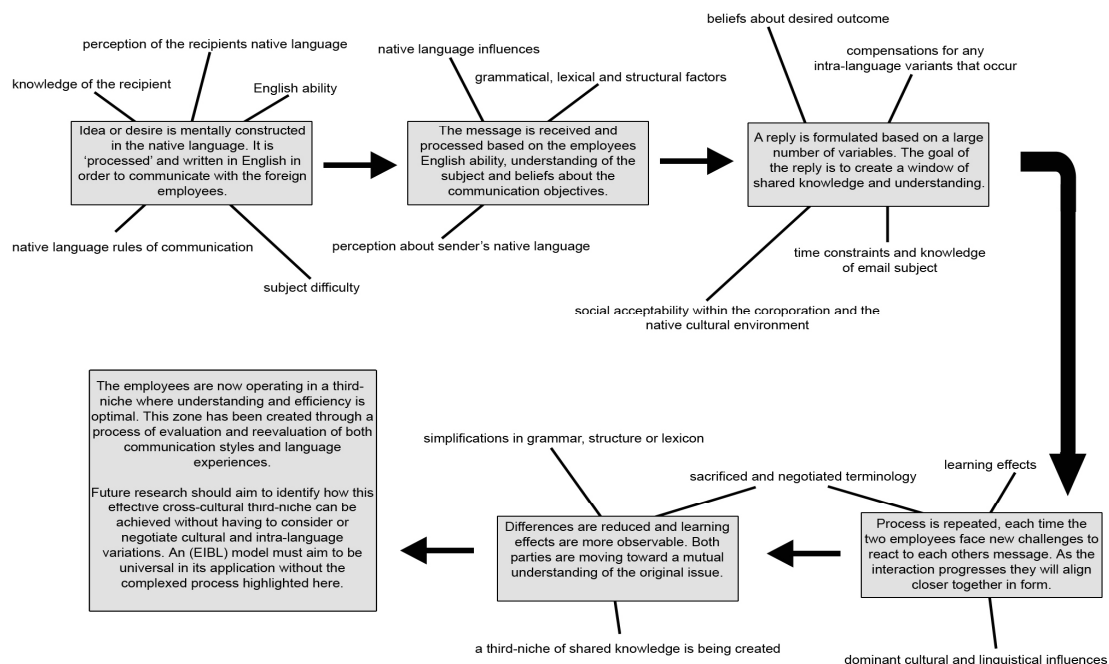
If writing (both in the native and non-native language) is indeed an artifact, which must meet certain standards of social acceptability as stated by Widdowson (1983) and supported by Al-Khatib (2001), then current international business communications are destined to fail as social acceptability is primarily achieved in the cultural context with which the writer is familiar. Therefore, international business communications must find a third-niche in which to operate, a niche independent of writers' and readers' cultural and native language norms of social acceptability.

Additionally, As Nystrand (1986) stated:

Text is not just the result of composing, it is also the medium of communication, the very information structure of written communication, for example, depends not just on the writer's meaning and purpose but rather on the extent of match between what the writer has to say and what the readers needs to know, i.e., the extent to which writer and reader share knowledge (p.36).

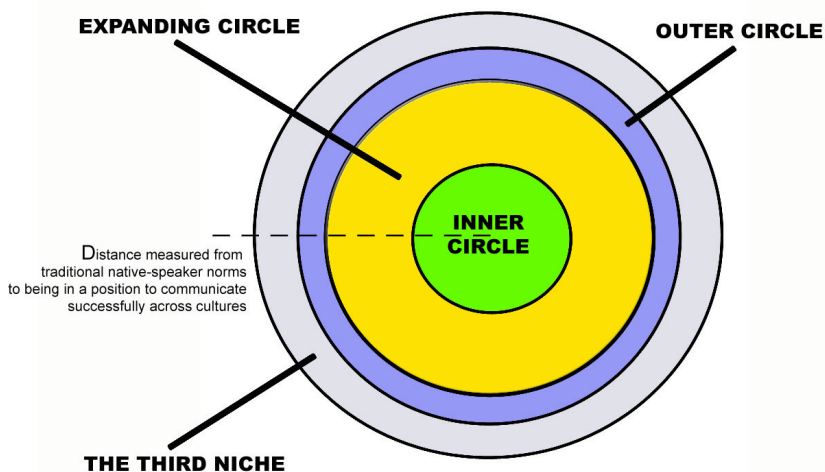
This proposed third niche should address issues of a newly formed conception of shared knowledge and social acceptability and how this can be achieved if the norms of the native English speaker remain culturally rooted and the non-native speaker cannot formulate a group of identifiable, universal norms due to the differences between their L1 and environment, as modeled in Figure 1, below.

**Figure 1:** The Theoretical Process of Written Communication Between Non-Native English Speaking Associates (Rivers 2007)



In relation to the ideology proposed by Kachru (1985), it can be hypothesized that this newly formed third-niche of communication would operate as illustrated below in relation to the three groups of speakers:

**Figure 2:** Proposed Third-niche for Effective Cross-cultural Business Communication in English (Rivers, 2007)



From the above figure a number of observations can be made which better reflect the current situation in terms of English speaking populations and successful business interactions through written genres:

The native speaker is now isolated within the confines of an international multilingual business place.

- The native speakers' ability to adapt to L2 speaker English varieties which have progressed with their L1 is limited and makes them far from ideal candidates with which to conduct international business. Due to this fact more and more major corporations will choose to set up or move into those areas where business practices are better suited to multilingual communication but still reflect low labor costs – mainly Asia.
- The outer circle of countries now holds a greater position of economic power due to the flexibility of language usage and cultural awareness.
- The expanding circle is now in a sort of no-man's land. The people within this group may be bilingual, in which case they will be drawn toward the outer circle, yet some of the people may be monolingual speakers in which case they will be drawn toward the isolated inner circle. Based on the data presented concerning the number of EFL learners it can be hypothesized that this expanding circle will decrease with a large majority of its speakers merging into the preferable outer circle.

The circle concept as originally proposed by Kachru (1985) is now no longer dependent on location as a classifier. National boundaries have become a thing of the past and the fluidic movement of people makes these categories based solely on language ability and awareness.

Although the new proposal is far from complete and many other factors need to be incorporated into the paradigm, it does provide an indication of what is needed if research into English as an International Business Language (EIBL) is to remain up to date and reflective of the changing economic and linguistic environment in which we currently live.

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# The Asian ESP Journal

## **Academic Writing in Nursing: Genres, Marking Criteria and Course Design**

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### **Biodata**

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### **Abstract**

This article reports on a two-year research study on academic writing in pre-registration nursing and midwifery at a UK university. For the nursing section of the research, the study surveyed 68 undergraduate students on a BSc nursing programme to identify the most common genres they had to write for their academic assignments. The study also interviewed three content lecturers and analysed the marking criteria used for assessing the identified genres. Based on the results of the survey, the interviews and the examination of the marking criteria, the article presents a taxonomy of the most common genres in pre-registration nursing, examines typical marking criteria, and suggests some guidelines for the design of writing courses for nursing students. It also presents a possible outline for one such course.

**Key words:** academic writing in nursing, writing genres, course design

## **Introduction**

Although research on the role of writing in higher education has produced a plethora of studies, journal articles and books (Elander et al., 2006; Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis, 2001; Lillis & Turner, 2001; Read et al., 2001; among others), very little has been researched and published about the nature and dynamics of writing in disciplines like nursing and midwifery. In nursing, for example, most research and publication efforts have concentrated on post-registration rather than pre-registration writing (cf. Gimenez, 2007; Leki, 2003; Whitehead, 2002). Post-registration publications have almost exclusively examined the new demands of the professionalised roles of registered nurses (Oermann, 2005; Parks, 2001; Tornquist, 1999; Zim & Entwistle, 2002).

The study reported in this paper explored the nature and issues in academic writing in pre-registration nursing and midwifery. It examined the most common genres students at different levels of a BSc nursing and BSc midwifery programme are required to write, the difficulties they experience in producing them, the criteria by which these genres are marked, and how the students feel they could be best supported to write the required genres successfully (Gimenez, forthcoming). This paper presents a taxonomy of the genres identified in the nursing section of the study, examines the most common criteria for marking these genres, and offers some suggestions on how ESP/EAP teachers can design courses to help nursing students write these genres successfully.

## **Genres in ESP/EAP: A theoretical framework**

Genres and genre-based studies have been the focus of many publications since the mid-80s. One of the most influential studies has been Miller's (1984) seminal paper which proposed that genres should be defined by the rhetorical actions they perform rather than by their content or substance. Bazerman's (1988) work on experimental scientific articles, Yates and Orlikowski's (1992) examination of the office memo, and Devitt's (1991) study on genres in tax accounting are just a few examples that illustrate this prolific area of research.

Swales' (1990) book-length analysis of genres in the academic discourse community has probably been the most often-quoted work in ESP/EAP. In this study Swales developed a theory of language use in discourse communities that makes genre its unit of investigation. In his work genre is defined as a typified communicative event with a clearly identifiable purpose and recognised as such by all the members of a discourse community. He mainly focused on research article introductions, pointing out, among other things, that they comprise three moves



which he termed CARS — create a research space. But it seems to me that his main contribution to our understanding of genres has been the distinction between moves and steps. Moves are actions writers take to represent a given communicative intent (e.g., establishing the research field), whilst steps are the different options that writers have at their disposal to realise a given move (e.g., claiming the centrality of the topic). Moves, steps and the rhetorical and linguistic elements chosen to realise them are governed by the values and beliefs supported by the writer's discourse community. Although the term 'discourse community' has become 'a fuzzy concept' (Hyland, 2006: 313) now under criticism for ignoring diversity and overemphasizing conformity (e.g., Canagarajah, 2002; Prior, 1998), Swales' work still continues to influence most studies in genre analysis.

These conflicting views are also reflected in the different theoretical approaches to genre that the field has developed. Flowerdew (2002) suggests that views on genre can be classified into textually orientated and contextually grounded. Textually orientated views examine how communicative purposes are lexico-grammatically and rhetorically realised, applying theories of grammar and discourse to do so. Contextually grounded views, on the other hand, situate genres in the purposes and functions they are created to fulfil and the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the members of the community.

Other conflicts originate from the pedagogical application of these theories (Johns, 2002). If genres are fluid and in constant evolution, can they be taught in the classroom where they are normally presented as static entities? Are genres to be taught as models to imitate or as texts to be critically contested (Benesch, 2001)? Should we teach 'macro genres' (e.g., letters) or 'subgenres' (e.g., business letters)? Should we focus on elemental genres (i.e. recurring linguistic patterns) (Martin, 1992)? And most importantly for this study, what genres should we teach and when?

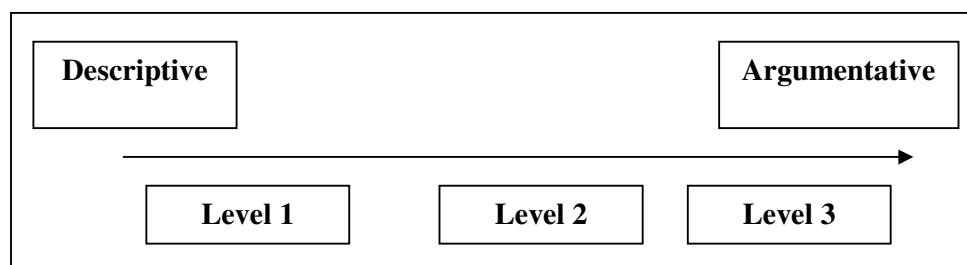
These general theoretical and pedagogical views of genres have informed the study reported in this paper to a greater or lesser extent. However, by focusing on genres in specific disciplines, namely nursing and midwifery, the study intended to examine the dynamics and complexities of these two disciplinary communities from a narrower viewpoint (Swales, 1998). From a Bakhtinian perspective, the study aimed at analysing genres not as sets of rules, but as ways of conceptualizing reality and interpreting particular aspects of the world in nursing and midwifery. In so doing, the study looked at not only the typical genres but also the members who produce and consume them, as well as the constraints on the production and consumption

of the genres (e.g., marking criteria) and the skills (e.g., linguistic and cognitive resources) needed to write them.

### **A taxonomy of genres in pre-registration nursing**

Sixty-eight students on a BSc nursing programme completed a survey which had as its main aim the identification of typical genres in pre-registration nursing and the difficulties associated with writing them.

Although genres have been traditionally classified by year of study (normally years 1, 2 and 3 in the UK), levels of writing were preferred as students on this programme are required to write different level assignments in the same year of study. For instance, the first year of the programme requires them to write at levels 1 and 2. Level one writing (e.g., care plans) is more descriptive and does not require deploying critical skills. Level 2 demands students to be less descriptive and more critical, whereas level 3 implies writing more argumentative texts and the application of critical skills, as when writing literature reviews. The progression from description to argumentation that students are expected to show in their assignments when moving up levels can be plotted on a cline as shown on Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** The descriptive-argumentative cline

(After Gimenez, 2007: 26)

Sometimes a given genre occupies two levels at the same time. For instance, argumentative genres like a review of the literature for the undergraduate dissertation are requested at the end of level 2 and beginning of level 3 of writing.

Of the 68 students who participated in the study, 21 were writing at level 1, 21 at level 2 and 26 at level 3 at the time of data collection. Data were collected over a period of two years and care was taken to have respondents with a similar profile at each level of writing (e.g., similar demographics, similar previous academic experience, and the like).

The results of the survey the students completed produced a taxonomy of typical genres by level which is shown in Table 1 below. Cross-tabulating genres and levels is quite useful if one wants to maximise student exposure to the right type of genre at their required level of writing. This has clear implications for course design which will be further explored below.

**Table 1.** A taxonomy of specific genres by level

Genres	Levels	Descriptive
Care plans	1	↓
Reflective essay	1-2	
Discharge summaries	2	
Article reviews	2-3	
Portfolios	2-3	
Literature review	2-3	
Argumentative essay	3	
Dissertation	3	

As shown in Table 1, some genres such as the care plan are clearly descriptive and thus requested at level 1 of writing. A care plan provides information about the patient’s personal details (e.g., name, date of admission), their medical history (diagnoses, medication and the like) and their hospital history (e.g., their last visit), which make it quite a descriptive written record. Other genres show a more balanced combination between description and argumentation. An article review, for instance, combines both descriptive elements, such as the bibliographical details of the article being reviewed, with evaluative elements like the value of its contributions and the possible gaps it failed to cover. Still other genres are almost predominantly evaluative and argumentative, of which the argumentative essay is a typical example.

Although no piece of writing can be said to be purely descriptive or entirely argumentative as a combination of the two styles of writing will always be necessary, some genres require facts to be described or listed, such as drawing up a problem list for the care plan, while others involve more evaluative writing, like judging the value of health care policies in argumentative essays. As shown in Table 1 the levels at which the genres are required seem to accompany the progression from description to argumentation (see Fig. 1), which is at the same time supported by the nature of each genre. It seems important to also look at the linguistic and cognitive skills

that writing these genres involves and the constraints that students have to overcome in order to produce them. This is discussed in the next section.

### Common marking criteria

An important consideration for both students and writing lecturers, especially for those teaching discipline-specific genres, is how the genres are going to be marked by the content lecturers. Marking criteria are an important source of information which indicates what expectations content lecturers have (Gimenez, 2007). Thus an examination and discussion of the meaning of the criteria will help students produce more effective genres.

In the context of the study reported in this paper, three content lecturers, each teaching at a different level, were interviewed to discuss, among other things, the common criteria used to mark the genres identified in Table 1 above. Based on their answers and an examination of the criteria provided to students in their handbooks, Table 2 was designed to illustrate the most common criteria by level. The criteria specific to content or the learning objectives of the modules have not been included in the table.

**Table 2.** Most common marking criteria by level

Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Work neatly presented and easy to read	✓	✓	✓
Correct spelling and grammar	✓	✓	✓
Correct in-text referencing	✓	✓	✓
List of references included	✓	✓	✓
Well-structured texts	✓	✓	✓
Logical development of arguments		✓	✓
Balanced argument		✓	✓
Critical evaluation			✓

The shaded cells in Table 2 show the specific criteria for each of these levels as well as the complexity of the requirements, level 3 being the most complex and comprehensive of the three. This has implications for learners, writing lecturers and course designers who need to decide on content — what their courses should focus on — as well as gradation issues. These will be more thoroughly dealt with below.

### **Course design: Some pedagogical considerations**

Some considerations which relate to course design can be made on the basis of the results presented above. These considerations concern content selection and gradation.

One of the typical questions course designers face is what to include in their courses. When designing a discipline-specific writing course, it seems imperative to first know what genres students are going to be asked to write as to avoid including content which is only tangentially related to their needs. Thus, a taxonomy of genres such as the one presented in Table 1 above can make the selection of content more effective. This taxonomy can also be used to plan pre-writing and writing tasks normally associated with the different genres. Taking care plans as an example, students may be asked to examine the verbs that are linked to writing them as a pre-writing activity. At level 1 of writing, verbs such as 'describe', 'list', and 'summarise' can be used to elicit students' knowledge of the semantic properties of these verbs and how they compare. At level 3, a discussion of verbs such as 'review', 'critique' (cf. criticise), and how they are used in academic writing may prove a stimulating way of introducing students to more advanced writing. A further task may involve students working with web-based corpora to identify how these verbs are commonly used and their most typical grammatical patterns. Still another pre-writing task may request students to match each of these verbs with a section in the genre they are examining.

In the case of care plans, the pre-writing tasks described above can be followed by different genre-based activities. For instance, students can be provided with examples of written genres to analyse not only their communicative purposes (e.g., to record information about the plan of care for a patient), but also how the purposes are rhetorically organised, that is, their moves and steps, and how these are linguistically realised (e.g., 'will + be able to' for the goal setting section: 'patient with a stroke will be able to communicate his basic needs in two months'). At a more macro level, students can discuss the attitudes and beliefs of the nursing community as encapsulated in the genre being analysed. In the case of care plans, students can discuss how the positivist epistemology embraced by the community materialises in the style of care plans, which tends to be impersonal and shows many examples of 'passive constructions' (e.g., 'patient has been diagnosed with breast cancer').

It is also important to mention here that different level tasks should incorporate discussions of the marking criteria used to evaluate the genres so as to raise students' awareness of what they need for producing efficient genres. These criteria represent institutional rules that students

have to either accept or challenge, depending on the approach to writing that they and their writing lecturer have agreed to follow. In either case, marking criteria represent constraints that students will have to overcome. In using marking criteria like the ones presented in Table 2 above, writing lecturers should call the students' attention to the fact that a criterion like "Work neatly presented and easy to read" needs to be unpacked. What do phrases like 'neatly presented' and 'easy to read' actually mean? It is only when they understand exactly what it takes to write a given genre that students will be able to produce it effectively. As Hyland (2006: 35) puts it, "Learning about genres does not preclude critical analysis. In fact it provides a necessary basis for critical engagement with cultural and textual practices." Ideally, students should unpack these terms in a session that brings their content and writing lecturers together. Alternatively, students can interview their content lecturers to find out more about what the criteria represent for them.

Closely related to content selection is content grading. It could be rather demotivating for students to be taught genres they still do not have to produce, let alone genres they have already been requested to write. Identifying the right levels at which each of the genres in the writing course should be introduced to students will allow the writing lecturer to provide students with the right type of support so that they can write their assignments more effectively. Grading in this sense refers to organising how and when the 'pool' of genres will be delivered to students. A more traditional approach to grading refers to the act of ranking contents from easy to more difficult. In this respect, the cline presented in Figure 1 can guide the writing lecturer. In general terms, descriptive genres are easier to produce than those which require students to use critical and argumentative skills, and so it seems sensible to grade contents following the 'descriptive-argumentative' cline. This consideration points to the importance of following a scaffolding principle, by which linguistic and cognitive skills needed to write easier genres are deployed in producing more difficult ones as mentioned above in relation to article reviews. These selection and grading principles are central to course design as the suggested outline in the next section intends to show.

### **Course design: A suggested outline**

One of the implications that has resulted from the study reported here is the need for a more targeted approach to teaching academic writing to nursing students (Gimenez, forthcoming). As far as possible, this has been implemented not only in the design of teaching materials but also in the design and organisation of the courses now offered. Table 3 below shows a possible

outline for a course in writing for nursing students. It is to be noted that each stage may take one or more teaching sessions, depending on the level and needs of the students and the time and resources available to the writing lecturer.

**Table 3.** A sample course outline

Stage	Aims	Examples of tasks
Exploring the nursing community (values, beliefs, concerns, and tensions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To raise students' awareness of the community they're entering</li> <li>▪ To expose students to how the values are represented in the written genres of the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Complete the following chart with what you think the nursing community values.</li> <li>❖ Read these lecturers' opinions about what they think their community values and compare their comments with yours. Explore similarities and differences.</li> <li>❖ Read the following academic texts which have been published in nursing journals and books and complete the chart below.</li> </ul>
Introducing academic writing in nursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To discuss the basic principles of academic writing that the nursing community values</li> <li>▪ To provide opportunities for students to put these principles into practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Read the following academic texts which have been published in nursing journals and books and complete the chart below.</li> <li>❖ Identify the rhetorical organisation of the following texts.</li> <li>❖ Discuss the reasons why the writer has remained invisible (no 'I' used) throughout the complete text.</li> </ul>
Exploring the typical genres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To expose students to the typical level 1 genres</li> <li>▪ To analyse the communicative purposes of these genres</li> <li>▪ To examine how the genres are rhetorically organised</li> <li>▪ To explore how purposes and rhetorical organisation are linguistically realised</li> <li>▪ To provide opportunities for students to put these principles into practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Where would you find this text?</li> <li>❖ What in your opinion is its purpose?</li> <li>❖ Identify the moves and steps in the following texts.</li> <li>❖ Can you find any recurrent grammatical pattern in them?</li> </ul>
Writing care plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To analyse the communicative purposes of care plans</li> <li>▪ To examine how care plans are rhetorically organised</li> <li>▪ To explore how purposes and rhetorical organisation are linguistically realised</li> <li>▪ To provide opportunities for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ What moves can you identify in these care plans?</li> <li>❖ Why do you think the style of the care plans you've just analysed is impersonal?</li> </ul>

	students to put these principles into practice	
Writing the reflective essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To analyse the communicative purposes of reflective essays</li> <li>▪ To examine how reflective essays are rhetorically organised</li> <li>▪ To explore how purposes and rhetorical organisation are linguistically realised</li> <li>▪ To provide opportunities for students to put these principles into practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ How is the process of reflection evidenced in this text?</li> <li>❖ What do these reflective texts tell you about the role of reflection in nursing?</li> <li>❖ Why do you think nursing values reflection?</li> </ul>

### Conclusion

This paper has reported on the results of a study that looked at the nature of academic writing in pre-registration nursing. It focused on the genres that students on a BSc in nursing are asked to write for their assignments and the typical criteria used to mark them. Based on the analysis of the genres and the criteria, the article has made some suggestions for designing writing courses for nursing students and offered an outline of the contents and activities for one such course.

Like most research in applied linguistics, the study reported here is just a snapshot of the multiple realities that lecturers of academic writing in higher education institutions have to deal with on a daily basis. As such it reflects the tasks students are requested to write on a specific programme (BSc in nursing) in a specific university in the UK. Although it is representative of what happens on similar programmes in other English-speaking universities, it cannot claim universality. For this reason, it is hoped that this article will provide some useful insights into discipline-specific writing and will encourage others to continue the debate in this under-researched area.

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## **The Foreign Language Engineering Writer: What Makes a Readable Memo Report?**

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His present research interests are the development of critical thinking skills and their application to higher order reading. He believes in student –centered classrooms and that the death of methodology would be no bad thing.

### **Abstract**

Writing in a foreign language brings its own set of complex difficulties, not least that the structure, notions, and productive skills required by different genres are often not understood by writers writing in their native languages. They have to be taught.

The purpose of this exploratory research is to analyze some of the linguistic and organizational elements of a typical degree-level document (memo report) produced in one of the engineering programs at the Petroleum Institute in Abu Dhabi, UAE with a view to describing some of the salient features which contribute to its level of “success” (readability) as judged by the subject teacher grading the document since part of the grade is given for language quality. (Here, teachers made comments related to “accurate grammar” and were able to identify text-based examples which they considered problematic.)

Texts were analyzed according to quality of noun phrase formation; quality of infinitive clause formation and use in the context of text moves, and lexical range in the employment of the latter. Successful application of these features was a factor in the response of the content teacher to the language quality of the report.

Data relating to the above will be presented and discussed in relation to how linguistic features can be aligned with the above-noted “success” for the subject lecturer. Recommendations will

be made as to how the readability of such documents might be improved by better preparing students to produce them, in particular by developing a better understanding of the relevant genre.

## **Introduction**

### *Background*

The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) operates in all areas of the oil and gas industry. It was established in 1971 and has steadily widened its endeavors through its subsidiaries, establishing an integrated oil and gas industry in Abu Dhabi. The company manages and oversees oil production of over two million barrels a day and is among the top ten oil and gas companies in the world. It has substantial and impressive upstream and downstream operations in transportation, shipping, marketing, and distribution.

Five years ago, ADNOC announced the establishment of The Petroleum Institute in Abu Dhabi. The decree establishing the Petroleum Institute provides for an entity that would bring together the best from education and industry to create a world class regional educational center for engineering, applied science, and research. The Institute offers five baccalaureate degree programs: chemical engineering, petroleum engineering, petroleum geosciences engineering, mechanical engineering, and electrical engineering. As the undergraduate programs mature, the PI will eventually evolve into a fully-fledged research and educational institution providing programs leading to Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

Our students are at the undergraduate age, emirati males and females. English is the medium of instruction as well as the operating language of the oil and gas industry in this region. This implies a range of issues for the students. Writing is perhaps the most complex and difficult (as well as the least liked and most “painfully” acquired) academic skill, particularly for those studying or working in a foreign language. Concern has been expressed in the institute about the quality of some of the written English produced by students. This project is, in part, a response to that concern.

### The Exploratory Research

Subject teachers in the degree programs have expressed dissatisfaction with the readability of student writing from a language perspective. In light of the above, an exploratory research project was formulated to develop an analysis and description of some of the dominant linguistic features of one commonly produced text, the memo report. The purpose would then be to allow such description to inform thinking about how to better prepare students to produce

effective texts. Implications for teaching and curriculum from this research could then be articulated. This paper describes an exploratory research project focusing on the description and evaluation of a range of memo report texts produced within the Institute. The approach is described in the methodology section. A beginning descriptive model was generated which may be used initially to work with students, teachers, and syllabus designers at the Petroleum Institute in order to improve the quality of student-generated written texts by having a bank of real texts described according to both linguistic and text type criteria, which can be referred to in order to inform curriculum and pedagogical thinking.

Our graduate profile objectives include the following:

- The graduating student will appreciate the critical role played by verbal, written, and graphical communications in engineering practice and project management
- The student will acquire the corresponding skills to communicate with a range of audiences
- The student will acquire the skills to employ information technologies where appropriate.

To meet these objectives, we have a commitment to provide ongoing language and communications support to students in our degree programs. Some of these students inevitably encounter a range of problems with written text. This would be true in a native-speaker environment and becomes more significant where students are studying in a foreign language. Further, within the company (all of our graduates will work for ADNOC), mastery of English language and communications skills constitutes part of the performance review of employees. Production of effective written documentation is therefore significant.

Though we are currently in the development stage of this project, eventually, by gathering, categorizing and storing a wide range of functional written documents, we hope to be able to do the following:

- Begin to develop a database of current documents
- Categorize and classify these in terms of text type/genre
- Describe the texts in terms of format, organization, and structure
- Perform discourse analysis for selected field and generic features

- Derive information to inform syllabus priorities, development, and design in order to improve end-product student texts
- Derive information to frame focus for professional development and ways to improve intra-company written communication

This will provide a model which can then be developed further. Given the potential range of stakeholders, the approach cannot be a uniquely linguistic analysis, but rather, needs to have a level of accessibility which will allow inclusion of nonexpert users. It must also have theoretical integrity as well as usefulness in pedagogical and curriculum terms. This is not an easy task and is therefore very much an initial and “first phase” approach.

### **Literature Review**

The field of English for Specific Purposes has grown exponentially from its origins in the 1960's, as English has increasingly become the lingua franca of international communications. This growth is especially notable in the context of education and commerce. Linguists have shown an understandable interest in analyzing the texts commonly produced in these different environments. From its inception rooted in register (Halliday, 1978), the linguistic analysis of ESP texts has broadened to include syntactic choices, pragmatics, and elements of text organization and structure. Since texts are interactive, with a relationship between writer and audience revolving around the communicative purpose of the writer, chosen genre, and expectations of the reader, (amongst other things), we require a wide range of tools for their analysis. This is particularly true if our description is motivated by the desire to act on this analysis in order to improve things, such as writer awareness, teaching and curriculum, and syllabus design (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2001), as is the case in this paper. The essentially pragmatic nature of EAP (Benesch, 2001) encourages text analysis based on the kind of features this study focuses on.

Much purely linguistic analysis, while highly informative and contributing to our developed understanding of written discourse, does not easily translate to learners or other “nonexpert” interested parties. Hyland & Hamp-Lyons (2002) have pointed out the problems of believing in a universality of academic conventions, and Clarke (1992) indicated that while students may be required to write in a particular fashion, they are not always clear what this should be and why. The need for pragmatic approaches which include reader expectations is therefore well-established (Hyland, 2002). Since this research hopes to have an “applications” focus, an approach to text description would need to be functional, broad, and accessible. Some

approaches are more transferable than others and therefore more potentially useful while working with students and colleagues in the context of professional development. Dudley-Evans' work on genre analysis (Dudley-Evans, 1994, 2001) is particularly significant in this area and takes a rather pragmatic approach which is also accessible to learners (this is doubly important in our environment since we are dealing with foreign language users, and much of the research looks at native English speakers.) For example, the concept of a "move" (Dudley-Evans, 1994, p. 220) in the context of the discussion section of a report is one which is not difficult for foreign language{sic} students to grasp and permits a functional analysis of their own texts which can be of significant use in a drafting process. This has informed part of the current work.

The development of an analytical framework for use by a variety of constituents including teachers and students therefore requires the question of linguistic analysis of text to be approached from a functional perspective. For example, nominalization is more functional in a science text than in everyday conversation and therefore the choice of using a nominal group, or noun-phrase, rather than a clause, to express a semantic process is more "natural" to the text. Further, this also allows us description of text as "chunks" of information, which is arguably how learners acquire language as well as informing how writers write. The noun phrase is already a widely researched area of linguistic enquiry. Here it will be described as one of a range of features which impacts and improves readability. Infinitive clauses are less well-researched. However, an interesting 2002 study of instructions, annual reports, and junk mail revealed that "more than one sentence in four contains an infinitive clause" (Myers, 2002, p.59) and argues that this feature has not been taken seriously in writing. It has been analyzed in this study as it is a stand-out feature of specific sections of the report.

The academic writing process lends itself to reflection and explicit learning in a way that speaking does not, primarily because it is "a highly self conscious, reflective, non spontaneous activity" (Lewis, 1993, p.101) within which there is a natural opportunity to analyze. A broad functional description of texts, as this study begins to do, may therefore more adequately meet the needs of teachers and students to engage in this reflection and ultimately produce more effective texts. As Halliday has stated: "The value of a theory lies in the use that can be made of it, and I have always considered a theory of language to be essentially consumer oriented" (1985, p. 7). We are therefore following something of a developing tradition in ESP to approach questions of text from the point of view of the end user and to expand this to include

a range of stakeholders who have a vested interest in students developing a more complete understanding of how to produce effective written communication.

### **Methodology**

Since our students are foreign language users, we took the simple view that the primary reader of the text (audience) should be the major judge of the success of that text. The students are involved in a degree program, and their immediate clients are their teachers. Further, these readers are a key element of the discourse community to which the text and writer belong. (Dudley-Evans, 1994)

As we wanted to look at a range of quality in order to have models, we were guided by the grade and perception of the subject teachers as to the notion of “excellent” and “poor.” This would give us a standard of acceptability in their context and allow us to describe features of the optimum text and suboptimum texts within that context. Initially a range of eleven texts were collected to use as a corpus for the analysis. Five of these were selected for linguistic analysis of noun phrases. A further six texts were used for analysis of infinitive clauses and text moves.

The Communication Department had been requested to become involved in providing language support to the Institute’s degree programs as a result of concerns expressed about the quality of the writing of some of the students. Individual teachers were assigned to specific programs. The researcher worked within the Department of Chemical Engineering. It thus seemed logical to use texts (the genre was a memo report) from that program to build the corpus, and therefore a purposeful sample was selected from one class. The students are in the first year of the degree program and have attained a 500+ in the TOEFL. Our primary concern is not to generate a large quantity of numerical data, but rather to describe qualitative elements of text, and though the sample is not a large one, it is sufficient for some primary conclusions and to provide the basis for further investigation (see McKenna, 1997, p.193).

As many writers have pointed out (McKenna, 1997; Berwick, 2001) but perhaps most notably Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik (1980): “Scientific writing differs greatly from other styles in having a distinctly higher proportion of noun phrases with complexity” (p. 34). Taking the noun phrase as a driver is therefore an established starting point and allows an analysis and description of pre-and post-modification which would indicate development of the discourse and be accessible as a text feature for description to the stakeholders. The infinitive



clause was also identified as a high frequency element of these texts and was therefore selected as a focus for analysis. Criteria for evaluation are described below.

### **Process**

A sample of texts (five) was chosen from a chemical engineering class. These exemplified a range of quality from “poor” to “excellent” as graded by the subject teacher. Part of the grade is awarded on the quality of the language content. The various realizations of noun phrases was marked and enumerated. Complex noun phrases were broken down into their noun phrase components, since counting them singularly and in their entirety would, in a sense, “penalize” the more sophisticated writer. The second feature looked at was the infinitive clause as an analysis of the reports revealed that this was a significant feature of the purpose and process elements of the report.

Further, analysis is done concerning lexical items. As Halliday (1994, p. 350) has pointed out: “Typically, written language becomes complex by being lexically dense: it packs a large number of lexical items into each clause; whereas spoken language becomes complex by being grammatically intricate...” These lexical items in written text are not the field-specific items, as this range of lexis tends to be high frequency and known. Rather, it is the discourse vocabulary which tends to be problematic. This sub-technical vocabulary (Cowan, 1974; Nation, 2005; Chung & Nation, 2003, and Mudraya, 2006) is important as it is not field-specific. According to King, “it is often overlooked by teachers and is a cause of problems for students” (King, 1989, p. 13). Such language can be marked for sectional relevance in different text types. For example, as stated, the infinitive clause is a high frequency feature in the process/method section of the report, and often exemplifies such vocabulary.

The analysis was therefore mainly driven by isolating some of the syntactical and lexical features which made the text successful according to the reader. It was thus not externally or extraneously imposed, but derived from levels of acceptable products within a specific context. This provided us with a simple model which could then be applied to texts from other engineering courses to see if it held true. If this was found to be the case, then it may be further generalized to other areas.

As stated above, the analysis had to be more than simply linguistic. A description of the “culture” of the collated texts was therefore agreed on through analysis of the documents and discussion with content teachers as to their expectations of how the reports should look.

By this is meant the:

- format and conventions
- structure
- organization

Each section of each text was then described in terms of expected content load (information) and purpose. A general description was given of dominant linguistic features. Further, description was given in the case of infinitive clauses as to how these function in the context of moves within the purpose and method section of the reports. (See page 3 and discussion). Such a description could be carried out with a range of linguistic features. This would result in a model encompassing a comprehensive description of texts from the different perspectives described, which is thought to be practical given the stated purpose of the research project and the potential stakeholders.

As part of this, a template for text description was designed, which is displayed in Appendix 1.

Also, a writer profile was created. This is significant in our environment as we have students entering from quite varied backgrounds. Some are direct entry, and others have come through various stages of our foundation program. All have achieved a 500+ on the TEOFL. Such a profile can be used in making curriculum and administrative recommendations, such as initiatives relating to grouping students for specific language focus work. It would also allow us to track changes in student writing over time and thereby give valuable institutional research information and which could inform syllabus changes. A possible template for this is outlined in Appendix 3.

The documents, data and coding were stored in a Lotus Domino database (the system is adequate for the purposes of this research; however, more detailed linguistic analysis of text would indicate the use of a different program, such as N6 or Text Quest.) Documents relate to the provision of a model and partial answer to the question what makes an “excellent,” “very good,” “good,” or “average/poor” student memo report text in the PI context. (Grouped together here as texts, being awarded 60 % D is considered a failure in some courses, but acceptable in others.) As stated in the methodology section, the measure here was the response of the subject teacher to the language (readability) of the document (comments on the involvement of language teachers will be made in the discussion.) The identification and description of patterns and features which answer this question would reasonably allow careful generalization of the approach to other documents.

Subject teachers may not always be able to specify what they mean by readability in relation to linguistic features, but in informal discussion, three of the teachers teaching the Chemical Engineering program were able to affirm that the text elements analyzed were important for “easy” reading of the documents. The issue of different response to the same text from subject and language teachers has been addressed in an interesting study by Napierkowski (2003) but is not part of the scope of this paper.

### **Criteria**

The criteria described below were derived from discussion with subject teachers as significant factors in readability. Communication teachers agreed that these features are key drivers of meaning in these text types. Broadly, it is considered a reasonable starting point that a text which is effective in a foreign language educational environment should have a number of characteristics which promote effective communication of the message(s) to the subject-informed reader. These text characteristics include: quantity and quality, which in turn includes accuracy and appropriateness. Quantity is related to length of text defined by simple word count. In the case of memo texts reviewed for this study, preferred length from the point of view of the content teacher was between 800 and 1000 words. As White has pointed out, this relates to how much information the reader expects (White, 2001, p. 68).

Accuracy in the context of quality relates to the number of words in error-free text units. (Robb, Ross, & Shortreed 1986). Appropriateness here relates to the employment of infinitive clauses in the expected text section. Further description is given below.

### **Quantity**

Word length guidelines are a common feature of academic writing in general and specifically useful for those writing in a foreign language.

For a text demonstrating understanding of a concept to be effective, there clearly has to be a sufficient amount of text. This is especially the case in the foreign language context, where a very limited text might strongly suggest the writer has poor communicative competence for whatever reasons.

### **Quality**

Quantity alone, however, is obviously no guide to the effectiveness of a text. An effective text, something which not only conveys the intended message(s), but which is also easy to read, will

have an appropriate variety of structures and lexis, and forms of expression. There should not be, for example, repetition of a few formulaic phrases but rather, a variety of forms (syntactical/lexical) which aid the reading experience and hence the effectiveness of expression should be in the evidence. Such features are a given as evidenced by their appearance as assessment criteria in writing rubrics in tertiary institutes internationally (Stevens & Levi, 2004; Walvood 1998)

### **Accuracy**

One aspect of quality is the structural accuracy of the items used (Polio, 1997). This is, again, vital in the foreign language context, as, although a number of infelicities can be tolerated and not interfere with the meaning(s)/message(s) intended through the text, there comes a point where the reader's effort is so great that meaning and message are lost, or at least difficult to discern. Hence, accurate use is employed as a feature of readability (see Criteria above).

### **Appropriateness**

That there are salient features in different genres of text would not be challenged, and there are now many publications aimed at foreign language text book writers, teachers, and students to assist in developing awareness of this (Carter et. al, 2000; Hughes, 2005). The appropriateness, or relevance of, the structures, lexis, and forms of expression used are clearly germane to this. Certain specific elements of grammar and vocabulary are “natural” to particular sections of the report which has influenced the focus here on infinitive clauses (Thomson, 1996). Since the most common uses of the infinitive are to indicate the purpose or intention of an action, in technical writing higher frequency would be expected (appropriate) in the objectives and purpose sections of a report (see p.13) or within certain contexts such as procedure explanation (experiment).

For each of the three broad categories of “good,” “average,” and “poor,” the purpose of the model is to demonstrate some of the linguistic features which lead to the application of these evaluative communication categories and to give a part description of functionality by a focus on text moves (Swales, 1990; Dudley-Evans 1994).

### **Features**

The linguistic features used are noun phrases and infinitive (purpose) phrases. There is a huge body of research on the former, and a significant recent doctoral study by Godby clearly

demonstrates the significance of noun phrases in the specific context of engineering writing (Godby, 2002).

As stated in the literature review, infinitive clauses are less well researched. They are however, high frequency in certain contexts (Myers, 2002, p.61). Infinitives were chosen here because (as previously stated) they are stand-out feature of the process section of the successful document.

De Haan (1992) has pointed out that for infrequent structures to be effectively tracked, samples would need to be large. This is presumably to do with more extended pattern identification. This was not a concern in our case as structures were observably frequent in the small sample range selected. A large corpus was not therefore necessary (see p.4).

## **Units of Measurement**

### *Noun phrases*

Noun phrases have been divided into those which have post-modification (complex) and those which do not (simple). The former include any noun phrase which has some form of post-modification postpositive adjective, prepositional phrase, or other phrase. The former include those phrases which end at the head, irrespective of the nature of the pre-modification. Within this classification, any conjunct noun phrases none of whose heads are post-modified are also classified as simple. Finally, noun phrases occurring inside other noun phrases are not counted separately but are included within the largest (complex) noun phrase.

Noun phrases are marked up and counted principally for two features: the (non)existence of post-modification and number of words in the phrase.

The first feature has four possible values:

np = simple noun phrase with no syntactic errors

npx = simple noun phrase with at least one syntactic error

nppm = complex noun phrase with no syntactic errors

nppmx = complex noun phrase with at least one syntactic error\*

\* Intra-phrase grammatical errors as identified by the researchers.

The second feature is indicated thus:

np\_? = simple noun phrase where? indicates the number of words in the phrase

np\_\_? = complex noun phrase where? indicates the number of words in the phrase

A final feature, which may be extended in future work, is a minimal marking of functionality for pronominal noun phrases. The incidence of these is very small, understandable in text from the kinds of writers in the PI, but a small number of usages of “it” and “this” do occur. (Further work in this area might include a breakdown of the kinds on noun phrases in the texts into the various clausal elements: subject, object, etc.).

*Infinitive clauses*

The same principle of inclusion applies to infinitive clauses. These phrases were further analyzed according to number and variety of verb head.

**Findings**

*Data*

Our data are as shown in Figures 1 to 7 below.

*Noun phrases*

The basis for noun phrase analysis includes total words in a text, the number of words in noun phrases, percentage of such, the numbers of noun phrases (total, simple, and complex), and the number and percentages of well-formed (structurally accurate) total, simple, and complex noun phrases. They are shown in Figure 1.

Chemical engineering texts

**Figure 1: Noun Phrase Data**

Quality	Comms	Words	W- NPS	%	Tot- NP	SP- NP	CX- NP	WF- NP	%	S- NP	%	CX- NP	%
10	Exc	899	550	0.6	113	81	32	111	98.2	80	98.7	31	96.8
8	V.good	494	294	0.6	73	54	19	69	94.5	51	94.4	18	94.7
7	Good	519	261	0.5	63	45	18	52	82.5	37	82.2	15	83.3
7	Good	404	236	0.5	48	30	18	46	95.8	30	100	16	88.8
6	Av/	339	182	0.5	53	43	10	47	88.6	38	88.3	9	90.0

*Infinitive clauses*

For these clauses, again the total number of words, the number of such clauses, the number of words in these clauses, the percentage of this, and the numerical range (variety) of the verb heading each clause were analyzed. This is shown in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Infinitive (Purpose) Clause Data**

Quality	Comms*	Words	Total Inf-Cl	Words in Inf-Cl	%	Lexical verbs
10	Excellent	899	18	125	0.14	11
8	Very good	519	9	99	0.19	5
7	Good*	404	5	71	0.18	4
7	Good	494	4	57	0.12	3
6	Average/poor	339	5	39	0.12	4

\*Of the initial batch of twenty eight base texts from which the five were selected, 42 % were in this category, thus two examples were selected.

**Lexical Verbs in Infinitive Clauses**

**Figure 3: Lexical Verbs in Texts**

**Text 1: Excellent**

Text Unit: Infinitive Clause	
Total no of units:	18
Intro/purpose:	5
Method/stages (process)	13
Other:	0
Acts as:	NP pre-modifier
Used effectively:	100%

Verb Variety & Frequency	
Use	1
Include	1
Find	2
Operate	1
Solve	1
Test	1
Ensure	1
Obtain	7
Calculate	1
Determine	1
Check	1

Influence on readability was indicated by variety, appropriateness, and frequency of use. Students are encouraged to use a variety of lexis in a meaningful way (see Process Section).

as this is one of the factors which influence the nature of reader response (+/-) to any given text.

Verb Variety & Frequency.	
Check	0
Include	0
Find	3
Operate	1
Solve	1
Test	0
Ensure	0
Obtain	0
Calculate	1

**Text 2: Average/Poor**

Text Unit: Infinitive Clause	
Total no of units:	6
Intro/purpose:	1
Method/stages (process)	5
Other:	0
Acts as:	NP pre-modifier
Used effectively:	84%

A high frequency of successfully employed infinitive clauses in the sections of the report indicated in Figure 3 improved readability for these sections and therefore contributed to text quality overall (see discussion).

**Figure 4: Electrical Engineering Data**

	Average text	Excellent Text
No of words (section total)*	244.	345
Introduction/approach		
No of IC units	6	12
No of words in IC units	66	107
% of IC units used effectively	100%	100%

\*Report sections were the same as in Figure 3.

**Figure 5: Text Moves**

No. of words (section total)	350	
No. of IC units	14	
Sectional moves		
Purpose	1	State the purpose of the memo Is to investigate and analyze our results and findings from the computer project
	2	State the purpose of the project a) primary purpose To apply the analysis to a flash separator in order to take account of heat



		responsibility in a heat exchanger. b) Secondary purpose/reason To operate the separator at a steady rate.
	1	Describe the method a) process and stages By using an Excel program, we are going to set a computer program as a
	2	consequent to solve the unknown values which are: V,L,Q, Xi and Yi <sup>1</sup> b) what has been achieved To calculate the vapor pressures of toluene and benzene we used Antoine's equation. c) preparedness/intention. Next we are ready to solve the equilibrium for Ki by applying the equation: $K_i = P^*(T)/P$ d) remaining stages to complete Then we have to figure out the energy required to operate the separator.

\*The accuracy of the content information is not commented on here.

As can be seen from Figure 5 above, the infinitive clause is apparent as a driver of moves within sections of the report as displayed. This lends a further level of description to the data presented in Figure 3.

The trend further held true for reservoir fluid lab reports in petroleum engineering where sections of a poor and excellent text were analyzed. Text moves section results are presented below and commented on in the discussion.

**Figure 6:** Text Moves Petroleum Engineering Lab Report

**Text 1:** Poor

No. of words (section total)	92	
No. of IC units	2	
Sectional moves experiment summary		

Objectives (purpose)	1	State the purpose of the experiment. to determine the density of the fluid sample to calculate the oil API gravity....
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**Figure 7:** Text Moves Petroleum Engineering Lab Report

**Text 2:** Excellent

No. of words (section total)	146	
No. of IC units	4	
Sectional moves experiment summary		
Objectives (purpose)	1	State the purpose of the experiment. to determine the density of fluid samples... densities are used later to find the specific gravity of the fluids.... ...the API gravity which is important to determine oil price... ..a model can be designed for reservoir fluids to predict.....

The full text, is displayed in Appendix 2.

**Discussion**

Returning briefly to the concept of an excellent, good, and average/poor text, it may be that clients other than the subject teachers need to be included in discussion of these descriptions. Language teachers are an obvious agent here as they “often undergo long term socialization and enculturation within the discourse community and writing assessment is central to their professional day-to-day lives.” (Napierkowski, 2003, p. 6). Of the significance of the items identified for analysis and the approach, we would claim the following.

The “excellent” text was noticeably longer than its counterparts (899 words). Even though these are memo reports, they cannot be successful if text length is compromised. Features such as variety and frequency are clearly undermined by a reduced text. There was a significantly higher percentage (almost double) of words in noun phrases between the “excellent” and “very good” text. Well- formed simple and complex noun phrases were above 98% in the former, falling to 88% in the latter in a considerably shorter text.

An example containing no syntactic (grammar) errors from this text is given below in Figure 8. The quality is typical of the text.

**Figure 8**

The program consists of many components, and each contributes to the final outcome. The first step is to test that the temperature chosen is between the Dew Point and the Boiling point to ensure that the system still consists of two states.

The “poor” text has the fewest number of words (339) and is therefore likelier to contain a higher proportion of noun phrases of some kind: forty-three simple noun phrases in this case. The proportion of complex to simple noun phrases as shown in Figure 1 is higher at the top end (81/32) and lower at the bottom (43/10).

A typical example with error from this text is given below.

**Figure 9**

The purpose of this project is to apply the analysis of flashing separator in order to take account of heat responsibility in a heat exchanger, so it will provide support the energy necessary so can operate the separator at steady state.

The general trend across the five texts is almost consistently downward from the “optimum” (excellent) text. However, text length alone is obviously not a definitive marker of a well-written text. The more accomplished writer who produced the “excellent” text wrote more, but also had a greater number of words in noun phrases and a greater number of such phrases, both complex and simple. More importantly, these phrases were substantially better-formed overall. Simply, his language competence and proficiency on this evidence is higher, and his text evidences the feature of readability resulting in a more positive response from the subject teacher.

For the second feature of infinitive clauses, the results were slightly idiosyncratic with a “very good” text having a smaller word count, fewer Tot-Inf-CI (Total Infinitive Clauses) and less lexical range than a “good” text. One issue here is that two grades are given which results in the generic grade; one for content and one for language. This particular text received the maximum grade for content but a lower grade than the “good” texts for language. This was the only case where the anomaly occurred, but it did slightly distort the results. It is notable,

though, that the readability of this text was viewed less positively, and therefore the linguistic analysis does in fact hold. Further research should avoid the problem identified above by considering only the language grade and further exploring the responses of the subject and language teacher to the same text (Napierkowski, 2003, p. 12). The relationship between content and language grades would clearly be a useful focus for further research.

Differences between the top and bottom end of the scale are certainly revealing. Both the writer of the ‘excellent’ text and the writer of the “average/poor” text demonstrated a high level of appropriateness by concentrating use within the introduction, and method/stages sections of the document-traditionally where a high frequency of this feature would be predicted given the “proposal” and “report” (purpose) nature of these elements of text. (Thomson, 1996, p. 503).

Where they differed substantially was in the range of verbs utilized and the effectiveness of their use (quality, accuracy, and appropriateness). A wider variety of appropriate items led to a more positive perception of the readability of the better text. It made for more interesting and persuasive reading. A sample from the introduction is given below.

**Figure 10**

The purpose of this project is to use analysis of a flash separator to include the heat duty requirements in a heat exchange which provides the energy required to operate the separator at steady-state.

The weaker text was limited to five items with one of these used three times (see Findings). The lexical range of the IC verbs in text 1 (excellent) indicates a lexical flexibility from the writer which was not present in text 2. This greater variety helped give the text greater readability. It engaged the reader more. Reader expectations are not only about what information we expect to see, but on a more subconscious level, being presented with the language we expect which has been chosen in order to communicate that content. (see Appendix 2)

The two language teachers who read these texts specifically mentioned how the choice of appropriate (expected) vocabulary and grammar in the relevant sections of the report contributed to ease of readability especially with reference to the variety and effectiveness of lexical verbs in infinitive clauses in the purpose and method section of the “excellent” text in Figure 3 (criteria of quality, appropriateness, and accuracy identified in the “concept” section).

Such “sectional” analysis and description of documents might therefore be extended and seen as valuable from teaching and learning perspectives. One of the issues for our students ( and perhaps generally for students writing in a second or foreign language) is the absence of an understanding that appropriate choices of grammar are not simply about “correct structure,” but also effective style and communication and meeting audience expectation. (Connor, 1996).

When the approach was then tested with “good” and “average” lab reports from the electrical engineering programme, a similar profile emerged (see Figure 3). In the introduction and approach sections of the reports, an “average” text contained 244 words with seven infinitive clauses. A “good” text contained 345 words for the same sections with twelve infinitive clauses. The former displayed much less lexical variety and frequency in the infinitive verbs with “test” being used four times. Variety in the better text was much more noticeable. Accuracy of application was the same in both cases (100%). This is perhaps to be expected given relative grammatical and structural complexity.

The pattern further held when applied to petroleum engineering lab reports where a similar description can be made, indicating that the approach could be generalized (see Figures 6 and 7). It is significant that the feature appears with high frequency as a driver of text moves as indicated in Figures 5, 6, and 7. Further, it was applied appropriately by writers of different quality texts to make similar text moves. The main difference between these texts was one of lexical variety, frequency, and range in the verbs employed (quality) and the quantity of text produced (see Criteria).

The two features chosen are significant for analysis of academic style memo/report writing. Noun phrases are perhaps more pervasive and generalizable, but infinitive clauses are also germane in our text area. Further analysis of noun phrases might focus on their functions within clauses and sentences in relation to their complexity, the various and varying natures of post-modifying elements, coordinated phrases, and so forth. In addition, other types of adverbial phrases could be considered such as those indicating sequence/process (temporal or logical), hypotheticals, and concessives.

Nevertheless, we have two important features pointing in the same direction.

## **Conclusion**

While accepting that the above does not constitute an exhaustive analysis and is exploratory in nature, it has shown itself to be useful as the foundation of a model of text description which could be extended and generalized to other texts across a range of academic programs in our

institute with a view to influencing preparation of students to write such documents more effectively. Clearly there were differences in terms of the language proficiency of the writers, which is influenced by factors other than those analyzed. However, sensitizing weaker writers to the contextual nature of elements of text discourse such as those looked at here should result in a better report and improve readability. In turn this should elicit a more positive response from the subject teacher and result in a better grade. It would also (perhaps more importantly) improve the writer's overall language awareness.

We have been able to describe the texts in terms of significant features which enhance readability as indicated by the assessment of the texts by chemical engineering teachers. It is felt there is enough evidence here to claim that such a multifaceted description of texts would be useful in illustrating and documenting text types and using such information to inform teaching and curriculum development. As stated, anecdotal evidence from teachers in PI degree programs has indicated a problem with regard to the quality of writing. Analysis of a range of texts has highlighted some of the linguistic issues. The extent of the problem (e.g., numbers of students, level of proficiency, and so on) still needs to be clarified as it is not within the scope of this investigation.

### **Recommendations**

It is important to emphasize that tertiary education has a relatively short history in the UAE, but much of great importance has been achieved in that time. Responses to second and foreign language learning issues have had much longer to develop in other countries. The following observations should be seen in that context.

The need for ongoing language support and development in degree programs is clear. In the quest for better student-produced texts, cross-curricular teacher collaboration is a significant element. There are various ways this can be explored and many models of good practice. The three-phase approach of collaboration, cooperation, and team teaching described by Dudley-Evans (2001) is a very practical example here. A synthesis of some of these elements (specifically collaboration and cooperation) has informed the teaching relationship between the Communication Department and the Department of Chemical Engineering in our institute leading to the development of a parallel syllabus (see Appendix 4). In the opinion of the department head, the quality of student documentation at the end of our first semester of working together was much improved. Attitudinal shifts are important here. As Sharpling states (2002, p.87): "Collaborative and cooperative knowledge cannot in itself be gained from a

fixed-term training course alone. Rather, it is dispositional, involving a genuine desire to investigate the conceptual and discourse framework of the subject students are studying, leading to a more systematic attempt to find out how a discipline works". Further, content teachers in foreign language medium institutes should be encouraged to develop an interest in the interface between language and content. Our most successful ventures (for learners) have occurred with content teachers who understand and are interested in this relationship.

On the text level, comprehensive description of the culture of each document should be given to students in order for them to have a detailed map before they begin. A possible format/template for this is presented in Appendix 1. The intention is to give a description of the purpose and structure of the document and guidance as to the linguistic and discourse elements appropriate to different sections of the text, such as those looked at in this study. The student then has a schema before embarking on the writing process. This can be utilized in consultation with instructors in the preparation of documents.

Further, it is important to encourage students to take a functional view of why particular language choices are significant in terms of meeting reader expectations and how the language works in order to do that. (Clarke, 1992). Description of documents from the perspective of text moves is a very accessible and practical approach here. The features described in this study could easily be discussed in this context. Too often grammar is presented as simply structural and therefore divorced from meaning and purpose. Learners require a more functional understanding in order to select relevant structures and vocabulary for their purpose. Given reasonable concerns about notions of universality in the context of academic discourse, (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002, Hyland & Tse, 2007) it is also worth sensitizing students to notions of range, frequency, (Mudraya, 2006) collocation and meaning within the context of specific disciplines and genres. Teachers may work on helping students develop a more focused lexical repertoire derived from their particular discipline, as suggested by these authors. This again reinforces the reflective and pragmatic nature of ESP.

The concept of ownership is also significant. Students need to be encouraged to effectively proof read and edit documents. The skills involved are complex and developed over time. It is often (wrongly) assumed that this is something which students know how to do rather than being a specific suite of abilities which need to be taught and valued as an important element in the set of skills utilized in the production of professional documentation.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

Text description. (example only).

Field: Chemical Engineering.

Genre: Memo report.

#### Purpose

The purpose of the report is to present the findings of a scientific calculation/experiment or survey/questionnaire investigation, to explain the methodology used to derive them, and to discuss the results and implications.

#### Components:

Title: Briefly states the subject of the report

Introduction: States the purpose of the memo and the report project.


Method: States the problem and the process followed in order to generate the results. Where calculations are given, explanation of the solution algorithm is required.

Results: States the findings from the methodology and any resulting discussion.

Conclusion: Contains an evaluative statement and the overall outcome of the process.

Comments: there is often little consistency in the student rendition of the structure of the document. Some contain no headings. There is use of widely differing terminology. Not all components are present in all reports.

Suggestion. Give a clear handout to students stating the required component headings. Example terminology could be given. Be sure final product is consistent with this. Incorporate into grade.

 Text language hyperlink: this would be linked to a section- by- section description and exemplification of features and moves. It would also include guidelines for grammatical structures and vocabulary.

## Appendix 2

N.B. Several (up to four) experiments may be described in this section. Total text length can therefore be four times as much as the section below. There were a further 10 examples of infinitive clauses used for similar text moves in the remainder of the full text.

Experiment Summary Section from the lab report.

Summary of experiments.

Experiment 1: Density Measurement at Ambient Conditions.

This experiment was done [to determine](#) the density of fluid samples (crude oil and brines) at the ambient laboratory conditions using a digital density/specific gravity meter model DA-520. This experiment is important as fluids can be distinguished inside the reservoir regarding their densities into oil at the bottom, water and gas at the top (gravity segregation). These densities are used later [to find](#) the specific gravity of the fluids and followed by determining the oil API gravity which is important [to determine](#) oil price in addition to other properties. Therefore, by determining the fluids densities and correcting them to reservoir conditions, a reservoir model can be designed for reservoir fluids [to predict](#) which one can be designed based on the range of these densities [to calculate](#) the fluids viscosity.

(text as written).

Appendix 3

PI Student profile # 0 Date:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ SI \_\_\_\_\_

Country of origin \_\_\_\_\_

Educational background:

Direct entry

Foundation programme  
FP grades  
Sem 1  
Sem 2  
Sem 3  
Sem 4

Degree programme:

GPA  
Year 1 Ave  
Year 2 Ave  
Year 3 Ave  
Year 4 Ave

Notes:

Appendix 4 Excerpt from Initial Parallel Syllabus.

<b>Week/D ate</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>CHEG Topics</b>	<b>CHEG Report Tasks</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	Sun.	Course introduction Assign student groups		
(Jan. 28)	Tu.	Cost estimating principles		
	Th.	Cost estimate levels	Specification of the role of communication teachers (course leader).	
<b>Week 2</b>	Sun.	Cost indexing		
(Feb. 4)	Tu.	Elements of plant total capital investment		
	Th.	Factored cost estimates		
<b>Week 3</b>	Sun.	Chapter 6 problems		
(Feb. 11)	Tu.	Chapter 6 problems		
	Th.	Operating cost estimates	Briefing on report writing support (Communication Department)	
<b>Week 4</b>	Sun.	Chapter 6 problems	<b>Re-editing report sections:</b>  - <b>Table of contents</b>  - <b>Executive summary</b>	
(Feb. 18)	Tu.	Chapter 6 problems		
	Th.	Process optimization		

<b>Week 5</b>	Sun.	One-dimensional optimization searches	Introduction to MLA referencing style OPR preparation.	
(Feb. 25)	Tu.	One-dimensional optimization searches		Oral progress report (outside of class time)
	Th.	One-dimensional optimization searches		
<b>Week 6</b>	Sun.	One-dimensional optimization searches	Re-editing report section: - Introduction	
(Mar. 4)	Tu.	Design test		Design test

# The Asian ESP Journal

## **An Analysis of the Move Structure of Textbook Prefaces**

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### **Biodata**

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### **Abstract**

The preface sections of 21 textbooks in applied linguistics were analyzed on the basis of earlier genre based studies (Swales 1981, 1990). To identify the moves, textual clues and surface signals were fairly reliable indicators. However, since we defined them in terms of their functions, our ultimate criterion for assigning values to them was functional/discoursal rather than formal. What the analysis revealed was consistent existence of a 4-move schema in the data realized through different textual devices. The textual strategies utilized by the authors to signal the moves were also investigated and categorized. It is suggested that data of this kind can be useful for teachers of English for specific purposes (ESP), English for academic purposes (EAP) and applied linguistics through the medium of English. More specifically, the findings of this study can be beneficial in raising the awareness of students of applied linguistics to better access the content they need from textbooks on their subjects of study.

**Key Words:** textbook, preface, genre, move, discourse community, academic discourse

## **1. Introduction**

Knowledge of generic conventions varies among members of any specific discourse community. In fact, those who are routinely involved in academic communication have greater knowledge of these conventions than those who are occasionally involved. This has serious implications for our understanding of the nature of acquisition of genre competence. In ideal circumstances, acquiring a discourse requires a long and subconscious process of genre-related activities under the supervision of expert members until a basic knowledge of genre and its related skills are acquired. As far as acquiring academic genres through the medium of English as a foreign language is concerned, a genre based literacy which advocates, among other things, the use of academic genres with particular focus on the conventional patterns of discourse structure and the way these patterns are textually realized can help students acquire genre knowledge and skills. As the most essential part of this genre based proposal, we need to raise learner awareness of the schematic structure of academic genres. This calls for a syllabus in which these generic structures are brought to the conscious attention of learners. This, in turn, requires analysis of academic discourses in terms of their schematic structures and the textualization of these structures. Successful academic communication requires a high level of academic genre awareness.

Swales' work (1981) is the first to analyze the schematic structure of an academic genre. The analysis, based on a corpus of forty-eight research article introductions from three fields of biology, medical science and social sciences, reports the dominance of four schematic stages, or 'moves' as he calls them, in the introduction sections: (1) Establishing the Field, (2) Summarizing Previous Research, (3) Preparing for Present Research, and (4) Introducing Present Research. Swales' (1981) model, which follows a fixed order, has been criticized by other genre analysts. In a combined effort Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988) studied conference papers and MA dissertations to yield a descriptive model that could cope with the complex schematic structure of long informative sections of genres such as discussion sections. Their analysis demonstrates, among other things, that the composite order of moves suggested by Swales' early model is not appropriate for longer genres or longer sections of genres. Instead they proposed that cyclical ordering may be more suitable. The point has been acknowledged by Swales (1990), who recognizes that texts may vary in their move structure because of different amounts of space available to the writer. He then posits his revised model, CARS (Create A Research Space), in which he identifies only three moves: (1) Establishing a



Territory, (2) Establishing a Niche, and (3) Occupying the Niche. What is new in the CARS model is the recognition by Swales of the variation that exists in terms of the amount of rhetorical work to execute discourse tasks:

It follows that the amount of rhetorical work needed to create such a space depends on the existing ecological competition, on the size and importance of the niche to be established, and on various other factors such as the writer's reputation.

(Swales 1990:142)

Following Swales' (1990) tradition, the focus of the present study is on one of the major academic genres—the textbook. It is a teaching genre in academic communication in which knowledge is represented in factual form. Scientific knowledge, like any other phenomenon, has a developmental process. This process is originated, in the first place, by empirical research which then gradually becomes a well-established scientific fact shared and respected communally in the discourse community. This knowledge is communicated through three modes of scientific expression (Fleck 1933 & 1975 quoted in Salahshoor 2000). The first is the Journal Article which "bears the imprint of the personal and the provisional". It is a platform on which the scientist exposes his thesis to the wider discourse community of scholars and researchers, which can be challenged, accepted or rejected. Next is "the *Vademecum*" or the handbook, which Fleck describes as a collection of individual contributions selected and carefully organized as to provide guidelines for further research by showing what counts as the fundamental concepts, what the appropriate research procedures are, and whose research work looks more promising. And finally, there is the textbook at the end of the process which contains only 'accredited knowledge', with fewer knowledge claims and more factual information.

Approached from the perspective outlined above, the textbook is an academic genre in which accredited knowledge is provided in the form of generally accepted facts. It is the most prevalent form of teaching genres in academic settings. Therefore, analysis of the sections that constitute this major genre seems necessary to meet the multiple needs of both teachers and learners as an aid to better access and evaluate the knowledge they gain from textbooks. More specifically, the findings of such studies can be beneficial in improving the academic reading and study skills of novice members of different academic disciplines. Novice members and students of any field need to have a deeper understanding of the functions of the genres and subgenres used in their academic communities. While the scope of the corpus in the present study is limited to textbooks in applied linguistics, it is suggested that the findings can be

beneficial in any study skills or academic reading course for students and novice members of various fields to raise their awareness of the structure of the genre analyzed and of the contributions of this genre as an aid to have appropriate and systematic access to the content they need.

Inspired by the necessity to understand specialized discourse, the present study is concerned with developing a framework to describe the move structure of the preface section of textbooks written in applied linguistics. More specifically, the present study seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What move structure dominates the preface section of textbooks?
2. What are the discourse functions of the moves?
3. In what dominant order are the moves displayed?
4. What kind of textual devices signal the moves?

Since the objective of this research is identifying the move structure of textbook prefaces, it is necessary to provide different points of view about the concept of move in order to derive an operational definition of the term. Nwogu (1991:114) defines move as "...a text segment made up of a bundle of linguistic features which give the segment a uniform orientation and signal the content of discourse in it." Bhatia (1993:30-31) considers moves "...cognitive structures which serve certain communicative intentions and are subservient to the overall discourse communicative purpose of the genre." Duszak (1994:299) defines move as "...a conventional strategy to carry out a discourse goal." And finally, Holmes (1997:325) defines move as "...a segment of text that is shaped and constrained by a specific communicative function."

For this study, we define move as a text segment, which may vary in size, shaped and constrained by a specific discourse goal. This text segment has a uniform orientation and the content of the discourse is signaled in it. In other words, we consider a move a text segment used for some identifiable discourse function. To highlight the main features of these definitions, moves can be defined in reference to the following attributes:

- Moves are subservient to the overall discourse goal of a given genre.
- Moves are conventional strategies which vary from one genre to another.
- Moves are realized in the propositional and illocutionary meanings of utterances.

## 2. Methods

The corpus of the present study is based on 21 textbook prefaces selected for analysis from the discipline of applied linguistics. The choice of textbooks was motivated by the need to control as much as possible for such variables as writer experience and expertise. Moreover, the selection of sample prefaces from a single discipline was intended to avoid any overgeneralizations of the results due to possible discipline-specific characteristics. Since I am mainly concerned with pedagogical implications, the major criterion in selection was to include textbooks which are widely used in the syllabuses of applied linguistic courses in my context (Iranian universities). Full bibliographical details of the textbooks are included in Appendix 1. In the text of this study they have been referred to according to their number in Appendix 1.

Following the approach of earlier genre-based studies (Swales 1981, 1990), textbook prefaces were analyzed for their move structure. To identify the moves, textual clues and surface signals were usually fairly reliable indicators; however, since we defined them as functional units, our ultimate criterion for assigning value to them was functional/discourse rather than formal. In other words, we did not trust the linguistic signals per se in the identification of moves.

In most cases the unit of analysis was the sentence. Where a sentence appeared to contain two moves (very few cases) and it was impossible to decide which of the moves within a sentence was more salient, it was coded as containing two moves.

Rough and dirty reading of the texts (Swales 1990) was followed by highlighting the identified moves. Conventionally, we chose a different color to highlight each move. Having done this, we extracted the move structure of the texts and summarized them in a single table in order to find the dominant pattern of the move structure in the data.

## 3. Results

Analysis of the prefaces reveals a four move structure, outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Four Move Structure

Schematic Structure of Moves in Textbook Prefaces	Frequency
1. Announcing Objectives	21
2. Identifying Audience	21
3. Outlining Organization	14
4. Acknowledging others' contribution	17

Eleven prefaces use a four move structure. The choice of numbers is determined by the order in which the moves appeared, as summarized in Table 2. For instance, announcing objectives is coded as move 1 because it is the most frequent move in the initial position of the prefaces. As was discussed in the preceding section, a functional/discourse criterion was adopted for the identification of the moves and titles were chosen according to their common functional orientation. The following discussion deals with defining and describing moves in the data, explaining their functional values and categorizing the textual indices that signal each move.

**Table 2.** Order and Number of Moves

Preface	Move Order	No. of Move Units
1	1-3-2-4	4
2	1-3-2-4	4
3	1-2-3-4	4
4	2-1-4	3
5	1-2	2
6	1-2-4	3
7	1-3-2	3
8	2-1-3-4	4
9	1-2-4	3
10	1-2-4	3
11	1-2-3-4	4
12	1-2-3	3
13	1-2-4	3
14	1-2-3-4	4
15	1-2-3-4	4
16	1-3-2-4	4
17	1-2-3-4	4
18	1-2-4	3
19	1-2-3	3
20	1-2-3-4	4
21	1-3-2-4	4

### 3.1. *Announcing Objectives*

This is one of the most frequent moves in the data (move 2 was the other frequent move). It appears in all 21 prefaces and occupies the initial position in 19 texts (Table 2). Through this move the writers announce their objectives for writing the book:

Preface 11. The objective of this book is to help language teachers write better tests.

The prevalence of this move in all the prefaces highlights the fact that the writers are expected to "announce the objective" of writing the book. Furthermore, the occurrence of this move in initial position in the majority of the prefaces indicates the significance of mentioning the goals and aims before moving to the next stages of developing the preface. Writers utilize different textual categories, which are categorized in Summary 1, to announce the objectives of their books.

#### Summary 1. Samples of textual categories employed for announcing objectives

##### BOOK+ BE + PP (passive structure)

- p.17. The book is also intended to .....
- p.1. Principles of language learning and teaching is designed to.....
- p.18. This book is concerned with.....

##### NOUN PHRASES

- p.4. The book has the following aims.....
- p.3. The goal of the third edition of *Developing Second Language Skill* is....
- p. 8. The twofold objective of the book is to.....

##### BOOK+ VERB (active structure)

- p.5. This book attempts to.....
- p. 9. This book provides.....
- p.10. ....it will do a number of things
- p.7. ...which also looks at.....

#### WRITER+VERB

- p.19. In this book I try to.....
- p. 13. I have been striving to.....
- p. 21. ....I have tried to.....

#### 3.2. *Identifying Audience*

Like move 1, move 2 appears in all the prefaces analyzed. In 14 prefaces it occupies the second position and so it is represented as move 2 (Table 2). Functionally, it serves to identify the audience of the books. Those who would benefit most from the book are introduced and in some cases the threshold or educational level for using the book is defined:

Preface 14. We have aimed to create a text that can be used as a resource by those carrying out many different types of second language research. We have approached the book with the novice researcher in mind.

The prevalence of this move in all prefaces demonstrates its significance. Any reader who tries to access the content of a book might be interested in knowing whether he/she is among the target audience of the writer. Just knowing the objectives of the writer is not sufficient; potential buyers should make sure the book is appropriate for their level of education and knowledge. The textual categories are included in Summary 2.

#### Summary 2. Samples of textual categories employed to identify the audience

#### BOOK+ VERB+ TARGET AUDIENCE

- p.1. This book is designed to serve as a textbook for graduate or advanced undergraduates....
- p.3. ....that will enable both prospective and practicing teachers to ....
- p.4 This book is aimed at teachers and applied linguists.....
- p.6. ....should be made available to both teachers of English and students of

#### TEFL/TESOL

- p.11. ....will be of most interest to students of language or linguistics...
- p.12. This text is planned for.....

p.14. ....a text that can be used as a resource by those carrying out many types of second language research...

p.15. This book is oriented toward an informed audience...

p. 18. This book is appropriate for both students and professionals .....

p19. ....aims to be a book that can be read by practitioners and theoreticians ...

p.20.....should prove to be most useful in first-level course.....

#### TARGET AUDIENCE+ VERB

p.2. Any contemporary student of language teaching needs to .....

p.9 ....an advanced student will soon realize .....

p.8. ....both classroom teachers and trainers of teachers have shown an increasing interest.....

p.11. ....others coming from sociology, social psychology and anthropology may be interested to.....

### *3.3. Outlining Organization*

The third move utilized by writers of the prefaces in the data appears in 14 texts (the least frequent move in the data) of which nine writers locate it in the third position (Table 2). It serves as a map of the book and reveals the issues dealt with in each section. To achieve this, the writers mention the number and order of chapters in the book explicitly and refer to the content of each chapter:

Preface 8. In the opening chapters he is introduced to the general purposes and methods of language testing and is asked to consider the chief characteristics of good educational measures. A series of six chapters then describes specific techniques for testing each of the major components of English as taught to speakers of other languages, after which attention is directed to the step-by-step process whereby the ESL test is constructed and administered, and the result interpreted. The final chapter offers procedures for calculating a few basic test statistics which will aid the teacher-test writer in evaluating the soundness of his test and the performance of his students. As with the rest of the book, the final chapter assumes no previous training in tests and measurement and no knowledge of advanced mathematics.

Since not all parts of a single book may be suitable for the identified audience, the readers might find such book maps suitable to locate where to find information of interest. Some parts of books might be appropriate for specific educational courses so the teacher or student would find this move useful in identifying the contents of the book. The salient textual category in the data is included in Summary 3:

Summary 3. Samples of textual strategies employed to outline the organization

CHAPTER+CONTENT or CONTENT+CHAPTER

- p.3. The comprehensive list of ...at the end of each chapter helps.....The activities at the end of each chapter help..
- p.11. In chapter 4.....are presented.....
- p.14.The discussion and data base questions and activities at the end of each chapter are aimed to.....
- p.15. In chapter 2, .....is discussed.
- p.16. This model is presented in chapter 2 and is used in subsequent chapters.....
- p.17. There is a common format to each chapter The authors present ...in chapter 16.....
- p.19. I provide.....in chapters two and three.
- p.21. The ..... at the end of each chapter are presented
- p.3. The first five chapters deal with.....
- p.7. There are completely new chapters on.....
- p.8. In the opening chapters he is introduced to.....
- p.12. Chapter 1 provides..... Chapter 2 deals with..... Chapter 3 is devoted to..... Chapter 5 is connected with.....
- p.15. The final chapter discusses.....
- p. 16. In the final chapter we examine.....
- p.17. Each chapter opens with..... Each chapter has a .....section ...
- p. 19. In chapters four and six I apply..... In chapter five I explore.....
- p. 21 . The material in these sections is designed to.....

*3.4. Acknowledging others' contribution*

The last move appears in 17 prefaces. In all the prefaces it occupies the last position (Table 2). The writers utilizing this move use it to acknowledge, thank and appreciate all those who had a



role in the production of the book. Those who are acknowledged include colleagues, students and family members:

Preface 1. This book has grown out of graduate courses in the theoretical foundations of language teaching that I have taught at San Francisco State University, the University of Illinois, and the University of Michigan. My first debt of gratitude is therefore to my students - for their insights, enthusiasm, and support. .... I am also grateful to faculty colleagues both here at San Francisco State University and around the world for offering verbal commentary, informal written opinions, and formal published reviews, all of which were useful in fashioning this third edition. I also wish to acknowledge the staff and the resources of the American Language Institute for support in this revision and in other research and writing projects. Finally, hugs and kisses to Mary for once again putting up with papers and journals and books strewn all over the house.

Preparing a textbook which considers different issues of applied linguistics is not possible unless a group of people join together in supporting the author. Acknowledging and thanking contributors is a significant move in the preface to wrap up the section. Gratitude, grateful, thank, acknowledge, appreciate and debt constitute the major lexical choices in the data, as illustrated in Summary 4.

Summary 4. Samples of textual strategies employed to acknowledge others' contribution

#### GRATITUDE

p.1 My first debt of gratitude is therefore to .....for.....

p.13. I want to express my sincere gratitude for.....

p.15. I express my gratitude to....for.....

#### GRATEFUL

p.4. I am grateful to.....

p.14. We are grateful to.....

#### ACKNOWLEDGE

p.1. I also wish to acknowledge.....

- p.3. I readily acknowledge my indebtedness and gratitude to.....for....
- p.11. I must acknowledge the contribution of.....
- p.16. We would like to acknowledge especially.....
- p.21. I would especially like to acknowledge my debt for.... to.....

#### DEBT

- p.4 I am indebted to.....
- p.20. I owe a considerable debt to.....

#### APPRECIATE

- p.8. The writer wishes to express his appreciation to.....for.....
- p. 14. We greatly appreciate.....

#### MENTION

- p.3. I hasten to mention.....
- p.10. I should like to mention in particular...

#### THANK

- p.2. We would particularly like to thank.....for.....
- p.3. I would also like to thank.... I would certainly be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank....
- p.6. Last but not least, thanks are also due to.....for.....
- p.9. My greatest thanks go to.....
- p.13. Further thanks go to.....for I want to thank .....for....
- p.17. I wish to thank.....

### **4. Discussion**

The shape of genre and its internal structure are determined by the communicative purpose it is going to serve. Genres are not considered ends in themselves rather they are utilized to perform higher level communicative purposes and social actions. Paltridge (1995) believes that instances of genre are assigned to particular categories not on the basis of a response to a property internal to them, but on the basis of a "signification that is bestowed on them from without," or on the basis of pragmatic and perceptual, rather than linguistic, aspects of

communicative events. In Biber's words "genre categories are assigned on the basis of user rather than on the basis of form" (1988:170).

This is the non-linguistic, communicative rationale that shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. This rationale "displays constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value" (Bhatia 1993:14). The implication of such a perspective to understanding the nature of genre is that the schematic structure identified by the analytic component of this study should be considered in light of the broad communicative intentions and purposes behind it. Thus scientific knowledge should not be treated independently from the participants of discourse. Scientific facts and their medium of expression can be examined in relation to their role in the conceptualization process of the scientific mind. Fundamental scientific concepts are introduced to the student through the textbook genre, which later becomes a platform for research activities. But this is not as simple as it seems. The interaction between the textbook writer and the student, however central that may seem, is not by any means the only interaction in the textbook. There are other participants involved which makes the nature of discourse complex. Overall, between the author and the student, there are three mediating participants, as shown in Table 3:

**Table 3.** Mediating Participants of Textbook Discourse (Salahshoor 2000: 151)

author
teacher
student
peer colleagues
publisher

There are different interactive processes between these participants. The writer covertly anticipates the expectations of his audience. One interaction is between the author as the producer of the textbook and the peer. The main motivation, from the author's point of view, is to gain recognition and prestige among the other expert members of the discourse community. For this reason, it is reasonable to think that the expectations and requirements of these expert peers are taken into account by the textbook writer and reflected in both the content and format of the genre. Yet the main audience of the textbook (especially the introductory textbook) is not

the peer but students who read the text for information. This interaction is pedagogic in the sense that the textbook helps the enlargement of the conceptual world of the student. This characterizes a writer-reader relationship based on unequal social and knowledge status. However, in most cases the interaction between the author and the student reader is mediated by another discourse participant, the teacher or lecturer. This means that the author should also have an eye on the expectations of teachers. For example, a textbook needs to be convincing to the teacher who is going to use it in terms of its potential for promoting both teaching and learning in the classroom. Another force in the creation of a textbook is financial. Textbooks, unlike research articles, need to be marketed and sold. This introduces yet another participant to the discourse, the publisher, who among other things expects the author to commit to meet certain publishing requirements such as conformity to standards of form and content.

This multiple participant relationship underlies the rationale behind the preface subgenre and its schematic structure. It is the space to bring together the multiple participants of textbook discourse and address their various expectations.

## **5. Conclusion**

A genre-based literacy for raising awareness about schematic genre structures should involve a database from which description of academic patterns across academic discourses can emerge. This and similar studies can contribute to the compilation of large-scale databases whose ultimate goal is designing genre-based courses for developing genre awareness skills.

As discussed previously, textbooks represent a major teaching genre in academic circles. They are the main tool for providing 'accredited knowledge' to students. The complexity of the subgenres that constitute the textbook genre can be understood by reference to the multiple participant networks which influence and shape the schematic structure of the discourse in these subgenres. The four move schema in the preface sections of textbooks is an attempt by writers to meet the expectations of actors involved in textbook discourse.

Inspired by such an understanding, the outcomes of studies into the textbook genre can be beneficial for teachers of English for Specific Purposes, English for Academic Purposes and teachers and students of Applied Linguistics. More specifically, the findings of this study can be used in courses which attempt to improve academic study and reading skills of novice applied linguists. In my context students take a study skills course which usually covers topics such as dictionary skills, library skills, reading skills, writing skills, note-taking skills, quoting skills and examination skills. What I have tried to propose in this paper is that these novice

members need to be exposed to other skills, including genre awareness of the materials through which they access knowledge. Since textbooks are a major genre in academia, the knowledge of how to use them appropriately and systematically is essential. One way of making textbooks beneficial for learners is revealing the functional values of their different sections. After all, effective communication in any field of study requires awareness of the conventions that dominate the discourse of that field.

The most obvious limitation of this and similar works is that while we are proposing a genre-based course whereby the main aim is to raise awareness about the schematic structure of academic discourses, this paper represents only a small-scale description, covering only textbook prefaces. However, a genre-based academic literacy should be seen as on-going, one that evolves and takes shape as more description becomes available. Thus while the present research is only a small piece of the puzzle, as other descriptions are created they may eventually create a mosaic of the genre which could be comprehensive in its coverage.

The issue of schematic genre structure is well established. However, certain areas have been less investigated than others. This includes many teaching genres and particularly the textbook. Different sections of textbook genres can be studied on the basis of move structure. There is also room for comparative researches, not only at the move level but also at the textual level to establish what pragma-lingual features are used to signal what schematic structures across academic genres.

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### **Appendix 1: The List of Textbooks Used in the Analysis**

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2. Brumfit, C. J. and Johnson, K. (1979). *The communicative approach to language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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10. Hudson, R. A. (1996). *Sociolinguistics. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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## **The Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of an English Tour Guide Project**

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### **Biodata**

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### **Abstract**

This paper reports on the development of an English tour guide project, which took place in a culture-tourism context in Taiwan. This ESP project, embedded in the theoretical frameworks of content-based instruction and hospitality language, covered four stages: planning, executing the tour guide training courses, implementing the on-site tour guide service, and evaluation. The paper provides detailed descriptions of the tasks involved in each stage. The findings from the evaluation indicate that in real situations multifunctional language skills are needed on the side of the project's student tour guides. Such skills include imparting knowledge, interpretation, proper guiding, answering questions, and practicing hospitality etiquette. Furthermore, nonverbal skills, such as understanding gestures, are also critical in enhancing cross-cultural communication. It is hoped that the findings of the present work will contribute to the development of effective training for English tour guides.

**Keywords:** content-based instruction, needs analysis, course design, evaluation, tourism

## **1. Introduction**

The revenue brought by international tourism and business travel has become an important source of income for many parts of the world. As cities are the entrances to a region or a country, they are often at the frontline of the competition to attract more international travelers. Among the strategies of urban marketing, culture tourism has gained more popularity because of the increasingly aging population and a growing interest in culture (Ark & Richards, 2006). Tourists find culture-tourism appealing because it offers a cultural experience, including local history, lifestyle, and environment. In successful culture-tourism tour guides play an essential role because an effective guide can act as a “culture broker” who interprets the given culture for tourists (Cohen, Ifergan & Cohen, 2002). Thus, the role of tour guides has gained research attention. Researchers have found that the quality of guides is vital to touristic success (Ap & Wong, 2001; Cohen, Ifergan & Cohen, 2002).

Recognizing the value of culture tourism for the growth of the urban economy and the importance of tour guides for enhancing tourists’ experiences, Kaohsiung City, the second largest city in Taiwan, has launched a tour guide project to promote tourism at the time of the Lantern Festival. The Festival, taking place along the banks of the renowned Love River of the City, have attracted more than four million visitors a year since 2000; the colorful celebrations include fireworks, lantern exhibitions, and tasting traditional food and snack. However, despite of the attractions the festival attracted few international visitors . Thus, a tour guide project was established, with the aim of providing better tourist services and in-depth explanations of the Festival and the City for international visitors. The department of foreign languages of a local university was commissioned by the city government to train tour guides, as well as interpreters and receptionists. Students for this program were chosen from the department through interviews, in which they were evaluated mainly by their English oral skills. Sixteen students were selected in December 2006. The whole project expanded from December 2006 to April 2007, covering the four stages of planning, executing the training courses, implementing the tour guide service, and evaluation (Table 1).



**Table 1** The four stages of the English tour guide project

Stage	Time	Description
Stage 1: Planning the project	Early December 2006	The coordinator of the city government and the coordinators of the university designed the project.
Stage 2: Executing the tour guide training courses	Early February 2007	The students participated in the two-day training course covering four courses.
Stage 3: Implementing the on-site tour guide service	March 3 to March 12, 2007	The students provided the on-site tour guide service at the Love River.
Stage 4: Evaluating the project	March 3 to early April, 2007	The researchers assessed the effectiveness of the project from the various participating parties.

As a matter fact, there are many complex prescriptions for professional tour guides (Ap & Wong, 2001; Cohen, 1985). Therefore, it was unlikely from the beginning of the project that the students could be trained in such a short period of time to meet the demands of professional tour guides. Hence, they were trained with the goal in mind that they should reach a level necessary to act as “specialized” guides for the Lantern Festival and Kaohsiung City only. For the purpose of this study, we selected a student tour guide as an informant who was equipped with knowledge of the Festival and the City, and was able to introduce the local culture in English. The principle of person choice was language skill, which refers here to situated linguistic skills, such as imparting knowledge, interpretation, guiding, answering questions, and practicing hospitality etiquette. Besides linguistic skills, nonverbal abilities, such as understanding gestures, were also crucial in the selection of informants.

In order to formulate the present project, which was centered on linguistic and nonverbal skills, we adopted the concept of content-based instruction (CBI) and hospitality language as a theoretical basis. CBI provides a framework for developing the content course, in which students were expected to learn content knowledge related with their role as tour guides. Hospitality language, on the other hand, provided ground for establishing students’ language and non-language skills needed for the job. The connection between the theoretical framework and the project is described in detail in section two.

This paper attempts to portray the process the project's development, including design, implementation and evaluation. The present work will provide detailed descriptions of needs analysis, course syllabus, materials, teaching and methods, and then the results of four types of evaluation—formative, summative, informal and media exposure—used to assess the students' performance the effectiveness of the project will also be presented. The findings of this paper may be particularly useful to those who intend to use this study as a reference work, in order to develop effective training for English tour guides.

## **2. Theoretical frameworks for designing the project—content-based instruction and hospitality language**

Content-based instruction (CBI) was the theoretical basis for designing and executing the workshop, covering the tasks of needs assessment, materials development, instruction, and evaluation. CBI is “the integration of a particular content with second language aims,” in which learners acquire knowledge of the content area and increase their language skills naturally (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1987, p.2). Meaning, rather the grammatical form, should be at the center of learning.

Both ESP and CBI emphasize that language lessons should be contextualized to connect students' language learning with meaningful content, and thus fulfill their practical needs. The theme-based instruction model, the most widespread type of CBI, puts particular emphasis on contextualization, in which authentic materials and tasks are often adopted to maximize the teaching of function areas in order to attain real-life goals. From this perspective it is a pivotal task to provide authentic vocabulary, forms, and registers for the students. The main strategy for teaching is to employ a variety of tasks, in order to help students in the acquisition of words and forms by calling on their prior knowledge and schema. Thus, schema can be built through content learning (Pally, 2000).

In addition, the teachers produce their own materials or, at least, they use certain sources in a modified form, in order to integrate the content into the teaching plan (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1982). For the present project, two types of materials were selected—a) works on Kaohsiung City, and b) works on hospitality language.

Hospitality language was the other theoretical framework in which the study was embedded. Hospitality language can be regarded as part of English for Occupational Purpose (EOP), a branch of English for Specific Purpose (ESP). Hospitality-related writings are generally classified into three types: prescriptive, descriptive and analytical (Blue & Harun

2003). “Prescriptive works” refer to manuals and instructional materials of the hospitality industry. “Descriptive works”, including documents, personal accounts, novels and films, deal with cultural and historical aspects of hospitality industry. “Analytical writings” explain the structural, operational and behavioral aspects of hospitality industry. Materials for the present project were selected from the bulk of prescriptive writings on hospitality language, in order to equip students with proper language skills for tour guides, interpreters, and receptionists.

Another aspect of hospitality language, structure, was also considered in the formulating of the project. Structure includes actors, physical settings, status protocols, and role expectations (Blue & Harun 2003). These elements of the structure affect the effectiveness of both verbal and nonverbal communication. Thus, making students aware of the structure and developing skills to successfully communicate with visitors was critical. Based on Blue and Harun’s proposition (2003), student skills were divided into two groups: verbal and non-verbal skills. The former include, among other skills, the necessary English vocabulary of terms of address, the abilities of 1) providing information and proper response to questions/requests, 2) dealing with problematic customers, and 3) alleviating complaints. Non-language skills include the use of gestures in practice, the understanding of body language, and etiquette.

### **3. Needs analysis and the aims of the training courses**

The course aims and objects were determined by needs analysis of the four parties: the City Government, the university, the students, and the visitors. The needs analysis was based on the observation and discussion of the instructors of the training course with the university administrators, the government event planner and the students, the instructors’ actual visits to the Festival, assumptions on visitors’ needs, and reports from the local newspapers and magazines. The detailed description of the needs analysis of each party is introduced in the following sections.

#### **3.1 Needs of the Kaohsiung City Government**

The needs analysis of the City Government was based on contact with the event planner. The planner from the City Government emphasized that students should be qualified with the ability to offer in-depth introduction of the Festival-related activities to foreign tourists.

#### **3.2 Needs of the university**

The foreign languages department of the university involved was commissioned to carry out the project. The university could use this public relations opportunity to increase its visibility

and enhance its image as a center for foreign languages. Besides, this task helped the university to build up a long-term cooperation with the City Government.

### **3.3 Needs of the students**

The sixteen students have been studying English for more than eight years. However, none of them has ever received training as tour guides. In this training course, they needed to acquire the ability of offering an in-depth introduction of Festival-related celebrations and activities as well as local culture to visitors. Besides, these students needed training in hospitality language (in addition to verbal and nonverbal communication skills) in order to properly attract visitors.

### **3.4 Needs of the visitors**

Although the primary objective of the project was to attract more international visitors, domestic visitors from different parts of Taiwan were also considered as potential customers. It was assumed that independent of origin every visitors wants to obtain an in-depth understanding of the event and its relationship with local culture, due to her/his unfamiliarity with the local scenic spots, legends, traditional snacks, and arts. By means of proper guiding, visitors, can have a closer contact with local culture and, will have a better understanding about the city. This will hopefully result in that later they will either return for another visit or recommend Kaohsiung and Taiwan to others.

### **3.5 Course aims**

Considering the needs of the aforementioned four parties, the aims of this project were multi-folded:

1. To equip the student volunteers with hospitality language skills and verbal and nonverbal communication skills;
2. To train the student volunteers in offering detailed introduction of the Lantern Festival and local culture;
3. To raise students' awareness that they have to treat the walking tour service as a promotion of Kaohsiung City tourism and the 2009 World Games;
4. To raise students' awareness that they not only represent themselves but also represent the university and the Kaohsiung City Government.

These objectives determined the scope of the present project. That is, the training project focused on tour guide techniques, the introduction of the Festival-related activities and local culture.

## **4. Description of the course syllabus, materials and teaching methods**

### **4.1 Course syllabus**

Based on the needs analysis and course aims, four courses, an assignment and a three-hour practicum were prepared for the students. These were as follows:

1. Principles and Basic Techniques
2. Walking Tour on Kaohsiung Lantern Festival
3. Introduction of Kaohsiung Local Culture
4. Introduction of Urban Marketing
5. Assignment
6. Practicum

“Principles and Basic Techniques for Escort Interpreting” was a training course of tour guide techniques. It covered the teaching of verbal and nonverbal communication skills, as well as techniques of hospitality language from arrival, through familiarization and engagement to departure, in summation known as the “guest cycle” (Kasavana, 1993, p. 424). Table 2 shows the adapted arrival-departure cycle, beginning with the arrival of the guests, followed by familiarization and engagement, and ending with bidding farewell.

**Table 2** The adapted guest cycle

Stage	Activities
Arrival	Greeting, self-introduction
Familiarization	A global introduction of the route
Engagement	Detailed introduction of each spot in the route
Departure	Bidding farewell

(Adapted from Blue & Harun, 2003)

The content-based course of “Walking Tour on Kaohsiung Lantern Festival” was spot-oriented. Various spots by the Love River banks were introduced through a certain route designed by the teacher, which, however, could be adjusted by the students if necessary. This route covered the theme lantern of 2007, the Lantern exhibitions, the so-called “Legend of Lantern Festival”, certain historical buildings and museums, and snacking areas. Guides were also expected to provide information for the tourists on the history and culture of Kaohsiung, and tell some stories of the Love River.

“Introduction of Kaohsiung Local Culture” aimed to train students to offer in-depth introduction on traditional snacks, Liu-Ho Night Market, traditional artwork, the temples in Kaohsiung, Taiwanese Opera and Taiwanese Puppet Show. “Introduction to Urban Marketing” overviewed Kaohsiung’s software and hardware infrastructure, as well as future plans for developing culture, economy, transportation, and recreation in the city.

Assignments were given to students after the in-class training course was done. The students, grouped in pairs, were assigned to hand in written papers and VCD disks that

recorded their practicing. Since we expected to have both local and foreign visitors, the students were expected to prepare everything in both Chinese and English. By means of this assignment the students developed the contents of their own tour guiding. They prepared greeting and self-introduction, designed their own routes for walking tours, compiled the content or story for each stop, provide an in-depth introduction to the event and the nearby scenic spots, and prepared for possible questions from the guests. Furthermore, by means of this assignment the students acquired the ability to compile and synthesize the materials prepared by the teachers, as well as to search for extra information and to make themselves familiar with the techniques of escort interpreting and hospitality language. Through this practice, students were expected to become more independent learners and independently prepare for the three-hour practicum.

The content-based and task-based “Practicum” was conducted one day before the Festival. The students took turns to act out as tour guides for different spots. Feedback from the peers and the instructors enhanced their guiding techniques.

#### **4.2 Materials**

Since there were no specific books or textbooks available for this walking tour service, the teaching materials were collected and compiled by the teachers. Thus, a great variety of sources were referred to.

“Principles & Basic Techniques for Escort Interpreting” referred to several textbooks on presentation skills including *Presenting in English* (Powell, 2003) and *High Season: English for the hotel and Tourism Industry* (Harding & Henderson, 2002), which formed a framework for the course.

“Walking Tour on Kaohsiung Lantern Festival” and “Introduction to Kaohsiung Local Culture” referred to publications by Information Office of Kaohsiung City Government, including *Legendary Kaohsiung* (Lin, 2004), *An In-Depth guide to Twenty Four Hours of Kaohsiung* (Chung, 2004), *Kaohsiung’s Old Professions* (Lin, 2002), official websites of Kaohsiung City Government, and reports from newspaper and magazines.

Three books formed the framework for the course of “Introduction to Urban Marketing”. They are *Hospitality and Travel Marketing* (Morrison, 2001), *Tourism Marketing* (Tsao, 2001), and *Blooming Kaohsiung* (Chang, 2005).

### **4.3 Teaching methods**

CBI and hospitality language were the theoretical basis for designing and executing the program. The overall teaching approach to the courses was essentially “task-based” and “top-down”. It focused more on meanings than on forms, on communicating and articulating ideas in meaningful contexts, and retrieving background knowledge and content schemata, rather than the simple decoding of basic grammatical rules and vocabulary teaching.

In treating the reading materials, the top-down skills, such as scanning for information, guessing the meaning from the context, and summarizing the article, were employed. For the instruction of guide service and escort interpreting skills, task-based skills and role play techniques were employed, in order to rehearse the communication between the students and the visitors.

Besides, as mentioned in course syllabus, students had three different occasions to rehearse their tour skills: in-class, homework assignment and practicum. First, in class, students role-played tour guides and visitors. Pictures of the scenic spots and undergoing infrastructure and city plans were presented in Power point. After students became familiar with the content, they were assigned the task to introduce the scenic spot in front of class one by one. Immediate response and suggestions were given in class. Second, the teachers assigned the students to record their simulated tour on VCD disks and write on papers in both English and Chinese version after the in-class teaching. The instructors gave them feedback days before the practicum. Third, in the three-hour “Practicum”, students were taken to the Love River where the Festival was held. The students took turns to act as tour guides. Immediate feedbacks on their weaknesses and strengths were given by their peers and the instructors..

### **5. On-site service and adjustment**

The mode of on-site service was determined by considering factors such as the number of students, the duration of duty, the distance of walking tour, the pace of visitors, and the students’ safety. After assessing all these factors, the organizers divided the students into pairs. The pairs would be dispatched when there was a request for guided walking tour. The City Government set up a service booth behind the lantern exhibition area. On the first day of duty, the students found that the location of booth was not ideal. The booth was easily ignored by the visitors who were occupied by the flashy display of lanterns. The signboard of the booth was also too small. To let the visitors be aware of the service, the organizers and the students

decided not to wait for requests passively. Instead, they made an adjustment by walking into the crowd to tout the service. This adjustment transformed the students from the information providers waiting for visitors' requests to active promoters of the City.

## **6. Evaluation**

Four modes of evaluation were applied to assess whether the program met the needs of the different parties. They were formative evaluation, summative evaluation, informal evaluation, and media exposures. Formative evaluation was used to measure the students' language and content learning. Summative evaluation was used to measure the students' perceptions of the project and their on-site service. Informal evaluation was used to understand the various customers' satisfaction with students' performance. Media exposure was used to measure the publicity of the service.

### **6.1 Formative evaluation**

The students were evaluated by their role play in class, their written assignments, video and audio recordings, and practicum. In class, the students engaged in their roles as tour guides and visitors. They took notes on the simulated situations and discussed the possible solutions for the situations. For the assignment, the students showed their competence in applying the content materials in their required homework. All of them had put together comprehensive scripts for their guided walking tours covering most important information. They were able to introduce the spots clearly and used the technique of hospitality language from arrival, familiarization, engagement, taking questions and departure. In the practicum, the students were also able to incorporate the nonverbal techniques into their in-class tasks and assignments. They observed their peers and offered comments on their performance.

### **6.2 Summative evaluation**

The data of summative evaluation were collected from a survey given after the ten-day service. The survey included five close-ended and five open-ended questions. All the sixteen students participated in the survey. The results of the survey were divided into two parts—students' perceptions for the training course and their reflections on their on-site service.



### 6.2.1 The students' perceptions of the training courses

In the five close-ended questions, the students were asked whether they agree that the course meets the demands of their job. In general, the students' evaluations were considerably positive (Table 3): they found the training course appropriate and useful to improve their understanding of the Festival and the city of Kaohsiung. According to their opinion, the materials of the course were especially useful for their work. The hospitality English and the tour guide techniques helped them developing their linguistic and non-verbal skills.

In fact, the students' feedback was asked in order to improve the course, and their critical remarks were quite insightful, as well. For instance, four students mentioned that the three-hour practicum is not enough: having a longer practicum, in which they could learn from fellow students and get a sense of the surrounding areas, would be more effective for preparation. A couple of students also mentioned that the real situations on site did not allow them to fully display their knowledge and skills to the visitors. For example, the firework shows often interrupted the tour. The crowd and noise made the students' explanation difficult to be heard. Therefore, they would like to learn more practical techniques to manage the situation.

**Table 3** The students' perceptions of the training courses

Courses	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree
Principles and Basic Techniques for being an English Tour Guide	12	4	--	--	--
Walking Tour on Kaohsiung Lantern Festival	15	1	--	--	--
Introduction to Kaohsiung Local Culture	10	6	--	--	--
Introduction to Urban Marketing	11	5	--	--	--
Practicum	15	1	--	--	--

### 6.2.2 The students' perceptions of their on-site service

In the five open-ended questions, the students were asked to report their difficult and enjoyable experiences, the difference of their expectations for the job before and after their service, what they would do if they had the opportunity to do it again, and their suggestions for future student

guides. The results were grouped into six categories: language-related difficulties, non-language difficulties, language-related benefits, problems with situation management, cultural learning, and personal growth.

*Language-related difficulties.* Almost every student mentioned certain language difficulties: the most typical problem was the accent of visitors. Since the students were trained with standard American accent, they experienced difficulties in understanding different accents different from this. They also needed more English prompts to encourage conversation with visitors to avoid the tour turning “dry.” Besides, when touching on more critical issues, such as politics and government policies, the students had difficulties in finding accurate vocabulary and expressions to explain their views.

*Non-language-difficulties.* While some students attributed their difficulties in answering politics-related question to their insufficient vocabulary, some others attributed their difficulties to their lack of related knowledge. Furthermore, two students mentioned that they encountered the problem of understanding nonverbal cues. They said they did not know how to react to the visitors’ friendly hugs.

*Language-related benefits.* In spite of the language-related difficulties, the students gained several language-related benefits from their work. Most of them stated that they gained more confidence in using English as they actively looked for opportunities to use the language in the ten-day service. Some of them became more aware of the weakness of their certain language skills: some students reflected that they need to improve their oral skills, while others felt the need of expanding their vocabularies. A couple of students said that they realized the need for learning a second foreign language, which may become useful when they have non-native English guests.

*Problems with situation management.* The students realized that real situations are very different from what they had expected. They found they were constantly interrupted by the crowd and noise during the tour. If the group was large, the students had difficulties in controlling the flow of the group.

*Cultural learning.* Most of the students said that they enjoyed having the opportunity of cultural exchange with visitors from different countries. Not only they learnt new cultural elements from the visitors, but the interactions also reaffirmed their own cultural identities. From the preparation of the tour, the students gained more in-depth knowledge of the city, the Festival and local folklore in general. Their experience created a sense of pride for their own cultural heritage and motivated them to work on its introduction to foreign visitors.

*Personal growth.* Every student reflected on her/his personal growth. Obtaining international connections was the most regularly mentioned point: some students exchanged E-mail addresses with the visitors and continued to correspond with them later on. Expanding world view was the second most regularly mentioned personal advantage, which was the result of that they had opportunity to join the ceremonial cultural activities, held by the City Government, in the company of their foreign guest. Gaining self-confidence in using English was another kind of growth. During the ten days, the students “forced” themselves to speak English with foreign visitors and gained positive feedback. They found themselves “encouraged” to speak English. They also became more independent in the search of tour-related information, the compilation of content materials, and the formation of their own performances. Some of them found they were actually good at being tour guides and wished to explore the possibility of becoming professional guides in the future.

### **6.3 Informal evaluation**

The third mode of evaluation was the informal evaluation, which served the understanding of the various participants’ satisfaction with students’ performance. The participants included visitors, teachers, delegates of the City Government, and university administrators. During the ten-day period, the visitor logs showed that about two hundred and fifty visitors took up the tour service. However, the exact number of the visitors who accepted the service was bigger than the number recorded in the logs, due to the fact that some of the students, dispatched in a hurry, forgot to record their rounds. The students received seventy-two written comments from the visitors; the comments were written on a blank piece of paper and the visitors were encouraged to write any sort of comment.

Most of the visitors gave positive feedbacks. Most of them used “informative,” “helpful,” “useful” and “interesting” to describe the tour. When describing the Festival, they used words such as “impressive,” “fantastic,” “beautiful” and “spectacular.” The students were described as “friendly,” “helpful,” “informative” and “knowledgeable.” More than half of the visitors commented on the students’ English oral skills and the comments were all positive; they were also satisfied with the service, which made some of them feel welcomed in a different culture. Some of the guests used superlatives, such as the tour was a “nice surprise” or an “unexpected gift”. Nevertheless, there were critical remarks, as well: two visitors pointed out that the location was not noticeable, due to the fact that the signboard of the service booth was too small.

The second informal evaluation was from the City Government. After the Festival, the City Government bestowed a certificate of meritorious service to each student and the university. The City Government was greatly satisfied with the students' performance and expressed its intention to continue the project with the university.

Another informal evaluation was the comments from the university teachers and administrators. During and after the Festival, they encouraged students by praising their performance; in fact, they were glad that the students had an opportunity to enhance the image of the university.

#### **6.4 Media exposure**

The fourth mode of evaluation, which helped measuring the publicity of the service and the visibility of the Festival, was media exposure. The students and their service generated two newspaper articles, three reports on Internet media, and coverage from six television stations. The officials of the City Government and the administrators of the university had expressed their satisfaction for the large quantity of the appearance of students in media.

### **7. Conclusions**

This report, applying the theoretical frameworks of content-based instruction and hospitality language, has portrayed the development of an English tour guide project. Based on the outcomes of the evaluation, the following conclusions can be drawn.

The CBI and hospitality language are appropriate models to develop a project of this kind. While CBI provides the framework for needs assessment, materials development, instruction, and evaluation, the hospitality language can be employed to build up the students' linguistic and non-verbal skills.

Task-oriented instructional activities were beneficial. Activities, such as assignments, role-play in class, and on-site practicum, allowed students to simulate real-life situations. The activities also provided opportunities for peer learning. Most of the students developed a sense of readiness after completing the tasks.

Understanding different accents were instrumental for students. Among the language difficulties, the visitors' accents were cited as the major concern by most of the students (with longer training in standard American accent). In line with the fact that scholars tend to accept the importance of the concept of World English (WE), more efforts should be done to familiarize students with the major English accents.

Verbal and non-verbal skills were crucial in guided tours. Judging from the students' reflections, the students found language difficulties, such as understanding different accents, using correct vocabulary to explain ideas, the most challenging tasks. Nevertheless, non-verbal skills were equally important. Situation management, mentioned frequently by the students, weakened the effectiveness of their work. The organizers and students needed to develop techniques to tackle the situations for future projects. The overall perceptions from the participants of the project indicated that the tour guide service was beneficial for every party.

## **8. Recommendations for future projects**

Based on the results of students' evaluations, the following suggestions can be made for organizers of future projects of this kind, include university project developers, governmental agencies, and volunteering students.

### **8.1 Project developers**

Task-oriented activities, role play and practicum should be the major instructional strategies for the content-based training course: practicing these provides opportunity for students to integrate content and real life situations. Special emphasis should be put on situated practicum, which aids students in gaining a practical experience in the surrounding environment. The practicum also provides an opportunity for peer critique and learning. Self-made audio or video recordings as homework should also be applied: this helps students to synthesize the course materials and develop the content of their tours. In addition, the students should be encouraged to read information with regards to local affairs, politics, and governmental policies, in order to keep abreast of current issues.

As to language-related skills, an introduction into the major accents of the world should be included into the course. Providing conversation prompts in English for the students makes the tour more interactive with the visitors.

Although the students were able to practice etiquette in the course of their tours, they seemed to be baffled by the visitors' politeness. The person in charge of the development of the project should discuss intercultural differences of polite behavior.

### **8.2 Governmental agencies**

The walking tour service seemed not to be very visible to both local and foreign visitors in the report. Since the program was commissioned by the government, the event planners from the

governmental agencies should publicize the tour service using various media, such as newspapers, radio, Internet, as well as event brochures, to local and foreign visitors. Therefore, visitors can be aware of the service and use it. In addition, the location of the service booth and the signboard should be large enough to attract visitors' attention. Directional signposts of the tour service at different entrances of the Festival site are recommended, in order to increase the visibility.

### 8.3 Students

The students should extend their local knowledge with regards to local social affairs, politics, and governmental policies, in order to keep abreast of current issues. The foreign visitors in this Festival showed that they were not only interested in the lantern festival but the society as well.

This paper has provided detailed descriptions of the development of an English tour guide project, an ESP project embedded in the theoretical frameworks of content-based instruction and hospitality language. It is hoped that the present paper will contribute to the research of ESP in various contexts and the facilitating of training courses for cultural tourism.

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