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Book Reviews

Foreword

Welcome to the Spring issue 2012 of *The Asian ESP Journal*!

We are very pleased to publish six selected papers that have examined a range of ESP-related topics, ranging from genre variation in research article introductions (Mahmood Reza Atai & Ali Sahraneshin Samani), information structure of master's theses (Tsai-yu Chen & Chih-hua Kuo), lexical analysis of student academic writing (Victor Khachan & Nalha Nola Bacha), New Literacy Studies combined with CoP in the study of undergraduate students' writing (Su-jen Lai & Ming-i Tseng), writing for publication by Chinese science postdoctoral researchers in America (Mimi Li), and a cross-cultural study of the genre of MA thesis acknowledgements (Zhang Jinpei).

A range of methodologies were adopted in the research studies reported in the six papers, including tests, surveys, corpus linguistic, and textual analytical methods.

In addition, two book review reports are published in this volume:

1. Bruce, Ian (2011). *Theory and concepts of English for Academic Purposes*. USA: Palgrave Macmillan, reviewed by Tharwat M. EL-Sakran
2. Basturkmen, H. (2010). *Developing courses in English for Specific Purposes*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, reviewed by Maryam Sherkatolabasi

I hope you will enjoy reading the papers that report on ESP studies conducted in various countries and cities in Asia and recommend the papers to your colleagues and students to further disseminate the findings and enhance the impact of the research studies.

Last but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the professional contribution of our Associate Editors and Academic Editors* whose quality review work has made the current issue possible. I also wish to thank our proof readers for their great work!

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* Details about our Associate Editors, Academic Editors and proof readers can be found on http://www.asian-esp-journal.com/asian-esp-journal-beta/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=90&Itemid=53.

Exploring Genre Variations in Research Article Introductions within a Single Subdiscipline: EOP versus EAP

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Abstract

Following Swales (1990), many scholars have tried to probe the generic structure of different sections of the research article genre, including Research Article Introduction (RAI). Both disciplinary and subdisciplinary variations were found in RAIs. This study aimed at exploring the generic structure of RAIs within one subdiscipline. The corpus is comprised of 40 RAIs published from 2000 to 2007 by native speakers of English. The RAIs were analyzed based on the Create a Research Space (CARS) model. The results indicated that there is no significant difference within this subdiscipline, and thus subdisciplinary variation is probably not a distinctive variable in RAIs in ESP. We

suggest that genre analysis of research articles (RAs) can provide clues to the extent to which the field of study is an "established" or an "emerging" one.

Keywords: Genre analysis, Research article introduction, Subdisciplinary variation, ESP, EAP, EOP

1. Introduction

Research articles are among the most frequently-studied genres in academic discourse, and over the past 20 years various sections of research articles have been analyzed: abstracts (Hyland, 2000; Lores, 2004; Samraj, 2005), results (Thompson, 1993; Brett, 1994; Williams, 1999), discussions (Holmes, 1997; Hopkins and Dudley-Evans, 1988), and RAIs (Swales and Najjar, 1987; Swales, 1981, 1990; Samraj, 2002; Ozturk, 2007).

After Swales' (199) seminal study which proposed a generic template for research articles, two basic avenues of research emerged in genre studies. Many scholars tried to explore other communication events and explore their generic structures (Santos, 2002; Hyland, 2004; Lores, 2004; Kanoksilapatham, 2005; Kwan, 2006; Lim, 2006). Some other scholars attempted to probe the existing templates, especially CARS, to explore possible variations and revise the templates. Factors to which scholars have ascribed discrepancies in the generic structure of research articles include: language of research articles (Giannoni, 2002; Fakhri, 2004; Yakhontova, 2006), linguistic background of the authors (Peacock, 2002; Martin, 2003), disciplines (Holmes, 1997; Samraj, 2002) and subdisciplines (Ozturk, 2007).

To begin with, Holmes (1997) found disciplinary variations in generic structures of research articles across hard sciences and social sciences. Samraj (2002) analyzed RAIs in the two related fields of Wildlife Behavior and Conservative Biology, using Swales' (1990) CARS model and found disciplinary variations between the two fields of science. Samraj (2002) maintains that whereas RAIs in Conservative Biology play a more promotional function and try to "claim centrality" in terms of value in the world of practice, Wildlife Behavior introductions justify the research in terms of the research article value in the world of research. Samraj, then,

ascribes these discrepancies to the "emerging" and "established" nature of these fields.

Along the same line, Ozturk (2007), attempting to address the genre variations and discrepancies within a single discipline, analyzed 20 RAIs from two related subdisciplines of applied linguistics (Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Writing) based on Swales' (1990) CARS model. His analysis indicates that the two subdisciplines employ different and almost unrelated move structures. He, likewise, interprets and justifies the variations in terms of "established" versus "emerging" nature of the fields, stating that Second Language Acquisition is an "established" field and Second Language Writing is an "emerging" one.

The present study was launched to pursue this avenue of research and to explore further probable discrepancies in the generic structures of RAIs based on CARS model. More specifically, attempts were made to expand the scope of the literature on the generic structure of research article introductions by questioning whether or not there are variations between English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) as two branches of a single subdiscipline, English for Specific Purposes (ESP). To this end, two aspects of the genre of RAIs were studied: move-structure (following Swales, 1990) and textual distribution of the moves (following Yakhontova, 2006). Moreover, textual dominance patterns as a significant aspect of textual differences were examined. Accordingly, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Is there any significant difference between the generic structures of RAIs within the
   subdisciplines of ESP (EOP vs. EAP) based on CARS model?
2. Is there any significant difference between the textual distributions of rhetorical moves in the RAIs within the subdiscipline of ESP (EOP vs. EAP)?

2. Method

2.1 The Corpus

The corpus was comprised of 40 RAIs taken from the leading journals of ESP, including *Journal of English for Academic Purpose*, *English for Specific Purposes*, and *Journal of Pragmatics*. Twenty research articles reported on EAP related issues

and another 20 research articles reported on EOP ones. Four criteria guided our selection of the articles. The nature of the research article was taken into account in that only research articles reporting empirical studies were included. The time of publication of the research articles was the second criterion; only research articles published from 2000 to 2007 were selected. The number of the authors writing the article was also considered, and articles were selected from among single-authored ones. Finally, the linguistic background of the authors was controlled, and the corpus was narrowed down to the articles written by native English-speaking authors. These criteria were set because the previous research documented their influential roles in the generic structure of research articles. For instance, Swales (1990) acknowledges that a time factor affects the genre and that genres are dynamic and change over time. Similarly, Peacock (2002) and Martin (2003) found that the linguistic background of authors is a distinctive variable in shaping the generic structure of research articles. Yakhontova (2006), conducing a contrastive generic analysis, concludes that language itself may be a distinctive variable.

The researchers and two members of the discourse community with a history of publications in applied linguistics and genre analysis decided whether a text belonged to EOP or EAP. Although it is greatly acknowledged that the distinction between EAP and EOP is not a clear-cut one, and many times people work and study at the same time, or they use the language they have learned at the university later at workplace (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987), the researchers adhered consistently to an operational definition of EAP and EOP articles: the articles addressing university students' academic English issues or denoting courses at the university were considered EAP articles, while those addressing business issues and referring to workplaces were categorized as EOP ones. The popularity of the journals was assessed through the independent judgment of two discourse analysts. The same scholars decided part or parts of the articles to be considered as an introduction. The lists of research articles in EAP and EOP corpora appear in appendices A and B, respectively.

2.2 Model and Data Analysis

To analyze the corpus, we utilized the CARS model (Swales, 1990). According to the three-move template of introductions, authors initially establish a domain or general topic (establishing a territory), and then they create or find a niche in this domain in a variety of ways (establishing a niche), and, finally, they try to fill that niche to justify their research (Occupying a niche). Figure 1 illustrates the move structure of introductions.

Move 1 Establishing territory
Step 1 Claiming centrality
and/or
Step 2 Making topic generalization(s)
and/or
Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research
Move 2 Establishing a niche
Step 1 A Counter-claiming
or
Step 1 B Indicating a gap
or
Step 1 C Question-raising
or
Step 1 D Continuing a tradition
Move 3 Occupying a niche
Step 1A Outlining purposes
or
Step 1 B Announcing present research
Step 2 Announcing principal finding
Step 3 Indicating RA structure

Figure 1: Swales' CARS model (Swales, 1990)

To enhance reliability of coding, two raters analyzed the corpus, and in cases of mismatch, the matter was discussed to reach a consensus, and as the last resort it was brought up to a third informant for final coding.

3. Results

The first research question in this study addressed the difference in the move structure of EAP and EOP introductions as an important concern of the current literature on RAIs. Table 1 shows the frequency of the moves across the two parts of the subdiscipline.

Table 1: The List of Moves in EAP and EOP Corpora

Introductions	Moves					
	Move 1		Move 2		Move 3	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
EAP	20	100%	17	85%	18	90%
EOP	18	90%	14	70%	20	100%

As Table 1 depicts, both EAP and EOP research articles utilize all of the moves in the CARS model with various frequencies. EAP research article writers tend to use move 1 more frequently than their EOP colleagues, who make use of move 3 most frequently. However, both groups are similar in that they both employ move 2 least frequently.

As for the order of research article introduction moves, the data in Table 2 indicate that the most observed pattern in both corpora is 1-2-3, which is in accordance with the CARS model. Patterns 1-3 and 3-2-1 are more frequent in EOP research articles while EAP research article writers use pattern 1-2-1-3 more frequently. The other patterns of move ordering are either very rare in both corpora or idiosyncratic to one of them.

Table 2: Move Order Patterns in EAP and EOP Corpora

Move Order	EAP		EOP	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1-2-3	5	25%	5	25%
1-3	2	10%	4	20%
1-2-1-3	3	15%	1	5%
3-2-1	0	0%	2	10%
3-1-2-3	1	5%	1	5%
1-2-1-2-3	1	5%	1	5%
1-2-1-2-1-2-3-1-3	1	5%	0	0%
2-1-2-1-2	1	5%	0	0%
1-2-1-2-1-3	1	5%	0	0%
1-2-3-2-3-1-3	1	5%	0	0%
1-2-1-2-1-2-1-2-1-2-1-3	1	5%	0	0%
1-3-1-3	1	5%	0	0%
1-2	1	5%	0	0%
1-3-1-2-1-3	1	5%	0	0%
3-2-3	0	0%	1	5%

3-1-3	0	0%	1	5%
1-3-2-3-1	0	0%	1	5%
2-1-2-1-2-3	0	0%	1	5%
3	0	0%	1	5%
1-2-3-2-1-2-3	0	0%	1	5%
Total	20	100%	20	100%

In order to probe the statistical significance of the differences in move patterns across EAP and EOP, two sets of chi-square tests were run on the data for the frequency and the order patterns of the moves, respectively. The results are summarized in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Chi-square Tests for Frequency of Moves across EAP and EOP RA Introductions

ESP	Move 1		Move 2		Move 3	
	Observed N	Expected N	Observed N	Expected N	Observed N	Expected N
EAP	20	19.0	17	15.5	18	19.0
EOP	18	19.0	14	15.5	20	19.0
Total	38		31		38	

Move 1		Move 2		Move 3	
Chi-Square	0.105	Chi-Square	0.290	Chi-Square	0.105
D.F	1	D.F	1	D.F	1
Significance	0.746	Significance	0.590	Significance	0.746
Min E.F	19.0	Min E.F	15.5	Min E.F	19.0
Cells With E.F < 5	0	Cells With E.F < 5	0	Cells With E.F < 5	0
Critical Chi-Square	3.84	Critical Chi-Square	3.84	Critical Chi-Square	3.84

As Table 3 illustrates, there is no significant difference in the frequencies of moves between the EAP and EOP research article introductions. The observed statistics (i.e. Chi-square values of 0.105, 0.290, 0.105) for moves 1, 2, and 3, respectively, at a probability level of $p \leq 0.05$ with a degree of freedom of 1, are all lower than the critical value of 3.84.

Similarly, regarding order patterns of moves, as Table 4 depicts, no significant difference in the frequency of the move-order-patterns between RAIs in ESP (EAP versus EOP) was found. The observed statistic (i.e. Chi-square value of 0.040) at a probability level of $p \leq 0.05$ with a degree of freedom of 1 is much less than the critical value of 3.84.

Table 4. Chi-square for the Frequency of Move Order Patterns across EAP and EOP

	Observed N	Expected N
EAP	13	12.5
EOP	12	12.5
Total	25	
Chi-Square	0.040	
D.F	1	
Significance	0.841	
Min E.F	12.5	
Cells With E.F < 5	0	
Critical Chi-Square	3.84	

When the above-mentioned statistics are considered, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the move structure of RAIs in the subdiscipline of ESP.

The second research question aimed at exploring the difference in the textual dominance given to each move according to the CARS model. Following Yakhontova (2006), move dominance was operationalized and calculated by dividing the number of the words comprising each move to the number of the words in the whole text. Move dominance percentages for EAP and EOP research article introductions are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. The Percentages of Move Dominance in EAP and EOP Corpora

Introductions	Moves		
	Move 1	Move 2	Move 3
EAP	62.2%	13.3%	24.0%
EOP	54.1%	13.3%	32.1%

As Table 5 shows, in both sets of research article introductions, moves 1 and 3 have higher textual dominance than move 2. However, it should be noted that in the EAP corpus, greater textual dominance is associated with move 1 than in the EOP corpus while in the EOP corpus there is textual dominance of move 3 compared with the EAP corpus. However, in both corpora, on average, move 2 has equal dominance.

Move dominance pattern is a pattern formed according to the textual space given to each move of the CARS model compared with the whole text. In Table 6, patterns formed according to the textual dominance of each move are shown.

Table 6: Move Dominance Patterns across the EAP and EOP Corpora

Move Dominance Order	EAP		EOP	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1-3-2	9	45%	4	20%
1-2-3	3	15%	7	35%
1-3	2	10%	5	25%
3-1-2	2	10%	2	10%
1-2	2	10%	0	0%
2-1-3	1	5%	0	0%
3-1	1	5%	0	0%
3-2	0	0%	1	5%
3	0	0%	1	5%
Total	20	100%	20	100%

As it can be seen in Table 6, the 1-3-2 pattern is the most frequent one in the EAP corpus, while the most frequent one is 1-2-3 in the EOP corpus. In the EAP corpus, move patterns 1-2-3, 1-3, 3-1-2, and 1-2 appear more frequently than other patterns while in the EOP corpus the more dominant move patterns are in descending order of 1-3, 1-3-2, and 3-1-2. Moreover, there are also discrepancies between the two corpus in that patterns 1-2, 2-1-3, and 3-1 were found only in the EAP corpus, and patterns 3-2 and 3 were exclusively found in the EOP corpus.

In order to examine the significance of the differences in textual dominance and frequency of move order patterns, two chi-square tests were run on the data. The results are presented in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7: Chi-square Tests for the Moves' Textual Dominance across the EAP and EOP Corpora

	Move 1		Move 2		Move 3	
	Observed Percent	Expected Percent	Observed Percent	Expected Percent	Observed Percent	Expected Percent
EAP	62	58.0	13	13.0	24	28.0
EOP	54	58.0	13	13.0	32	28.0

Move 1		Move 2		Move 3	
Chi-Square	0.552	Chi-Square	0.000	Chi-Square	1.143
D.F	1	D.F	1	D.F	1
Significance	0.458	Significance	1.000	Significance	0.285
Min E.F	58.0	Min E.F	13.0	Min E.F	28.0
Cells With E.F < 5	0	Cells With E.F < 5	0	Cells With E.F < 5	0
Critical Chi-Square	3.84	Critical Chi-Square	3.84	Critical Chi-Square	3.84

As Table 7 depicts, there is no significant difference in terms of textual dominance of moves in the two corpora. The observed statistics (i.e. Chi-square values of 0.552, 0.000, 1.143) for moves 1, 2, 3 respectively, at a probability level of $p \leq 0.05$. with a degree of freedom of 1, are all less than the critical value of 3.84.

Also, for the move dominance patterns, as depicted in Table 8, it was revealed that the observed Chi-square value of 0.077 at a probability level of $p \leq 0.05$ with a degree of freedom of 1 is much less than the critical value of 3.84. Therefore, again, there is no significant difference between the frequency of move-dominance patterns in RAIs within the subdiscipline of ESP (EOP and EAP).

Table 8: Chi-square for the Frequency of Move Dominance Patterns across the EAP and EOP Corpora

	Observed N	Expected N
EAP	7	6.5
EOP	6	6.5
Total	13	
Chi-Square	0.077	

D.F	1
Significance	0.782
Min E.F	6.5
Cells With E.F < 5	0
Critical Chi-Square	3.84

According to what was mentioned, it could be concluded that there is no significant difference between the textual distributions of rhetorical moves based on the CARS model in RAIs within the subdiscipline of ESP.

All in all, the results demonstrate the point that although there are some differences in terms of generic structures of RAIs and textual distribution of the moves in the subdisciplines of ESP, the differences are not statistically significant.

4. Discussion

This study can be regarded as a follow-up of previous studies (e.g., Holmes, 1997; Samraj, 2002; and Ozturk, 2007) and aimed at probing generic variations in RAIs within a single subdiscipline.

Our data analysis for probing the first research question revealed no significant difference between the generic structures of RAIs within the subdiscipline of ESP (EAP vs. EOP). It should be reiterated that in this study we controlled many variables in order to examine generic variations within one single subdiscipline. Previous studies revealed discrepancies in generic structure of research articles and ascribed variations to the idea that one of the sets of corpora was taken from an emerging field of study and another one from an established field (Hyland, 1999; Samraj, 2002; Ozturk, 2007). In the present study, however, there was no significant difference between the EAP and the EOP corpora in terms of generic structure of RAIs. This may initially bring us to the quick conclusion that both EAP and EOP belong to either established or emergent fields.

Hyland (1999), elaborating on established fields of inquiry, maintains that writers in established fields consider themselves "as inhabiting a relatively discrete and clearly identifiable area of study and their research as proceeding along a well defined path" (p. 352). Therefore, writers in these fields assume that the readers possess some "background" and "procedural expertise," and they do not need to justify their work as much as their counterparts in emerging fields (Hyland, 1999). Moreover, Ozturk (2007)

states that "M1-M2-M3 move structure is commonly employed in hard sciences and established fields" (p. 33).

We argue that the concepts of "established" and "emerging" are two extremes of a continuum rather than all or nothing concepts. A field of inquiry may manifest some aspects of an established field and some features of an emerging one, and that is what we notice in ESP. As our data indicated, most of the RAIs in both corpora had a 1-2-3 move pattern, and therefore it can be concluded that ESP, both EAP and EOP, are closer to the established end of the aforementioned established-emerging continuum. However, since the corpus was taken from the leading journals which are the forums of communication in the ESP discourse community, the writers might have been aware of the well-known CARS model and tended to apply this template in their papers.

However, our analysis of data corresponding to the second research question indicated that research article writers devote more textual dominance to move 1 and the least to move 2, which is in contrast with what Hyland (1999) states about established fields of study, in which research article writers "can presuppose a certain amount of background" (p. 352) on the part of readers. It can be said that, in this regard, ESP manifests some features of emerging fields. In other words, although ESP is now considered an established field of inquiry and has passed its initial phases of development as an emerging field, RA writers still feel they need to justify their research as much as their counterpart colleagues in emerging fields do.

Moreover, previous studies of genre analysis and distribution of moves were mostly of contrastive rhetorical nature and ascribed the differences to the size of the discourse community to which the genre and the subsequent research articles belong (e.g. Yakhontova, 2006). However, in our corpora both the EAP and the EOP research article writers devote almost the same textual space to CARS moves for introductions, which can be due to the international nature of these research articles and the point that they belong to one subdiscipline. In this study, the size of the discourse communities from which the corpora were taken is assumed to be the same.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed at probing variations in generic structure of RAIs in two neighboring branches of a single subdiscipline. The findings revealed that disciplinary variations

found in previous studies may not stretch to their subdisciplines, at least in ESP. Moreover, although ESP manifests some aspects of emerging fields of study, it (both EAP and EOP) is much closer to the established end of the established-emerging continuum.

The findings of the present study may provide clues to the point that unlike disciplinary variation, subdisciplinary variation may not be a distinctive variable, at least in soft subdisciplines like ESP. However, further studies with more representative corpora should verify this conclusion.

The findings provide some insights for EAP practitioners and materials writers in academic writing courses. ESP practitioners in research article writing courses aimed at awareness raising or explicit instruction of generic structures of RAIs according to the CARS framework may not need to be concerned about subdisciplinary variations if their students come from the same subdiscipline. Similarly, although CARS model is a pattern-posing model rather than a pattern-seeking one, it provides a rational template for analyzing, comprehending, and writing RAIs. The findings of this research are applicable in EAP courses for non-native English speaking researchers or graduate students and may contribute to their awareness of the generic structures, textual distribution of moves that mark the discoursal patterns of RAIs in ESP.

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Appendix A: The EAP Corpus

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A Genre-Based Analysis of the Information Structure of Master's Theses in Applied Linguistics

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Abstract

Most genre studies have focused on the prestigious genre of research articles. As Swales (2004) indicates, theses/dissertations are a very different genre from research articles. However, little research has been conducted to analyze complete theses in a specific discipline (e.g. Bitchener, 2010; Thompson, 2001). This study investigates the

information structure of 20 master's theses in applied linguistics using the computer software AntConc. The results show that a majority of the theses still adopt the traditional I-Lr-M-R-D-C structure, which is different from the article-compilation or topic-based structures used by many Ph.D. dissertations (Swales, 2004). Two-thirds of the theses contain pedagogic implications, revealing a special concern of this discipline. Most theses have a separate Literature Review chapter to give an elaborate review of pertinent studies, reflecting the communicative purpose of theses to show familiarity with the research topic/field. The Method chapter shows much variation, though they largely focus on describing methods and procedures in data collection and describing samples. The presentation of Results highlights how the results are obtained as well as report and interpret data in graphics. Discussions and Conclusions in the theses examined contain similar but more elaborate moves and steps than those in research articles. This study clarifies the similarities and differences between master's theses and research articles, and Ph.D. dissertations respectively. It also provides valuable information and authentic materials for EAP pedagogy.

Keywords: English for academic purposes (EAP), theses/dissertations, genre analysis, academic writing

1. Introduction

With the increasing globalization of academic research and communication, there has been growing interest and effort in the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in the past ten years. Research on EAP has focused on the genre of research articles (RAs) since it is the most prominent and widespread genre in the academic discourse community. Most studies on RAs take a genre-analytical approach, analyzing both the macrostructure and microstructure of text exemplars of this genre.

In contrast, a similar genre, theses and dissertations, has received much less attention (Dudley-Evans, 1999; Swales, 1990; 2004). Although there have been quite a number of manuals and guidebooks of thesis/dissertation writing in the market, very few of them are based on empirical research or focus on a specific discipline (Bitchener, 2010; Swales & Feak, 2004). As Swales (2004) indicates, "little was known about this genre from a discoursal point of view, largely because of the daunting length of its exemplars…" (p. 102).

For the majority of graduate students, writing a thesis/dissertation is, however, a challenging writing task that determines, to a large extent, whether they can receive a master's or PhD degree. As Dong (1998) points out, the writing challenge is not only demonstrating knowledge related to the research but also using that knowledge to "argue logically and meaningfully the meaning of the research results" (p. 369).

On the other hand, from the perspective of genre, theses/dissertations have distinctive communicative purposes which are different from those of RAs. For the former, one of the purposes is to convince the graduate committee that the student has completed an independent study, showing both familiarity with knowledge of the specialized field and research skills, and that the completed work, in essence, form, and style, can meet the expectations of the academic community. In addition, theses/dissertations reflect a research learning process, represented by more detailed presentation of propositions in chapters and more elaborate literature review, in contrast to the more concise sections in RAs.

According to Swales (2004), PhD dissertations can have three types of information structure. The traditional ILrMRDC pattern (Introduction- Literature Review- Method- Results- Discussions- Conclusions) is essentially a "blown-up" version of the IMRD structure of research articles. The second is the article-compilation ILr-IMRD-…-C pattern, which has a typical macro-structure of Introduction, Literature Review, recursive IMRD chapter pattern, and Conclusions. The third type is ILrT (theoretical framework) M-Topic-…-C pattern. This "topic-based" thesis typically opens with an introduction and a discussion of theory or framework, followed by a series of chapters with titles based on topics under investigation, and ending with a conclusions chapter. He also indicates that on available evidence, the traditional pattern is much less frequently adopted now than the other two patterns. However, we suspect that master's theses, as the product of a much shorter period of study and research, and probably with a different communicative focus, may show different patterns of information structure. Theses and dissertations can be regarded as two genres with generally similar features but different orientations and scope**.** Dissertations are usually more research-world-oriented and cover a number of topics in a broader scope, while theses often have a strong focus on the real world with a more restricted scope (Swales, 2004).

The earliest study on theses/dissertations is a case study by James (1984) which investigated the writing problems of non-native doctoral students. Later studies were more variable in their research focuses, including information structure (e.g. Bunton, 1998; Dong, 1998; Paltridge, 2002; Ridley, 2000; Thompson, 2001), argument structure (e.g. Shaw, 2000), disciplinary variation (e.g. Parry, 1998), and discoursal features such as citation practice (e.g. Shaw, 1992; Thompson, 1998) and metadiscourse (e.g. Bunton, 1998; 1999).

Most of the studies have concentrated on doctoral dissertations and investigated the information structure of one specific chapter rather than the complete dissertation (e.g. Bunton, 1998; 1999; 2002; 2005; Dong, 1996; 1998; Hocking, 2003; Paltridge, 2002; Ridley, 2000; Swales, 2004; Thompson, 1999; 2001; 2005; Turner, 2003). As Samraj (2008) pointed out, "the master's thesis has not received as much attention as the PhD dissertation" (p. 55).

Therefore, we attempt to empirically examine the information structure of master theses in the field of applied linguistics. The major concern is how the information structure of master theses reflects the communicative purposes of this genre. We also intend to find whether and how the information structure of master theses is similar to or different from that of RAs or PhD dissertations.

2. Research methodology

This study takes a genre-analytical approach to examining the macrostructure of master's theses. Since most previous studies on theses/dissertations investigated only a single chapter or a couple of chapters, we developed a coding scheme of moves and steps for analyzing complete theses. The original coding scheme was based on a number of studies, for instance, Abstract (Lores, 2004), Introduction (Bunton, 2002), Literature review (Kwan, 2006), Method (Lim, 2006), Results, Discussions, and Conclusions (Yang & Allison, 2003). However, we integrated and modified the moves and steps in these studies to make them not only consistent across the chapters but also appropriate for the theses in applied linguistics. Although the whole coding scheme seemed complicated, it was considered that such a coding scheme could better illustrate the relationship between neighboring chapters and differentiate the rhetorical functions of similar moves and steps in different chapters. For example, the move of reporting results in Results and the same

move in Discussions are represented by different codes since they are rhetorically similar but not the same and they include different steps in these two chapters. The coding scheme was then used to analyze a corpus of 20 master theses in applied linguistics. The theses samples were selected from the ProQuest Digital Dissertation database. The keywords, such as *language learning*, *ESL*, *English*, *SLA*, and *academic writing*, were used to elicit theses exemplars for analysis.

The analysis of moves and steps of each chapter in the theses was conducted by four researchers, two university faculty members and two master students, all in the field of applied linguistics. To ensure inter-coder reliability, all four researchers analyzed the same theses samples in the initial stage of the analysis and held weekly meetings to check the codes of moves and steps throughout each thesis. In later stages, after we had finished analyzing the Introduction, the four researchers were grouped into two pairs to speed up the analysis but could still secure high inter-coder reliability.

After the move analysis of each chapter, the computer software AntConc (version 3.2.1w) was used for data analysis. With the help of the Word List function, the basic statistics of the corpus, such as the total running words, average thesis length, and frequency of words were obtained. The frequency and range of each move and step were then derived by performing Concordance, since the identified moves/steps were all tagged on the electronic versions of the theses. This function was also used to retrieve examples of a specific move or step from the corpus. To find common sequence patterns of moves or steps in each chapter, a file of move/step codes in the order in which they occur in the theses was constructed so that move/step sequences of various lengths (such as 3-move/step or 4-move/step sequences) could be produced when we conducted the analysis of Clusters and selected various cluster sizes.

3. Results and discussions

In the following, the results of genre analysis are presented in the order of, first, the whole thesis, then individual chapters, that is, Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review, Method, Results, Discussions, and Conclusions, respectively.

The whole thesis

The corpus of 20 master's theses consists of 374,289 running words, on average 24,953 words in a text. However, the length of the theses varies greatly, ranging from 7,627 to 44,775 words.

Of the 20 theses, 15 are organized in the conventional ILrMRDC pattern (Paltridge, 2002; Swales, 2004), while 3 in the article-compilation pattern (Dong, 1998) and 2 in the topic-based pattern (Bunton, 1998). Further analysis of the 15 ILrMRDC theses showed that rhetorical chapter headings are used in 13 theses, while slight variations, such as "Inquiry strategies" that correspond to a method chapter, are used in 2 theses. The heading of Literature Review is used in 11 of the 15 theses, while the rest have an embedded Literature Review in the chapter of Introduction.

All 15 theses have Introduction, Method, and Results chapters, but the heading of Discussions appears in only 10 theses; in the other theses, discussions are embedded in the Results or the Conclusions chapter.

As indicated by Yang and Allison (2003) on RAs in applied linguistics, pedagogic implication "reflects one of the principal concerns of applied linguistics as a discipline" (p. 373). In this study, it was found that two-thirds of the theses have a section or part of a section discussing pedagogic implications. They often occur in the chapter of Discussions or Conclusions.

Abstract

Abstract is generally considered to be "a description or factual summary of the much longer report, and is meant to give the reader an exact and concise knowledge of the full article" (Bhatia, 1993, p. 78). However, it also has a promotional purpose, persuading the reader that the article is worth reading (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Hyland, 2000).

Analysis of the 15 abstracts of the theses in the corpus showed that all of them have an introduction move (AI), method move (AM), and results move (AR). Conclusions move (AC) seems to be optional, occurring in 8 (53.3%) of the 15 theses, all at the end of the abstracts. All abstracts have a linear structure of AI-AM-AR. In addition, cycling of moves rarely occurs in abstracts. An example of Abstract marked with the AI-AM-AR sequence is shown in the following:

> //AI// Second language acquisition (SLA) research finds that small group (SG) and pair work (PW) are essential tools in language learning, specifically creating … This study examines learner perceptions of participation in SG/PW and the actual character of their participation in creating necessary conditions for SLA. //AM// This study involved 29 adult ESL learners enrolled in a private institute. Using focus group discussions, video-recorded SG/PW activities, and "stimulated recall" (Gass & Mackey, 2000), learner perceptions of SG/PW are identified. In addition, … //AR// Findings show a majority of learners noted communicative breakdown as motivating and … (Example 12)

We also observed that abstracts in the theses lack elaboration on research methodology and/or results, and this might contribute to their short length, on average 164 words. In contrast, PhD dissertations seem to have much longer abstracts, on average 342.8 words, according to Lin & Kuo (2010). The convention of not including citations in the Abstract is largely followed in the dissertations examined since only two abstracts include a couple of citations.

As Hyland (2000) indicates, Abstract is selective representation rather than exact representation. We found that AI in most abstracts focuses on the purpose of the thesis research or the centrality of the research topic. Hyland (2000), commenting on disciplinary variation, explains that **"**in soft knowledge domains, as a result of the absence of well-defined sets of problems**"** (p. 97), writers have to work harder to acquaint readers with the background of their research and to construct its significance rhetorically, and thus greater focus is placed on situating the study. In Swales' term, the move of "Creating a Research Space" seems to be more central than Method in master's thesis. Unless a specific or self-designed research method is adopted, AM in the abstracts tends to describe the research process, especially the participants and data collection. AR is highlighted in most abstracts, containing more than one sentence and informative statements are used to pinpoint research findings. Finally, AC in the abstracts often emphasizes pedagogic implications of the study, reflecting disciplinary distinctiveness.

Introduction

Introduction is the section/chapter that is usually regarded as the most difficult to write in RAs or theses/dissertations. For example, the difficulty of making strong but convincing claims has been a great challenge to not only novice writers but also experienced professionals. Swales' canonical analysis of 48 RA introductions and his CARS model has long been esteemed as a classic in the field of genre analysis, but Bunton's (2002) study of Introduction in doctoral dissertations shows possible differences between the two genres.

In this study, we used a scheme of three sequential moves and one independent move, consisting of 28 steps in total, to analyze the information structure of the Introduction chapter in theses. Similar to Bunton (2002), we found that 4 theses (26.7%) have an Introduction chapter which includes Literature Review, while 11 (73.3%) have separate Introduction and Literature Review chapters. In the latter, the major rhetorical function of citations in the Introduction chapter is to introduce the research field/topic and indicate its centrality rather than review pertinent literature. This should be noted since when we later analyzed the move structures of other chapters, we found that the move of referring to other studies has different rhetorical functions in different chapters. We thus added an independent move of referring to other studies in each chapter.

Similar to Bunton (2002), we identified a greater number of steps than those described in Swales' CARS model. For example, the steps of stating research questions or hypotheses, providing justifications for the present study, and indicating a problem or need in the field (each occurring in five or six theses).

Among all the steps, the step of providing topic generalization/background (ITb) has the highest frequency (42 occurrences), followed by the step of reviewing previous research (ITl, 27 occurrences). In terms of range, these two steps also have the highest percentages, 91% and 73%, respectively. Following these two steps, purpose statements and centrality claims both have a range of 64%. Analysis of move/step sequences showed that ITb is often followed by referring to other studies, either for the purpose of reviewing previous research or providing background information (ILt), that is, ITb-ITl or ITb-ILt. Either pattern tends to have many cycles in a single thesis Introduction. In other words, as writers introduce the thesis topic, they often divide it into several sub-topics and make topic generalizations one by one, with each one followed by a number of citations either

to provide background information of the sub-topic or to review pertinent studies. This suggests that theses usually involve research topics of a larger scope and thesis writers intend to demonstrate their familiarity with the topics by providing great details of relevant studies on each topic. Referring to other studies is also used when writers need to define terms. The step of defining terms is followed by referring to other studies a total of 10 times across 4 theses. This indicates that thesis writers tend to refer to the definitions or explanations of terms proposed by well-known scholars in the field for better acceptance of the definitions. Thus, it should be noted that the move of referring to other studies can perform different rhetorical functions. In total, we have identified four functions in Introduction, namely reviewing previous research, providing background information, providing definitions of terms, and providing support or justification.

Other sequence patterns of steps, as revealed from the Cluster analysis in AntConc, do not occur frequently (with a frequency lower than 5 in 11 theses). However, if we look at only move sequences, not step sequences, the move pattern IT-IN-IO occur in a majority of theses (82%). This suggests that the three moves in Swales' CARS model for research articles, namely, establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche, also hold in theses and follow that order. This similarity can be seen in the following typical example from the corpus:

> //IT// The influence of high-stakes language assessments on the learning environment has received much attention in educational and testing communities during the past two decades. ... //IN// However, most studies to date have focused primarily on the influence of the test, particularly the washback of the test on teachers, whereas few have examined the role of learners and the test context. … //IO// The goal of the current study was to explore washback on learners that may be the result of important contextual factors, such as … (Example 4)

However, writers may organize the steps within these moves in various ways. For example, it was noted that among the ways of establishing a niche, indicating a gap in previous research, and indicating a problem or need for research are frequently used, but no writers use counter-claiming.

Another observation is that although Introduction in all the theses ends with the move of occupying the niche, many steps in this move that were identified in Bunton (2002) do not occur frequently in our thesis exemplars, suggesting that the Introduction chapter in master's theses seems less elaborate than that in PhD dissertations.

Literature Review

Kwan (2006), as reviewed earlier, conducted a very detailed analysis of the Literature Review chapter in doctoral dissertations in applied linguistics. Her study reveals that Literature Review displays an Introduction-Body-Conclusion structure and the Body part is divided into several thematic sections, each of which displays recursive move structures that are similar to the structure of Introduction. In this study we found, similar to Kwan, that almost all theses have an Introductory move (LI) at the beginning of the Literature Review chapter (10 out of the 11 theses which have a Literature Review chapter). A majority also have a concluding move (LC) (8 of 11 theses).

In terms of frequency, two steps, surveying the non-research-related phenomena (LEn) and surveying the research-related phenomena (LEr), enjoy the highest frequencies and a range of 100% in this chapter. Also, LEn-LEr and LEr-LEn are the step pairs occurring most frequently. They occur in many cycles (LEn-LEr-LEn-LEr…) in some of the theses, showing that reviewing the literature demonstrates recursive move structures in terms of themes, as suggested in Kwan (2006), each going from a general discussion of a theme by referring to a number of pertinent studies as a group, using often non-integral citations and focusing on the theme rather than specific studies, to a more elaborate discussion on specific studies, one by one, using integral citations and elaborating on specific parts of them. For example,

> //LEn// Recent research shows, though, that lateralization is completed by the age of five. //LEr// Hawkins (2001) refers to the ability of a child to learn the first language rapidly, effortlessly, without any formal instruction. … //LEn// For many researchers, this is evidence which shows that children acquire the language rapidly by innate mechanisms. … //LEr// Strozer (1994:136) mentions that critical period in language learning extends from age two to… (Example 1)

This study identified a new step in the move of creating a research need (LN), which is not reported in Kwan (2006), that is, the step of concluding a part of Literature Review and/or indicating transition to reviewing a different area (LNt). The LEn-LEr pattern (and its cycles) is often preceded by LNt, and therefore both LNt-LEn-LEr and LNt-LEn-LEr-LEn-LEr have high frequencies (18 instances in 6 theses). Either move/step pattern represents a complete review unit of a given theme; such an elaborate review move is in contrast to a more concise review move in the Introduction section of RAs.

The LEn-LEr-LNs pattern (13 instances in 8 theses) shows that the move pair LEn-LEr is often followed by the step of summarizing the review of a theme (LNs). Again, cycles of the three-step pattern, or cycles of the first two steps followed by a single LNs are possible.

Therefore the move/step sequence patterns, as found in our analysis, suggest that a complete review unit of a theme can be represented as LNt-LEn-LEr(-LEn-LEr…)-LNs. However, only 6 occurrences of the complete pattern were found, probably because other steps may occur between the pair of LEn-LEr and LNs.

Four of the theses in our corpus have the part of Literature Review embedded in the Introduction chapter. Analysis of these four theses showed that all of them display a similar organizational pattern; that is, the Literature Review moves are combined with the Introduction moves. The Introduction move that often occurs before Literature Review moves is establishing a territory (IT), including two steps: providing topic generalizations/background (ITb) and indicating centrality/importance of topic (ITc), while the move of occupying the niche (IO), including a number of steps, often occurs after Literature Review moves/steps. Therefore, it seems that the organizational pattern of the Introduction chapter in these theses is similar to an expanded RA Introduction.

However, the Introduction steps usually do not combine with Literature Review steps to form sequence patterns. In other words, although the part of Literature Review is embedded in the Introduction chapter in these four theses, Literature Review steps constitute their own moves without mixing with the Introduction steps. Generally speaking, the macrostructure shows a pattern of Introduction-Literature Review-Introduction. Since only four theses have a combined Introduction and Literature Review

chapter, further examination of a larger corpus is necessary to confirm this macrostructure.

Method

Method in RAs or in theses has not been well studied in comparison to other sections or chapters, probably as a result of great variations in the research methodology in different disciplines. We modified and added a few steps to Lim's (2006) elaborate scheme to make them more suitable for theses in applied linguistics. For instance, a move of introducing the Method (MI), with two steps – indicating chapter/section structure (MIo) and providing an overview of the study (MIs), was added. Also, a new step, explaining variables and variable measurement (MMv), was added under the move of delineating methods of data analysis.

The findings revealed that two steps, describing methods and steps in data collection (MDp**)** and describing the sample (MDs), occur in all 15 theses. They can be regarded as obligatory steps. Examples of MDp and MDs from the corpus are given below:

> //MDs// The subjects in this study were twenty-four fifth grade students, 13 females and 11 males enrolled … This school is located in a working class inner city neighborhood … (Example 14)

> //MDp// In order to investigate how anonymity influences negative feedback, two conditions were established: … A within-participant design was chosen in both contexts. Participants were assigned to form NS-NNS dyads, participated in … Two pictures were used for data elicitation … (Example 2)

Three other steps, referring to other studies in order to provide support or justifications (MLj), justifying data collection procedure (MDj), and referring to other studies to provide background information (MLt), occur in more than 70% of the theses. They could be regarded as quasi-obligatory steps in Method. In terms of frequency, MDp is also the step that has the highest frequency, with 76 occurrences.

Considering both frequency and range, we may conclude that in the Method chapter, thesis writers in applied linguistics tend to focus on data collection method(s) and procedure as well as the samples (or participants). In addition, they frequently refer to other studies in order to provide background information for the adopted method or to justify why the method is adopted. This is consistent with the results from the analysis of sequence patterns which showed that a number of pairs have high frequencies: MDp-MLt, MDp-MDj, and MDp-MLj. These pairs also occur in a reversed order and in cycles.

However, the frequencies of three-step sequence patterns are generally low, suggesting that there does not seem to exist a fixed way to organize relevant information about research methodology in applied linguistics.

In terms of moves, it can be noted that the move of elucidating data analysis procedure (MP) occurs much less often than the first three moves (i.e. MI, MD, MM). A possible reason may be that in some theses, describing data analysis procedure is combined with results and included in the Results chapter. In contrast, the Method chapter emphasizes data collection method/procedure and data analysis method.

Results

Reporting research findings should be regarded as the most important communicative purpose of either RAs or theses. Therefore, it is essential to examine how this communicative purpose is realized in moves and steps. Previous studies on Results in RAs have indicated that the Results section(s) not only reports results but comments on results as well, and that a cyclic pattern of reporting and commenting may occur (Posteguillo, 1999).

The findings showed that both reporting major findings (RRf) and providing background or indicating how results are presented (RIb) occur in all theses (100%). In addition, interpreting results (RCi, 87%), indicating method or statistical procedures applied (RIm, 80%), and locating graphics (RRg, 80%) also have high percentages in range. In terms of frequency, RRf and RCi have the highest frequencies, followed by RIm, RRg, and RIb. It can be noted that these top five high-frequency steps are also the five steps having high percentages in range. Therefore, we may conclude that, similar to RAs, Results in theses emphasize reporting and commenting on research results, but thesis writers also tend to provide relevant information for the presentation of results.

Analysis of sequence patterns showed that six high-frequency steps, that is, RRf, RCi, RIm, RRg, RIb, and RCc (comparing results with literature), form several high-frequency sequence patterns. First, RRf and RCi occur most frequently (102 instances) and form cycles (RRf-RCi-RRf-RCi…) in 13 theses, revealing that in theses research results are often reported one by one, each followed by adequate interpretation. For example, the following extract from the corpus contains two cycles of RRf-RCi:

> //RRf// Analyzing Figure 4.1 shows that the Taiwanese group of students agreed more on learning vocabulary by … //RCi// These findings revealed that the Taiwanese students were aware of the importance of applying new vocabularies in practice, … //RRf// The written responses also showed similar findings. Only 30% of Taiwanese students showed … //RCi// The Taiwanese students' responses reflected an existing educational problem in … (Example 11)

A second pair is RRg and RRf (45 instances), suggesting that the use of graphics is essential when reporting results in applied linguistics and writers tend to locate graphics and then indicate the major findings as demonstrated in the graphics. The third pair is RIm and RRf (37 instances), indicating the method adopted, followed by the major findings as a result of using the method. Other high-frequency pairs include RIb-RRf (19 instances), RIm-RRg (15 instances), and RIb-RIm (12 instances).

The six high-frequency steps also form a number of meaningful three-step sequence patterns: RIb-RRf-RCi (16 instances), RRg-RRf-RCi (16 instances), RIm-RRf-RCi (12 instances), RRg-RRf-RIm (12 instances), RRf-RCi-RCc (11 instances), RIm-RRf-RRg or RIm-RRg-RRf (10 instances).

If we look more closely at the six high-frequency steps and sequence patterns, we can notice that two of them (RIb and RIm) belong to Move 1 (Introducing the Results chapter), another two (RRf and RRg) belong to Move 2 (Reporting results), and the other two (RCi and RCc) are under Move 3 (Commenting on results). Therefore, the first three moves could be regarded as representing the primary rhetorical functions in the Results chapter. In contrast, it seems Move 4 to Move 6 are optional. This could be due to the

fact that these moves/steps are overlapping with the moves/steps in the Discussions or Conclusions chapters.

Discussions

Discussions is usually regarded as a rhetorically reversed part of Introduction; in other words, it proceeds from the specific findings as reported in Results to a more general view of how the findings can be interpreted and evaluated. This moving from specific to general is often realized by cycles of moves and steps reporting and commenting on research findings (Yang & Allison, 2003). Swales (1990) and Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988) also emphasize the presence of repeated cycles in Discussions. A question we want to clarify in this study is how the rhetorical functions of reporting and commenting on results are differently realized in Results and Discussions chapters in theses.

First, frequency analysis of the moves and steps in the 10 theses which contain Discussions showed that the step of reporting major findings (DRf) and the step of interpreting findings (DCi) have much higher frequencies (96 and 92 instances, respectively) than the other steps (lower than 50). This suggests that these two rhetorical functions are important in Discussions. In terms of range, DRf occurs in each of the theses examined. Thus, it should be considered as an obligatory step. DCi occurs in 9 theses (90%); DCa (accounting for results), DIb (providing background information), DLj (referring to other studies for support or justification), and DSc (making conclusions of results) occur in 8 theses (80%). They, therefore, are quasi-obligatory steps.

Examining only moves, we also observed that the first four moves (i.e., introducing the Discussions chapter, reporting results, summarizing results, and commenting on results) occur more frequently and in more theses than the other moves (i.e. Move 5 to Move 7), which represent the rhetorical functions of summarizing, evaluating and deducing from the study, respectively. In particular, DCi, DCa and DCc (comparing results with literature) often accompany the reporting of major findings (DRf) and they have both high frequency and range. This demonstrates that the communicative purposes of Discussions are not merely to report results but also to summarize results, comment on results, and compare them with other studies in the field.

Analysis of sequence patterns showed that DRf-DCi and DCi-DRf have the highest frequencies, 46 and 28 instances, respectively. Also, they occur in cycles in a

majority of theses (8 of the 10 theses). An alternative step following DRf is DCa, that is, DRf-DCa, with 26 instances, showing that writers sometimes explain and give reasons for the findings. A third high-frequency pair is DCi-DLj, with 17 instances, showing that after interpreting results, writers may refer to other studies to provide support for their interpretation.

Sequence analysis also reveals a number of meaningful three-step sequence patterns: DIb-DRf-DCi (8 instances), DIb-DRf-DCc (6 instances), DRf-DCi-DCc (8 instances), and DRf-DCi-DSc (6 instances). The first two patterns reveal that in Discussions, the writers tend to first restate the research questions or design of the study, then report the major findings, and finally interpret the findings or compare the results with those from other studies; this can be compared to the focus on reporting and interpreting specific results in the Results chapter. For example,

> //DIb// In this final chapter, I seek to reconnect overarching emergent themes from the findings … //DRf// Without exception, all six co-participants expressed the importance of knowing, though … //DCi// However, their reasons for this and the way taboo language figures in their social worlds are as multifarious as the individuals themselves. … (Example 9)

These sequence patterns confirm what we mention earlier, that is, in Discussions, writers usually move from specific to general, discussing and examining research findings in a larger research context.

Conclusions

Conclusions is often short in RAs, particularly in scientific RAs, unless it is combined with Discussions. It is also a section/chapter that has long been neglected in genre studies. However, the communicative purposes of Conclusions need clarification, as Yang and Allison (2003) and Bunton (2005) indicate. Yang and Allison (2003) reveal that Conclusions may have overlapping moves with Discussions; however, it has a more linear structure and different functional weightings on the overlapping moves. In other words, Conclusions concentrates more on highlighting overall results and evaluating the study rather than commenting on specific results. In theses, as there are sometimes

separate Discussions and Conclusions chapters, it is essential that the information structure of Conclusions be examined in relation to the communicative purposes of this chapter so that we can have a better understanding of how to conclude a thesis with appropriate rhetorical highlights.

In this study, only 10 theses have an individual Conclusions chapter. Frequency analysis first revealed that the top three high-frequency steps, summarizing the study briefly (COs, 16 instances), drawing pedagogical implications (CDp, 13 instances), and recommending further research (CDf, 11instances) also have high percentages (80%) in range. However, these three steps do not have frequencies as high as the high-frequency steps in other chapters, suggesting that cycles of steps seldom occur in Conclusions. This confirms Yang and Allison's (2003) finding that Conclusions usually has a linear structure, as illustrated in the following example:

> /COs// Putting together the results of this study, two main conclusions can be made … //CDp// Stemming from the conclusions in the previous section, this study identified three main recommendations that … //CDf// In the process of the data collection and analyses and in interpreting the results, some observations … (Example 5)

Another step, indicating limitations (CVl), has a high percentage (90%) in range but its frequency (9 instances) is not as high as the above-mentioned steps. This is reasonable since writers would mention the limitations of their study only once. Cos (100%) can be regarded as an obligatory step, while the other three can be regarded as quasi-obligatory. In terms of moves, it can be observed that Move 2 to Move 4 (summarizing, evaluating, and deducing from the study) are characteristic of the communicative purposes of Conclusions in theses.

Analysis of sequence patterns revealed that all patterns have low frequencies (5 or less instances), suggesting that there may be no fixed order of presenting the various moves/steps as they do not have clear sequential relationships.

4. Concluding Remarks

As indicated by previous studies (Partridge, 2002; Swales, 2004), because of the problem of accessibility, daunting length of its exemplars, and considerable variation across disciplines, little was known about the genre of theses/dissertations from a discoursal point of view. Based on a genre-based analysis of a corpus of 20 master's theses, this study attempts to clarify the similarities and differences between master theses and research articles, and PhD dissertations respectively in terms of move structures and sequence patterns.

The results of this study show that in terms of schematic structure, a majority of master's theses in applied linguistics still employ the traditional I-Lr-M-R-D-C structure (75%). This percentage is much higher than that in Ridley (2000) (12%), Thompson (2001) (7%), and Paltridge (2002) (40%), whose corpora consist of PhD dissertations from a variety of fields. A possible reason might be that the scope and length of master's theses are not as large and great as PhD dissertations so that master's students tend to organize them in the IMRD structure which is similar to research articles, rather than in the article-compilation or the topic-based structure. However, as apprentices, both master's and doctoral students have to show familiarity with the relevant literature in their fields, and therefore most theses and dissertations contain a more elaborate literature review than research articles, usually with a complete chapter. In terms of disciplinary variations, pedagogic implications, which occur in two-thirds of the exemplars, characterize the theses in applied linguistics.

With respect to the chapters, most of them use rhetorical chapter titles, but Discussions may be combined with Results or Conclusions in the same chapter. What characterize the theses in applied linguistics are pedagogic implications that occur in an individual section or chapter in two-thirds of the theses.

With respect to individual parts/chapters in the theses, the analysis of abstracts reveals that three moves, Introduction, Method, and Results, are obligatory and usually follow a linear order. The structure of Introduction in the theses generally follows Swales' CARS model, but more steps were found under the moves. Nevertheless, a lot of steps identified in Bunton's (2000) study do not occur in our exemplars. This may suggest that Introductions in master theses do not have an information structure as complex as that in Ph.D. dissertations.

The analysis of Literature Review reveals similar results to those in Kwan's (2006) study; that is, there is usually an introductory move and a concluding move, and between them are theme cycles.

In the Method chapter, the moves/steps describing methods, data collection, and samples have high percentages in both frequency and range. However, the frequencies of sequence patterns in this chapter are low, suggesting that research methodology may vary greatly in applied linguistics so that there are no fixed ways to organize the moves and steps. Such variation is in accordance with the information structure of the Method section in research articles (Lim, 2006; Swales, 1990).

The Results chapter usually starts with an explanation of how research results are obtained and presented in this chapter before major research findings are reported, possibly because more detailed results and explanations need to be provided in theses than in research articles (Basturkmen, 2009) so that an overview is required. In terms of sequence patterns, thesis writers tend to accompany the reporting of a finding with explanations before moving on to the reporting of another finding.

The most important moves/steps in Discussions are interpreting results, accounting for results, and comparing results with literature, often following the reporting of major findings. This suggests that the major rhetorical function of Discussions is to comment on results rather than report results. Moreover, discussions can be combined with results or conclusions, hence are often included in the Results or Conclusions chapter.

The Conclusions chapter focuses on summarizing the study, drawing pedagogical implications, and recommending further research. Overall, Discussions and Conclusions in master theses contain similar structural elements to those in research articles and Ph.D. dissertations, but theses and dissertations elaborate on these elements in greater detail than research articles (based on Bunton, 2005; Hopkins & Duddley-Evans, 1988; Yang & Allison, 2003).

The importance of genre knowledge in helping EAP learners to raise their consciousness and master their target genres has been widely acknowledged. With a rapidly increasing number of students enrolled in master degree programs which require the writing of theses in English, we certainly face the need of providing them with a clear picture of what constitutes an acceptable thesis. The fine-grained analysis of the study has identified moves/steps which are field-specific and genre-specific. Pedagogically, we

provide a more complete model of moves and steps for thesis writing in applied linguistics. It is empirical and practical, helping students understand the appropriate schematic structure of theses corresponding to disciplinary communicative purposes. In addition, the move/step sequence patterns identified could be further turned into cognitive writing strategies to raise students' awareness of major and optional moves/steps and a range of options for effectively organizing information in each chapter in the theses. Finally, authentic materials and analyzed examples from the corpus are easily accessible to both thesis teachers and graduate students. They can be incorporated into a theses writing guide to equip students with academic literacy.

With a small corpus, the study provides a preliminary understanding of the generic structure of master's theses. Validation of the findings is needed in future research by utilizing a larger corpus. In addition, since previous studies have revealed disciplinary variations in academic writing produced by graduate students (e.g. Paltridge, 2002; Samraj, 2008), further cross-disciplinary comparative investigations would certainly add to our understanding of this genre.

Research can also be carried out to explore the issues arising from this study. One avenue that is worth investigating is how the rhetorical functions of the move of referring to other studies might vary in each chapter. Another area that deserves more attention for pedagogic and research purposes is to analyze the linguistic features of theses. Identification of the linguistic features and patterns realizing specific moves and steps in the chapters would be pedagogically very helpful to both EAP learners and teachers.

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Appendix : The coding scheme

Chapter	Move	Step	Code
Abstract	Move 1: Introduction (AI)		AI
	Move 2: Method (AM)		AM
	Move 3: Results (AR)		AR
	Move 4: Conclusions (AC)		AC
Introduction	Move 1: Establishing a territory (IT)	Providing topic generalization/background	ITb
		Indicating centrality/importance of topic	ITc
		Defining terms	ITd
		Reviewing previous research	ITl
	Move 2: Establishing a niche (IN)	Indicating gap in previous research	INg
		Question-raising	INq
		Counter-claiming	INc

		Continuing/extending a tradition	INe
		Indicating a problem/need	INn
	Move 3: Occupying the niche (IO)	Indicating purposes/aims/objectives	IOp
		Indicating scope of research	IOc
		Indicating chapter/section structure	IOu
		Indicating theoretical position	IOh
		Announcing research/work carried out	IOw
		Describing parameters of research	IOe
		Stating research questions/hypotheses	IOq
		Defining terms	IOd
		Indicating research method	IOm
		Indicating findings/results	IOr
		Indicating models proposed	IOt
		Indicating applications	IOa
		Indicating value or significance	IOv
		Providing justification	IOj
		Indicating thesis structure	IOo
	Referring to other studies (IL)	Providing background information	ILt
		Providing definition of terms	ILd
		Providing support or justification	ILj
Literature Review (each thematic unit: Moves 1-3)	Introduction (LI)	Indicating organization of the review chapter(s) and justifying the themes (areas) to be reviewed	LI
	Move 1: Establishing one part of the territory of one's own research by (LE)	Surveying the non-research-related phenomena or knowledge claims	LEn
		Claiming centrality	LEc
		Surveying the research-related phenomena	LEr
	Move 2: Creating a research need (in response to Move 1) by (LN)	Counter-claiming (weaknesses and problems)	LNc
		Gap-indicating (paucity or scarcity)	LNg

		Asserting confirmative claims about knowledge or research practices surveyed	LNa
		Asserting the relevancy of the surveyed claims to one's own research	LNr
		Abstracting or synthesizing knowledge claims to establish a theoretical position or a theoretical framework	LNs
		Concluding a part of literature review and/or indicating transition to review of a different area	LNt
	Move 3: Occupying the research niche by announcing (LO)	Indicating research aims, focuses, research questions or hypotheses	LOa
		Indicating theoretical positions/theoretical frameworks	LOt
		Indicating research design/processes	LOd
		Interpreting terminology used in the thesis	LOi
	Conclusion (LC)	Providing a summary of the review of the themes and relating the review to the present study	LC
Method	Move 1: Introducing the Method chapter (MI)	Indicating chapter/section structure	MIo
		Providing an overview of the study	MIs
		Indicating theory/approach	MIt
	Move 2: Describing data collection method and procedure(s) (MD)	Describing the sample (participants, location, time, etc.)	MDs
		Describing methods and steps in data collection	MDp
		Justifying data collection procedure(s)	MDj
	Move 3: Delineating methods of data analysis (MM)	Presenting an overview of the (data analysis) design	MMd
		Explaining specific method(s) of data analysis	MMm

		Explaining variables and variable measurement	MMv
		Justifying the methods of measuring variables or data analysis	MMj
	Move 4: Elucidating data analysis procedure(s) (MP)	Relating(or recounting) data analysis procedure(s)	MPp
		Justifying the data analysis procedure(s)	MPj
		Previewing results	MPr
	Referring to other studies (ML)	Providing background information	MLt
		Providing definition of terms	MLd
		Providing support or justification	MLj
Results	Move 1: Introducing the Results chapter (RI)	Providing background information or how results are presented	RIb
		Indicating methods used or statistical procedure applied	RIm
	Move2: Reporting results (RR)	Locating graphics	RRg
		Reporting major findings	RRf
	Move 3: Commenting on results (RC)	Interpreting results	RCi
		Comparing results with literature	RCc
		Evaluating results (including strengths, limitations, generalizations, etc. of results)	RCv
		Accounting for results (giving reasons)	RCa
	Move 4: Summarizing results (RS)	Making conclusions of results	RSc
	Move 5: Evaluating the study (RV)	Indicating limitations of the study	RVl
		Indicating significance/advantage of the study	RVs
	Move 6: Deductions from the (research) study (RD)	Recommending further research	RDf
		Drawing pedagogic implications	RDp
		Making suggestions	RDs
	Referring to other studies (RL)	Providing background information	RLt

		Providing definition of terms	RLd
		Providing support or justification	RLj
Discussions	Move 1: Introducing the Discussions chapter (DI)	Providing background information (such as purpose, design, research questions/hypotheses, etc.) or how discussions are presented	DIb
	Move 2: Reporting results (DR)	Reporting major findings	DRf
	Move 3: Summarizing results (DS)	Making conclusions of results	DSc
	Move 4: Commenting on results (DC)	Interpreting results	DCi
		Comparing results with literature	DCc
		Accounting for results (giving reasons)	DCa
		Evaluating results (including strengths, limitations, etc. of results)	DCv
	Move 5: Summarizing the study (DO)	Summarizing the study briefly	DOs
	Move 6: Evaluating the study (DV)	Indicating limitations	DVl
		Indicating significance/advantage	DVs
		Evaluating methodology	DVm
	Move 7: Deductions from the (research) study (DD)	Making suggestions	DDs
		Recommending further research	DDf
		Drawing pedagogic implications	DDp
	Reference to other studies (DL)	Providing support or justification	DLj
Conclusions	Move 1: Introducing the Conclusions chapter (CI)	Restating purpose, design, research questions/hypotheses, results, or indicating how conclusions are presented	CIb
	Move 2: Summarizing the study (CO)	Summarizing the study briefly	COs
	Move 3: Evaluating the study (CV)	Indicating significance/advantage	CVs
		Indicating limitations	CVl

	Evaluating methodology	CVm
Move 4: Deductions from the (research) study (CD)	Recommending further research	CDf
	Drawing pedagogic implications	CDp
	Making suggestions	CDs
Referring to other studies (CL)	Providing support or justification	CLj

A Lexical Corpus Based Analysis of L2 Academic Vocabulary: A Case Study

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Abstract

English proficiency tests are devised to assess student readiness for higher academic studies and to maintain institutional standards. Internationally, standardized tests are required by the majority of universities. However, with the increase in in-house English tests as an option in both L1 and L2 environments, the validity of measured parameters (such as writing) becomes an issue of urgent concern. Research has indicated that

investigation of active vocabulary in student writing is one way to address this question. Thus, this study profiles vocabulary in 103 essays (29,077 words) written by L1 Arabic speakers in a 'low' academic English proficiency course, as quantified by an in-house university English entrance exam (EEE) at an English medium university in Lebanon. Lexical vocabulary profiling (LVP) was carried out using Lextutor tools (available at www.lextutor.ca). Although the findings indicate consistent vocabulary use across the studied corpus, active vocabulary levels (K1, K2, and AWL lists) are not on par with the vocabulary profiles set by international standardized admissions tests as predictors of academic success. Recommendations are made to explicitly teach academic vocabulary.

Keywords: in-house English proficiency tests, EFL writing, academic word list, lexical vocabulary profiling, lexical corpus analysis, lexical recycle index

1. Introduction

English proficiency tests are devised to assess student readiness for academic studies and to maintain institutional standards, and thus continuous follow-ups on the validity of tests is important and is a regular feature of standardized tests such as the TOEFL and IELTS. Although standardized international English proficiency tests may dominate internationally, in-house English proficiency tests also have a strong presence at institutions throughout the world. These assessments normally evaluate discrete grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and paragraph or essay writing comparable to the international tests. However, with these in-house exams, their validity, especially for writing, is of concern to the institutions in which they are administered. One way to measure the validity of the writing produced on these tests is through investigating the vocabulary produced by test takers against relevant word lists using lexical profiling. The lexical profiling of available samples of the writing sections of the TOEFL and ILETS has associated cut-off scores with certain levels of vocabulary (Breeze, 2008; Dutton, 2006), which can aid investigation of student writing with in-house exams. Through vocabulary profiling techniques, the relationship between vocabulary level and writing quality can be assessed (Augstin Llach, 2005; Coxhead & Byrd, 2007; Horst & Collins, 2006).

Although validity studies are regularly carried out in international entrance exams, there are very few such studies investigating in-house exams in L2 contexts, and

thus this study evaluates the breadth and depth of active vocabulary produced on an in-house university English proficiency test developed at an English-medium university in Lebanon. Through lexical profiling, this study investigates the extent to which the tests measure vocabulary in writing and their ability to predict an active vocabulary profile of academic success as defined by international standardized tests. Pedagogically, the teaching/learning of vocabulary will be reflected upon in light of the findings in this study.

2. Review of Literature

Research has indicated vocabulary is an important indicator of academic writing proficiency with increased lexical variety and sophistication in the target language assessed as of higher quality (Morris, 2001; Morris & Cobb, 2004; Tschirner, 2007) and that developing vocabulary improves writing skills (Brynildssen, 2000).

In general, L2 written texts compared to those of native speakers are weaker and characterized by redundancy and simpler vocabulary (Bacha, 2002 & 2005; Morris & Cobb, 2004) and considered of minimal proficiency for university academic work (Gilquin, Granger, & Paquot, 2007; Mukattash, 2003; Pool, 2003). In order to help students widen their vocabulary repertoire, some comparative research has examined L2 academic writing texts (used interchangeably with writing or essays in this study) and university academic reading. This has resulted in the production of some vocabulary texts. These texts are helpful to students in preparing for English entrance exams and/or developing their academic vocabulary for more effective academic writing (Praniskas, 1972 and Yorkey, 1981, as cited in Coxhead, 2000). Other similar studies have also investigated the academic vocabulary required for university work (Breeze, 2008; Coxhead & Nation, 2001; Dutton, 2006). Recent studies in corpora in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) pedagogy have focused on analyzing vocabulary in both student and professional texts, predicting academic success, determining student proficiency levels, assessing development and progress, and using the results in materials design for both courses and EFL textbooks (Coxhead & Byrd, 2007; Krishnamurthy & Kosem, 2007). Furthermore, studies in disciplines such as medicine, engineering, anatomy, professional air tourism, and applied linguistics have shown the value of corpus lexical analysis in determining the words in professional texts and thus the vocabulary

necessary for students to write effectively (Chen & Ge, 2007; Wang, Liang, & Ge 2008; Mudrdaya, 2006). In fact, the academic performance of non-native speakers could be obtained along with other text and non-text indicators through assessing the vocabulary in their writing. To highlight some of this research, Lee and Muncie (2006) investigated the effects of intervention of explicit vocabulary strategies and integration of language skills with high school ESL learner use of vocabulary in writing, showing an increase in higher target level vocabulary above the 1,000-2,000 word level, improving the lexical frequency profile of their writing. A few studies on the growth of learner lexicons (Lenko-Szymanska, 2000) have shown the validity of using the lexical frequency profiles to measure vocabulary output and the pedagogical implications of frequency lists and lexical analysis in corpus studies for L2 writing.

In justifying our evaluation of the writing quality through lexical assessment measures, we refer to research that has further indicated word lists such as the Academic Word List (AWL) are of value in assessing the vocabulary level of students' written texts which help determine student proficiency levels and give insights to developing lexical levels and thus facilitate more effective writing (Coxhead, 2000). Coxhead's (2000) AWL has provided researchers and practitioners with an assessment tool that accounts for the type of active vocabulary in students' texts against a criteria of 570 word families (10 sublists) needed for effective writing and thus successful academic study. The General Word List (GWL), the University Word List (UWL), and the Thorndike Word Lists have also provided researchers with the most frequent word levels required for students to understand and write academic texts. Nation (1990) argues that the threshold needed for reading in English depends on learners knowing the first 2,000 most frequent words, but in university settings those words must be augmented with more specific academic language, as supplied by lists such as the AWL. Some researchers quantify the assessment of required vocabulary in writing for different academic levels. Tschirner's (2007) study outlines the threshold levels for different grades in pre-tertiary institutions and the levels of passive vocabulary (i.e., those words that students can recognize and understand in reading texts) and active vocabulary (i.e., those words that students can produce in their writing) indicating that in grades 11 and 12 (almost equivalent to the Remedial course in this study) productive (or active) words are 4,000. Tschirner (2007) further reports on studies in which a minimum estimated vocabulary size needed for

academic purposes is approximately 5,000 words for authentic texts and a range from 5,000 to 10,000 for university textbooks. Nation (2006) argues that at least 97% (8,000-9,000 word families) of the vocabulary of a text needs to be known to gain adequate understanding of the text. Nation (2006) reports that native and non-native learners gain these levels through not only reading a lot but also more efficiently, coupled with learning lists such as the AWL. Tschirner (2007) recommends schools and universities give more direct vocabulary learning even for advanced L2 students since there are significant differences between native speakers in vocabulary development through guessing and retention strategies (Laufer, 2003 in Tschirner, 2007). Cobb & Horst (2001) report that if the first 2,000 words are known (referred to as K1 and K2 hereafter) and the 570 AWL word families, then the learner knows about 90% of the vocabulary they should meet in any academic text and support this by referring the reader to computer text analyses. Nation & Beglar (2007) report that learners need 98% of the vocabulary of written and/or oral texts to comprehend texts unassisted (Hu & Nation, 2000, as cited in Nation & Beglar, 2007). They emphasize that the three reasons for assessing the vocabulary is to determine how close learners are to the minimum requirement, to monitor learner vocabulary development, and to make comparisons of the level and rate of development with that of native speakers. Horst (2005) adds that L2 learners widen their vocabulary through a great deal of extensive reading which can be assessed through frequency profiling. Since the AWL is used as a lexical measure in this study, some additional explanation about it is necessary. There has been some debate concerning the AWL as a valid lexical measure and, therefore, its efficacy for assessing the quality and level of L2 writing (see Hyland & Tse, 2007). Hyland & Tse (2007) contest the existence of an academic vocabulary arguing that specific vocabulary lists for the various disciplines makes more sense, and thus the AWL is inadequate. However, Eldridge (2008) finds value in the AWL, pointing out:

> students are more involved in general academic English in taking the international exams IELTS and TOEFL and the general environment involving instructions and communicating in an academic environment makes acquiring a general academic vocabulary for interdisciplinary communication important. (p. 110)

Eldridge (2008) debates whether students would be better off in acquiring a "universal literacy or multiple literacies depending upon the context" (p.110). Taking the foregoing into account, Eldridge (2008) reports "Coxhead's flawed AWL may continue for a while to be of more practical service than the specialized approach suggested by Hyland and Tse (p.111). Having said all of this, research using the AWL vocabulary profile has indicated the levels of the vocabulary in texts which provide guidelines for university admissions (Breeze, 2008; Dutton, 2006), which in turn give insights into needed vocabulary development in L2 written texts (Coxhead, 2000).

3.1 Aim of Study

Through corpus analysis, this study aims to investigate the extent to which lexical profiling measures vocabulary in writing and their ability to predict an active vocabulary profile of academic success defined by international standardized tests. The teaching/learning of vocabulary is reflected upon in light of the findings in the study. In this way, the study contributes to evaluating active vocabulary as a determiner of writing quality.

3.2 Research Questions

1. Is the writing of students with EEE 500-549 an acceptable English proficiency threshold required for university study? In other words, is the entry writing proficiency of the in-house entrance exam on par with those of the international standardized tests of the TOEFL, SAT, and IELTS?
2. Is active vocabulary a determining factor in overall writing assessment? In other words, to what extent does the vocabulary, as operationalized by the AWL (Coxhead, 2000), compare to that of the international standardized essay tests of the TOEFL and IELTS?

4. Method

4.1 Student background

Although Lebanese English-medium universities accept international standardized English proficiency tests, the number of students opting for such international tests remains restricted to overseas students. At the time of the study, the local population of

students was channeled mostly via the in-house English proficiency test which, to a great extent, resembles the paper-based TOEFL (discrete item assessment of grammar, reading/comprehension, and essay writing). Students were admitted and placed in the EFL courses based on cut-off scores. To our knowledge, it was run by experts and was the sole responsibility of the University Testing Office. The EFL Program was not involved in writing, administration, or correction of the exam.

The feeder schools to the university are of two types: private and public. Private schools are mainly sponsored by the French or Americans, with French as the medium of instruction in the former and English in the latter. Students are referred to as either French or English educated. The other feeder schools are public governmental schools in which French is the language of instruction. Most students are L1 Arabic speakers. According to statistics from the Lebanese Ministry of Education (2009), 62.5% of all Lebanese schools offered French as a second language in the school year in 1999-2000, which decreased to 55.8% in 2005-2006, and schools in which English was offered increased from 19.7% to 21.6%. It is clear universities need to address the issue of valid English entrance exams as more students opt to enter English medium universities.

4.2 Data Collection

The present study was carried out as a diagnostic essay test given in the first week of classes to students who were enrolled in the first English course, ENG009, a remedial non-credit English course with a three-credit teaching load. It was not possible to obtain the writing from the in-house entrance exam (used interchangeably with EEE hereafter), but these essays approximated those of the writing section on the in-house entrance exam (see below for a description). In this context, it was a purposeful sample in that all the students registered in the course took part. Participant ages were between 17-18 with Arabic as their first language and French and/or English their second. Students were enrolled in different disciplines at the university taking four courses in addition to remedial English.

To approximate the EEE testing environment, students were briefed on the seriousness and importance of the diagnostic writing activity for teachers to pinpoint students' individual weaknesses so they could assign bridging tasks/activities. In this context, the data-collection framework approximates the testing environment of the

writing component of an EEE writing test. To ensure time proximity and similar writing performance, it was important to limit the time between EEE results and data collection. Similar to the EEE writing environment, the diagnostic test/essay used in this study was given in a 45-minute sitting without external help (such as dictionaries); and students were assigned a typical EEE topic which dealt with *parents and teenagers* where students could draw upon their own experiences in answering.

The academic writing corpus collected for this study comprised the essay writing of 103 first-year university students. In terms of English proficiency, students admitted had to secure a minimum EEE score of 500. Students with EEE scores between 500-549 points (or SAT writing section 380 points, internet-based TOEFL (iBT) 80-90 points, or IELTS 6.5 points) were automatically channeled into ENG009 and those with EEE scores between 550-599 (iBT 91-100) were exempted from English 009 and admitted into a higher course.

4.3 Procedure

The 103 diagnostic essays were all photocopied and transcribed; the typists ensured the correction of spelling mistakes, except those denoting grammatical errors, as required for digital analysis of the vocabulary. Essays were compiled into individual files according to five course sections. Finally, the five sections were combined to create this study's ENG009 Learner Corpus (see Table 1), a mini-corpus topic-based mini corpus of student writing (similar to that of Schmitt & Schmitt, 2007).

The text files were individually uploaded to the Web Vocabulary Profiler (Web VP, version 1.5 also known as VocabProfile) as part of the Compleat Lexical Tutor, available at www.lextutor.ca (Cobb, 1999-2009). Data analysis was carried out on three Lextutor fronts: 1) Text LexCompare, 2) VocabProfile and 3) British National Corpus (BNC) as a reference corpus.

The upload process resulted in the following output findings, representing the 5 ENG009 sections and the ENG009 Learner Corpus (the 5 sections' sub-corpora combined).

5. Data analysis and discussion

Table 1 indicates the average length of each of the produced essays corresponds with EEE requirements as per EEE writing instructions: a minimum of 1½ handwritten pages (averaging 250-300 words).

Table 1. ENG009 Learner Corpus: Participants, corpus size, and average essay length

	No. of Subjects	**Words/Sub-corpus**	**Words/subject**
Sub-corpus 1	15	4116	274.4
Sub-corpus 2	22	5716	259.81
Sub-corpus 3	25	8033	321.32
Sub-corpus 4	21	4788	228
Sub corpus 5	20	6419	320.95

Although these averaged essay length figures do not necessarily mirror the actual length of individual essays, this approximation confirms, to a great extent, the nature of the ENG009 Learner Corpus compiled for this study. In addition, the average essay length is in line with most of the studies that have employed VocabProfile in the past (see Dutton, 2006; Horst & Collins, 2006; Laufer & Nation, 1995).

Lexical recycling/repetition

In general, lexical recycling/repetition through text comparison is devised to calculate the range of repeated words (and unrepeated/new) across a variety of texts. From a practical learning perspective, text comparison programs such as TextLexCompare (available at www.lextutor.ca/text_lex_compare) are engineered to trace vocabulary learning/acquisition opportunities from one text to another. By calculating the recycle index, or the number of recycled words divided by total words in the new text, TextLexCompare highlights lexical prominence between an old and new text, and thus determining learning possibilities/opportunities based on the frequency of encountered words.

However, in this study, lexical recycling was used as a tool to measure similarity among the 5 sub-corpora; the higher the similarity rate (repetition/recycling), the closer vocabulary proximity/choice is across all sub-corpora. That is, a high rate of repeated/recycled words from one sub-corpus to another is a direct indication that

ENG009 students have similar productive/active vocabulary thresholds. As shown in Table 2, lexical recycling varies from 93.67% to 95.06% across all sub-corpora. The lowest recycling rate shows 93.67% of the words in sub-corpus 3 are repeated in sub-corpora 1, 2, 4, and 5. On the other hand, sub-corpus 2 has the highest rate of repeated words (95.06%) in comparison with the remaining 4 sub-corpora.

Table 2. ENG009 Learner Corpus: participants, corpus size and average essay length

	No. of Subjects	**Words/Sub-corpus**	**Words/subject**
Sub-corpus 1	15	4116	274.4
Sub-corpus 2	22	5716	259.81
Sub-corpus 3	25	8033	321.32
Sub-corpus 4	21	4788	228
Sub-corpus 5	20	6419	320.95

Considering Cobb's (2007) first indication that a rate of 70% vocabulary repetition/recycling can be associated with "related or sequential texts by the same author" (p. 48). The high recycle index rates across the ENG009 Learner Corpus are an indication of writing consistency and empirical support favoring the EEE cut-off scores (500-549), but not necessarily a key point in validating those scores against international standardized English proficiency tests. Recycle indices found across the 5 sub-corpora indicate fresh ENG009 students/EEE 500-549 performers have similar pools of vocabulary.

Yet questions remain as to whether standardized international tests would evaluate the EEE 500-549 students as the lowest acceptable English proficiency threshold required for university study and whether active vocabulary represents a determining factor in overall writing assessment. To put these questions into perspective, EEE 500-549 scores must be looked at vis-à-vis matching TOEFL iBT and IELTS scores recognized at the university. The EEE 500-549 equivalent TOEFL (iBT), IELTS and SAT are 80-90 points, 6.5 points and 380 points (writing section), respectively. IELTS 6.5 performance band, corresponding to the lowest acceptable EEE performance (500-549), is defined by the Common European Framework (2001) as "an advanced level of competence suitable for more complex work and study tasks" (Council of Europe, 2001,

p. 2, quoted in Shaw & Weir, 2007, p.159). The problem, then, is not a matter of consistency with the IELTS cut-off score band, but is rather related to the IELTS assessment criteria, mainly those surrounding vocabulary distribution. In his lexical investigation of IELTS speaking tests, Read (2005) reports on performance bands 4-8. The size of Read's corpus, mainly band 6 (18,493 words) and band 7 (21,865 words), the closest to EEE 500-549, is within proximity to this study's ENG009 learner corpus.

Read (2005) concludes that vocabulary sophistication and frequency are associated with band performance, band 8 being the most sophisticated whereas band 4 the least. Applying Read's findings to the present study, it is found that band 4, which is 2.5 performance points lower than the university in this study's English proficiency admission requirement, is much more sophisticated than that of the average performance in the ENG009 corpus (see Tables 3 and 4).

To conclude, the recycle index results in this paper demonstrate international standardized test findings and expectations are drastically more demanding than those found in the EEE.

Table 3: ENG009 Learner Corpus: participants, corpus size and average essay length

	No. of Subjects	**Words/Sub-corpus**	**Words/subject**
Sub-corpus 1	15	4116	274.4
Sub-corpus 2	22	5716	259.81
Sub-corpus 3	25	8033	321.32
Sub-corpus 4	21	4788	228
Sub-corpus 5	20	6419	320.95
ENG009 Learner Corpus	103	29077	282.3

Table 4: ENG009 Sub-corpora TextLexCompare Output

Old files	**New file**	**Tokens Recycle Index**
Sub-corpora 2-5	Sub-corpus 1	94.57 %
Sub-corpora 1, 3, 4 & 5	Sub-corpus 2	95.06%
Sub-corpora 1, 2, 4 & 5	Sub-corpus 3	93.67%
Sub-corpora 1, 2, 3 & 5	Sub-corpus 4	95.04 %

Sub-corpora 1-4 & 5	Sub-corpus 5	94.76%

K1 vocabulary distribution

In light of Coxhead's (2000) vocabulary distribution (Table 5) and Nation's (2001) analysis of the Brown corpus (Table 6), Table 3 reveals that the K1 percentile distribution across all ENG009 sub-corpora is higher than expected (percentages varied from 80.68% to 82.68%). The study's corpus vocabulary profiling reveals a consistently high dependency of ENG009 students on the first 1000 most frequent words in English.

Table 5. Coxhead's (2000) percent distribution of vocabulary in academic texts

Sub-corpus	**AWL**	**1st 1000 words (GSL)**	**2nd 1000 words (GSL)**	**Total**
Arts	9.3	73	4.4	86.7
Commerce	12	71.6	5.2	88.8
Law	9.4	75	4.1	88.5
Science	9.1	65.7	5	79.8

Table 6. Percent of the most frequent word families in an average text as revealed in the Brown corpus (taken from Nation, 2001)

Word Families	**Percent (%) of Words in Average Text**
10	23.7
1000 1000	72
2000	79.7
3000	84
4000	86.7
5000	88.6
6000	89.9

K1 vocabulary allocations in Coxhead's (2000) analysis varied according to the type of academic sub-corpus. K1 distribution in Coxhead's arts sub-corpus, the closest to the present study, accounts for 73% of the texts (see Table 5). However, in the context of the British National Corpus (BNC) as a reference corpus, ENG009 Learner Corpus K1

vocabulary distribution is quite noticeable. The ENG009 corpus average distribution shows a high 88.86% whereas figures for sub-corpora 1 to 5 are 89.48%, 89.22%, 88.94%, 87.10% and 89.36%, respectively (see Table 7).

Table 7. ENG009 Learner Corpus VocabProfile Output Based on BNC as a Reference Corpus

BNC	**ENG009 Corpus %**	**Sub-corpus 1**	**Sub-corpus 2**	**Sub-corpus 3**	**Sub-corpus 4**	**Sub-corpus 5**
K1	88.86	89.48	89.22	88.94	87.10	89.36
K2	5.16	4.65	4.71	5.07	6.46	5.04
K1-K2	*94.02*	*93.13*	*93.93*	*94.01*	*93.56*	*94.4*
K3	3.86	3.52	4.28	3.48	4.47	3.71
K1-K3	*97.88*	*96.65*	*98.21*	*97.49*	*98.04*	*98.11*
K4	0.83	1.12	0.61	0.85	0.83	0.82

When learner performance on the international standardized IELTS and in light of the context of Nation's (2001) K1 vocabulary distribution of the Brown corpus (Table 6) was considered, the ENG009 corpus K1 vocabulary distribution findings remain inflated (Table 7). The learner corpus has a frequency average of 82.21% with a consistent range of 80.68% to 82.68%; whereas in the IELTS writing sample vocabulary, frequencies in bands 6 and 7 (6.5 being equivalent to the EEE 500 cut off score for university entrance) indicate 59.5% and 54.6% respectively (Read, 2005, p.14). This indicates that the learner corpus contains an inflated percentage of high frequency words, when compared to the IELTS writing sample (Read, 2005).

K2 vocabulary distribution

The VocabProfile output in Table 3 shows K2 distributions of 6.16% to 6.75% across all sub-corpora, figures close to the K2 vocabulary distribution in the Brown corpus of 7.7% (Nation, 2001; see Tables 3 and 6). Additionally, analysis of the ENG009 corpus and individual sub-corpora against the British National Corpus (BNC) reveals K2 distribution close to Coxhead's K2. Table 7 shows the BNC K2 distribution for the ENG009 corpus is 5.16% whereas sub-corpora 1 to 5 vary from 4.65% to 6.46%, percentages that are

comparable with Coxhead's academic corpus (4.4%, 5.2%, 4.1% and 5%) in arts, commerce, law, and science respectively (see Table 5).

Nevertheless, when the IELTS cut-off score of 6.5 (equivalent to the EEE500-549) as a university entrance requirement is considered, the learner essays then become poor by comparison as the IELTS emphasizes a K2 frequency of 14.9% to 15.1% (Read, 2005) which the learner texts do not exhibit.

To conclude these sections, the ENG009 corpus indicates a high vocabulary frequency distribution of 94.02% with a range of 93.13% to 94.4%, much higher than Coxhead's (2000) highest K1-K2 vocabulary distribution of 79.1%. It is expected that the lower the K1-K2 frequency, the more academic the text is (Dutton, 2006). The ENG009 corpus thus indicates less sophisticated vocabulary and a higher frequency of more common words (Read, 2005), reaffirmed when compared to the IELTS band 6 K1-K2 word frequency average of 74.4% (Read, 2005).

Academic vocabulary distribution

Table 3 indicates the active use of academic vocabulary, as defined by Coxhead's (2000) AWL list, is minimal and below academic writing requirements or expectations. Academic texts on average, according to Coxhead (2000), manifest an AWL distribution of 10%. Except for sub-corpus 4, AWL distribution in this study does not cross the boundary of 3.82%, about three times below the academic vocabulary ceiling set by Coxhead (2000) and Read (2005). However, when this low rate distribution is considered in light of the AWL 10 sublists (i.e., 570 word families), ENG009 Learner Corpus pinpoints an academic vocabulary across the 10 sublists (see Table 8).

Table 8. Presence of academic vocabulary in ENG009 Learner Corpus across Coxhead's (2000) AWL sublists

AWL Sublists	**Presence of AWL families in ENG009 corpus (out of 570 families)**
Sublist 1	Analyse approach assume authority available benefit concept consist create derive economy environment factor finance identify income individual involve issue major method occur percent period principle proceed process require research respond role section sector significant similar source specific theory (**38 families of 60**) **[63.3%]**

Sublist 2	achieve affect appropriate aspect category community compute conclude consequent culture design final focus impact injure normal obtain positive previous primary range regulate restrict secure seek site text tradition transfer (**29 families out of 60**) **[48.3%]**
Sublist 3	circumstance constant contribute corporate emphasis illustrate imply instance interact negate outcome physical react sex shift sufficient technology (**17 families out of 60**) **[28.3%]**
Sublist 4	Access adequate apparent attitude attribute commit communicate concentrate contrast cycle goal impose integrate job label mechanism obvious phase predict principal project resolve statistic stress sum (**25 families out of 60**) **[41.6%]**
Sublist 5	academy aware capacity challenge conflict contact draft energy evolve expose facilitate generate generation image licence medical mental network psychology reject stable style trend whereas **(24 out of 60**) **[40%]**
Sublist 6	acknowledge attach bond brief capable discriminate diverse furthermore ignorant intelligence minimum neutral nevertheless precede reveal transform transport **(17 families out of 60) [28.3%]**
Sublist 7	adapt adult comprehensive confirm convert couple decade definite globe grade ideology innovate isolate media mode phenomenon prohibit reverse somewhat survive topic transmit ultimate visible (**24 families out of 60**) **[40%]**
Sublist 8	contradict deviate drama eventual exhibit highlight induce intense manipulate plus radical random tense (**13 families out of 60**) **[22.3%]**
Sublist 9	diminish duration ethic mature military mutual norm relax revolution vision (**10 families out of 60) [16.6%]**
Sublist 10	collapse convince persist whereby (**4 families out of 30) [13.3%]**

Coxhead (2000) highlights the prominence of her 10 sublists, associating sublist 1 (the most frequent 60 words) with 3.6% coverage of the words in an academic text. Academic vocabulary distribution in sublists 2 (2nd most frequent), 3 (3rd most frequent) and 4 (4th most frequent) cover 1.8% , 1.2%, and 0.9%, respectively. As table 9 indicates, a mastery of AWL sublists 1-4, according to Coxhead (2000), ensures the coverage of 7.5% of the 10 % available in academic texts. The ENG009 corpus indicates sublist 1 coverage of 63.3% whereas the coverage of sublists 2, 3, and 4 is distributed as 48.3%, 28.3% and 41.6% respectively.

Table 9. Coxhead's (2000) distribution of academic vocabulary across AWL sublists

Sublist	**Items**	**Coverage of Academic Corpus (%)**	**Cumulative Average (%)**
1	60	***3.6***	3.6
2	60	***1.8***	5.4
3	60	***1.2***	6.6
4	60	***0.9***	***7.5***
5	60	0.8	8.3
6	60	0.6	8.9
7	60	0.5	9.4
8	60	0.3	9.7
9	60	0.2	9.9
10	30	0.1	10

The average 3.8% AWL in the ENG009 corpus and the consistent range from 3.52% to 4.47% across the five sub-corpora based on the Brown corpus indicate a very low frequency of academic words in the texts when compared to Coxhead's (2000) target of 10% and even to Nation's (1990) lower target of 8%. When compared to Read's (2005) study, the IELTS bands 6 and 7 are 10% and 9.4% respectively, with the TWE corpus at the 9.49% academic word frequency level (Breeze, 2008) and the learner's corpus in Dutton's (2006) study 7.17%. Table 9 indicates that when the ten sublists of the AWL were examined in the ENG009 corpus, 201 families out of the 570 are present in the corpus as a whole, which shows an adequate representation of the different types of words in the AWL. The implication is that teachers should draw on the words in the AWL and explicitly teach the words and not expect students to pick them up through context or their own reading. Coxhead (2000) states:

> Even though Sublists 5-10 add little to the overall coverage of the AWL, they are worth including, as these less frequent items occur in a wide range of texts and are unlikely to be acquired incidentally through reading (p.228).

These results have strong implications for teaching and learning academic vocabulary in students' first years of study, a call to action endorsed by Breeze (2008) and Coxhead & Byrd (2007).

6. Implications and recommendations for future research

This study investigated the frequency of vocabulary in L1 Arabic students' writing in an in-house English entrance exam. Specifically, the study investigated to what extent the in-house exam compared to the international tests as measured through vocabulary profiling and whether it was on par with those tests. On both accounts, the main results indicate the academic vocabulary in the in-house entrance writing exam is not as challenging as the international writing exams, indicating lower writing quality. However, only individual words were examined, not the words in context or cohesion and coherence, a limitation of the study. Qualitative analysis of the students' writing is needed to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the lexis in the students' texts. Furthermore, the essay exams of the in-house test and those of the international exams were written on different topics and had different populations and numbers which may influence the results. However, since the aim of the study was to investigate the general quality of the writing according to a general AWL and not specific lexical items per se, this comparative study design was considered satisfactory.

The results have implications for explicit teaching and learning of academic vocabulary in the students' first year of study at the university. In fact, through corpus studies such as the present one, much can be learned from students' academic writing (see Coxhead, 2010). Brynildssen (2000) reports vocabulary development should be part of teaching and learning in classrooms, as words form the basis of any writing. Based on the results in this study and research in the field, some recommendations are made below for vocabulary teaching and learning in the remedial academic English classes at the university:

- Selecting interesting readings from various sources rich with vocabulary
- Involving students in group vocabulary activities
- Keeping journals in which students use the new vocabulary
- Having a class newsletter in which different types of writing are included

- Giving time for writing assignments in and out of class
- Conferencing with teachers
- Assessing the level of student vocabulary, and thus writing proficiency, through computer-based tools such as VocabProfile

Although this study focuses on one remedial course, it confirms the value of the AWL in L2 writing research. Additionally, we believe a new research culture has been established in the EFL Program in this study which should be expanded. Since words are the building blocks of texts, it is these blocks we need to increase, relevant to students' studies. Future research is needed to investigate any lexical development over time and the extent of the development after explicit program instruction has been given. A comparison, in addition, with the level of vocabulary in the required textbooks would raise awareness of the specific vocabulary students need. The findings of the present study imply institutions of higher education must be aware that developing and administering in-house English proficiency exams may eventually benefit many universities, for such exams can be tailored to the needs and expectations of the teaching body. In practice, however, the legacy of in-house English proficiency exams has proven otherwise and often the validity of these exams is questionable. The development of an English proficiency exam requires an academic think-tank, with high priority given to the academic constituencies and experts in testing and evaluation. The role of the English teaching body, on the other hand, must be a complementary one, assisting in the realization of a language culture that develops teaching and learning strategies to link pre-university language proficiency to post-university market demands. All in all, once a university decides to develop and administer in-house English proficiency exams, it becomes that university's responsibility to continuously validate this tool, and here we offer one means of accomplishing such validation.

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Researching EFL Literacy Learning as Social Practices: Moving from Participation to Design in Communities of Practice

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Biodata

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Abstract

This paper explores some aspects of the relations between EFL literacy learning and the social situations in which it occurs. The paper aims to illustrate the theoretical concepts central to the New Literacy Studies (NLS) and Communities of Practice (CoP), and apply them in the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This attempt marks an important shift of paradigm in ESL/EFL writing: from the narrow focus on linguistic strategies of

composing a written text to a contextualized social practice perspective of writing. The specific examples of six undergraduate students who majored in English at a university in Taiwan are used to show the importance of juxtaposing the theoretical concepts in the NLS and CoP and considering EFL literacy learning as socially situated practice. Finally, this paper suggests that EFL teachers should consider adopting a learning-centered, reflective approach to teaching, which will enable the teachers to adapt their teaching materials and modify classroom activities to suit learners' needs and interests, and meanwhile enable the students to become critically aware of their learning as well as language use. In our view, such a pedagogic approach may, in the long run, help improve the quality of student learning in and out of ESL/EFL classrooms.

Keywords: CoP (Communities of Practice), EFL literacy learning, NLS (New Literacy Studies), pedagogy, ESP (English for Specific Purposes)

1. Introduction

This paper, which explores some aspects of the relations between EFL literacy learning and the social situations in which it occurs, aims to illustrate the theoretical concepts central to the New Literacy Studies (NLS) and Communities of Practice (CoP), and apply them in the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The notions of *practices*, *events*, *domains* and *networks*, which are the key concepts often utilized in the NLS (Barton, 1991, 2007; Barton & Hamilton, 1998, 2000; Barton & Padmore, 1991; Baynham, 1995; Heath, 1983, Heath & Street, 2008; Street, 1984, 1994), and those of reification and participation, as well as identity-in-practice, which are the key ideas of learning in CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), are discussed and applied in the field of ESP.

ESP is a broad umbrella term with two main categories: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). Various academic disciplines fall under EAP, such as Medicine, Business, Science and Technology, Law, and so on. Likewise, EOP can be subdivided into English for Professional Purposes (EPP) and English for Vocational Purposes (EVP). EAP is itself an umbrella term which covers English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). The former is designed to cover nearly all aspects of EAP, "incorporating a formal, academic style, with proficiency in the language use" (Jordan, 1997, p.5); the latter is geared to meet the specific needs of students from one particular

department or academic discipline; for example, "medicine is listed under English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) … For students studying to be doctors, a book and cassettes have been prepared, under ESAP, to give practice in reading textbooks, listening to lectures and so on" (ibid., p.4).

This paper is concerned with English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP), whereby the research participants were selected from a group of EFL undergraduate students who majored in English and undertook an English Writing course as a compulsory subject at a university in Taiwan. We examine the examples of six students participating in our research project which serve as case studies to demonstrate the importance of connecting the notion of the social and cultural nature of literacy as espoused in the NLS research with the theory of CoP, and regarding EFL literacy learning as socially situated practices. Different from the traditional focus of ESL/EFL writing on the textual or discourse analysis of written texts, this paper is significant for its attempt to take a contextualized social practice perspective. Such a perspective powerfully conceptualizes the link between EFL literacy practices and learning in different domains of life in which they are embedded and which they help shape. We thus argue that taking this perspective is crucial to better understand the social practices which are central to EFL literacy teaching and learning, and in turn to contribute to a socially-situated, reflective approach to ESP/EAP curriculum design.

2. Theoretical Concepts

The motive of integrating the notion of literacy as social practice (NLS) with the theory of situated learning (CoP) is originated from our observations as EFL teachers in Taiwan, noticing that EFL learners refer to relevant experiences from daily life in their English learning. It coincides with the recent trend of second language (L2) teaching and learning, which has moved from dealing with cognitive processes to bringing together cognitive processes with social interaction (see e.g. Candlin & Mercer, 2001; Lantolf & Appel, 1999; Skehan, 1998). The alternative of just focusing on cognitive processes and language development would not have been as revealing. Despite the increasing amount of research literature on L2 teaching and learning in social contexts, the subjects in the previous studies have scarcely been EFL learners studying at university level in Asian countries and more specifically in Taiwan. Given that "[l]iteracy is embedded in

institutional contexts which shape the practices and social meanings attached to reading and writing" (Barton, 1997, p.46), and that "discourse conventions for particular types of writing are shaped by dominant views of the nature of knowledge and the assumed relations between readers and writers of this type of discourse" (Clark & Ivanič, 1991, pp.169-70), we would assume that Taiwanese EFL undergraduate students would have a number of engagements with diverse socio-political realities of their everyday lives and target situations.

Importantly, the teaching of ESP should not merely focus on lexis and syntax of a particular field, as Hutchinson & Waters put it, "ESP is primarily an educational, rather than a linguistic, concern" (1984, p.111; their emphasis). Accordingly, ESP teachers should move away from grammar practice and authoritarian teaching roles to facilitate more equal, respectful and interactive relationships in settings that value reflection and negotiation. In view of that, the purpose of this study is to reveal that the integration of the key concepts in the NLS and CoP is useful to pursue because it offers a specific analytical framing to scrutinize EFL literacy learning in particular contexts in Taiwan and then can shed new lights in the field of ESP.

2.1 The New Literacy Studies (NLS): Literacy as Social Practice

Developments in the NLS have moved away from models, which focus on the cognitive psychological aspects of reading and writing, and are concerned instead with the social practices, which surround the use of their particular writing systems (Barton, 2007; Street, 1984). The NLS in this sense does not focus only on literacy itself, but on how literacy is culturally embedded and socially constructed in a particular situation. The view of literacy in terms of 'practices' may vary according to context and purpose and these practices are local to the activities and communities with which people are. The notion of 'practices' here involves values, attitudes, feelings and social relationships, and specifically, includes people's awareness of literacy, constructions of literacy and discourses of literacy, how people talk about and make sense of literacy (see Barton & Hamilton, 1998, 2000). In essence, the notions of 'literacy practices' and 'literacy events' focus on the real activities involved in reading and writing. Whilst 'literacy events' are the particular activities where reading and writing have a role, 'literacy practices' are the cultural ways of using reading and writing which people draw upon in a literacy event

(see Barton, 2007; Baynham, 1995; Heath, 1983; Heath & Street, 2008).

Another key concept often utilized in the NLS is the term 'domains' (Barton, 1991). In principle, domains of reading and writing can be used as a way of sorting the social space in which literacy practices are embedded. As Baynham (1995, p.40) points out, "Domains of literacy map the main settings and contexts where people use literacy (home, workplace, school, shops, bureaucracies, the street)." ESL/EFL students are required to read English texts and write English reports, which are closely related to the academic subjects they study (e.g. business English, medical English, English literature, etc.) in schools, and each of these can be seen as a specific domain. In addition, the students may read English texts (e.g. magazines, newspapers, grammar books, novels, etc.) and write English notes, diaries and/or e-mail messages at home. What these students read and write in the home settings may, to a varying extent, differ from what they read and write in other settings.

In different domains, ESL/EFL students do not simply learn to decode/encode written texts, but also participate in different social interactions in which 'networks' play a significant role (Barton & Padmore, 1991). Social networks of support exist for people and these networks are part of everyday life, no matter whether or not people have problems. A salient example here is the work of Heath (1983) which is concerned with literacy events at home and in the community. Networks are involved not only in how students are taught in the classroom, but also in how the students make use of the practices in the academic milieu or social context to help and support their learning. In ESL/EFL learning contexts, social networks, which include the support from family members, teachers and friends/classmates, have not been researched very much, but they are likely to be important factors affecting students' English learning.

Related to the concepts of domains and social network is the perspective of 'context', which is much valued in the NLS; context here is considered to include not only the physical aspects of the environment where the learning-teaching events take place but also the values, beliefs and intentions of the participants, the institutional context where the participants are situated and socio-cultural factors. It also includes the social relations among the participants, as theorized by the researchers working on classroom discourse analysis (Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993; Bloome et al, 2005;

Cazden, 2001; Gee & Green, 1998; Yeager, Floriani & Green, 1998). Their studies, with the central interest in literacy learning and specific attention to interaction around written texts in classrooms, conceptualize each classroom as a local event, intertextually shaped by past events which each participant has experienced. Applying this view of context offers us a new perspective on what ESL/EFL students do with their literacy learning, for the naïve assumptions that literacy are somehow neutral and value-free activities are no longer defensible. It encourages us to acknowledge that in the specific EFL context which this research is based on, prior discursive and social practices in different domains of life create knowledge which guides the Taiwanese EFL learners to make good use of social networks to undertake their English literacy learning. Expressed more simply, literacy learning is situated in many ways across several domains, (i.e. social contexts), and positioned in relation to social institutions and power relations that sustain it.

Whereas the view of literacy as social practice is acknowledged in the NLS scholarship which is mainly concerned L1 literacy learning, it starts getting attention in L2 writing research only in recent years (e.g. Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Hyland, 2003; Johns, 1997; Kroll, 2003). Considerably more efforts in L2 writing instruction are allocated to the training of skills, rather than the development of the awareness of purpose, participants and creativity involved in an act of writing. It is reflected in a substantial amount of tasks on grammar, spelling, sentence construction, and other skills in EFL writing classes (e.g. Connor, 1996; Dvorak, 1986; Mohan & Lo, 1985). However, in recent years, for the increasing importance of English in the world, ESL/EFL learners need a capacity to write in English to enter a global community, and attitudes towards teaching and learning of English writing are changing.

Kern (2000), researching writing from the perspective of teaching ESL/EFL writing at tertiary level, makes a strong claim for teaching ESL/EFL students to write effectively as an important way to help learning by providing opportunities in various ways: to organize and express thoughts and feelings fulfilling the intended readers' expectations, to explore different aspects of the target language, to reduce the anxiety which is often felt in the oral production, and to develop creativity for writing and sensitivity for reading others' work. Although not mentioning the exact term of 'social practice', Kern's claim highlights ESL/EFL student writing as associated with specific

areas of life, inseparable from social interactions. In a similar vain, Atkinson (2003), Leki (2003), and Paltridge (2004) also argue that L2 writing researchers should not be too single-minded focusing on such functional and practical issues as peer response or rhetorical strategies, but should explore the context in which texts and genres are constructed. The utilization of a practice-based approach to literacy is of importance because people's values, attitudes, feelings, social relationships and awareness of literacy, as well as the context in which they situate can be taken into consideration. In this research, by focusing on literacy practices a group of Taiwanese EFL learners encountered at home, school and workplace settings, as well as local communities socially-situated and constructed perspective of literacy help undermine a deficit view which considers EFL/ESL literacy learning as the instruction tailored for rectifying errors in EFL learners' writing, and therefore highlight written texts as artifacts that can be explicitly questioned, compared and recontextualized, revealing their underlying assumptions and ideologies.

2.2 Communities of Practice (CoP): Learning as Situated Practice

Allied to the concept of literacy as social practice (NLS) is that of learning as situated practice. Lave and Wenger (1991) in their book, Situated Learning, explore the situated character of human understanding and communication, focusing on the relationship between learning and the social situations in which it occurs. Drawing on examples of adult learning, they identify that learning is about 'legitimate peripheral participation' (LPP) in communities of practice (CoP), which means learning is a socially situated process in which newcomers interact with more experienced members in a given community in order to gain the legitimate access to sources for having fuller participation in community activities. LPP, in Lave and Wenger's view, is not a naturalized process of appropriating established knowledge and skills, but conflictual process of negotiation and transformation which is implicated in social structures in a given community. Issues relevant to social structures including the relationship between identities, knowing and social membership, as well as discourse in CoP are also very important and need to be taken into consideration.

Wenger (1998) in his more recent book, Communities of Practice, puts forward the concept of LPP in concert with the concepts of practice and identity, characterizing a social theory of learning. Wenger challenges that the notion of learning is concerned with the acquisition of individual, cognitive and transferable skills but claims learning as a social practice in which legitimate peripheral participation. In other words, learning is conceptualized as "an evolving form of membership" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.53). Individuals develop, negotiate, and reconstruct their identities in a community or communities through (re)defining social relations and roles they experience. Each individual may participate in multiple communities simultaneously, and the ways which they participate in different CoPs may vary considerably. Such variations depend on the concern of 'context' of practice in a CoP, which is related to the social structure of a community. It is important to note that although Wenger fails to pursue profoundly power relations underpinned social interactions, the construct of a community cannot separate from social and institutional hegemony, which invokes the implications of apprenticeship and normative behavior. In our view, these concepts can be useful when they are applied to data with respect to EFL learning socially constructed in particular contexts. The relevance of this issue will be further discussed in Section 4 of this paper.

To sum up, the important aspect of situated learning discussed here is literacy as situated practice. Research papers in the book, Situated Literacies, edited by Barton, Hamilton & Ivanič (2000) draw upon the social and cultural nature of literacy, making connections between literacies in specific contexts and broader social practices located in particular times and spaces. Barton & Hamilton (2000), for example, provide an overview of a social theory of literacy in terms of practices and events. In their view, "literacy practices are as fluid, dynamic and changing as the lives and societies of which they are a part"(*ibid*, p.13). This has significantly been interwoven with the way Lave & Wenger (1991) situate learning in certain forms of 'social co-participation'. As Barton & Hamilton put it, "any theory of literacy implies a theory of learning" (2000, p.14).

2.3 English for Specific Purposes (ESP): EFL Literacy Learning as Dynamic Process

The study of languages for specific purposes has a long history; teaching and learning

English for specific purposes has come to dominance in the field of ELT since 1960s. A great deal of ESP literature can be found, notably by Johns & Dudley-Evans (1991), Hutchinson & Waters (1987), Richards (2001), and Strevens (1997), regarding the essential and variable features of ESP, history, and overview of ESP curriculum and related syllabus design. As Belcher (2008) points out insightfully, ESP industry continues to flourish, given much attention about its significance in the contemporary world, particularly its emphasis on constantly changing learning targets, needs and strategies. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) in their ESP book propose that a learning-centered approach to needs analysis can help identify learners' knowledge, language items, skills and strategies. To achieve a learning-centered approach to ESP course design, they suggest that "we need to take into account not only the requirements of the target situation, but also the needs and constraints of the ESP learning situation, and the general pedagogic approach they determine" (1984, pp.110-111). Briefly, the course design of a learning-centered approach is a dynamic and negotiated process, whereby opportunities for the learner's responses are incorporated into the learning tasks so that the use of classroom tasks can adapt to needs as they develop or change.

Researchers (e.g. Belcher, 2008; Douglas, 2000; Robinson, 1991) acknowledge the importance of taking into account learners' participation and investment of effort and point out the need of drawing upon the socio-cultural, multiple-layered view of context to explore the ESP curriculum. The use of such a view of context into investigating ESP learning effectively shifts ESP learning and teaching away from the focus on linguistic features of texts produced in specific fields such as business, medical science, and technology to underline a better understanding of ESL/EFL learners' learning of reading and writing gained from deeper and critical ethnographies of classrooms and related contexts in which learners situate. This pedagogic approach is the one which this paper endorses—it not only includes the social theory of how people learn, resources, expectations and experience of English, expectations and experience of teaching and learning in general, but also the fit between the ESP/EAP teaching situation and the wider educational context to which it belongs. The key findings derived from this study are expected to yield new insights into researching Taiwanese EFL students' English literacy learning, which will be elaborated in Section 6.

3. Research Methodology: Context and Participants

In this study, we utilized a *qualitative multiple case study* approach to gain an in-depth and holistic understanding of Taiwanese students' EFL literacy learning experiences (McDonough & McDonough, 1997; Silverman, 2000; Stake, 1998). The research was undertaken at a research-oriented university in northern Taiwan. The two specific questions this paper seeks to address, along with the research methods, objectives and contributions, are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1 Research questions, methods, objectives and contributions

1. What literacy practices do the Taiwanese EFL students utilize to assist them in writing?	
Methods	interviews; observation (field notes)
Objectives	to identify what kinds of practices (e.g. classroom tasks, teacher responses to students' written work, etc.) and networks (e.g. teachers, classmates, parents, etc.) are helpful for the students and how the practices assist them in doing their written work
Contribution	enable the field of ESP to uncover L2 *literacy practices* (situated in academic and social contexts) and *events* (located in time and space), as well as *social networks* (including home, school and workplace settings) that the particular group of Taiwanese EFL undergraduate students could make good use of to facilitate their English literacy learning
2. What approaches do the Taiwanese EFL students utilize when they learn and write in English?	
Methods	interviews; students' English written assignments
Objectives	to scrutinize the problems/difficulties the students have encountered when they learn and write in English and the ways they utilize to cope with the problems/difficulties, and so to be able to discover their awareness, values and attitudes with respect to literacy as well as learning
Contribution	enable the field of ESP to recognize the utilization of situated practice-based approach to L2 literacy is of importance because the particular group of EFL learners' *values*, *attitudes*, *feelings*, *social relationships* and *awareness of English literacy*, as well as *the context* in which they have situated to negotiate and to construct their participation, identities and meaning could be taken into close consideration, and in turn to contribute to a *socially-situated, reflective* approach to ESP curriculum design
Overall Contribution	**enable the field of ESP to closely consider the use of a *socially-situated, reflective* approach to ESP curriculum design**

The primary participants were six EFL undergraduates who majored in English and undertook English Writing course as a compulsory subject at the university—Winnie, Daisy, James, Mary, Linda and John (see Table 2 for an overview of the participants). All of them are native speakers of Mandarin Chinese.

Table 2 An Overview of the Participants

Name	Gender	The criteria of sampling		Previous educational / work experiences		
		Course attended	Qualifications on entering the College	Initial English language learning (when / where)	Schools / Courses attended before studying at the university	Work experiences (full-time / part-time)
Winnie	female	English Writing (I)	Joint College Entrance Exam	- the fourth year of primary school - at a language institution in Taipei	- three-year junior high school in Taiwan - three-year senior high school in Taiwan **- one-year intensive course of multi-disciplinary subjects including English at a cram school in Taiwan**	- work part-time during the vacation while studying at the university
Daisy	**female**	**English Writing (I)**	**Joint College Entrance Exam**	- the first year of primary school - at a language institution in Taipei	- three-year junior high school in Taiwan - three-year senior high school in Taiwan **- five-week English language course in U.S.**	**- work part-time since senior high school, as her family needs part of her salary to support her university education.** **- part time jobs she had ever taken: cashier helper in the local cinema, caller in the cram school, receptionist in the local library, waitress in the fast-food (McDonald, KFC) restaurants**
James	**male**	**English Writing (I)**	**Joint College Entrance Exam**	**- the fifth year of primary school** - at a language institution in Taipei	- three-year junior high school in Taiwan - three-year senior high school in Taiwan	**- not yet completed the twenty-two months of military service** **- no work experience**
Mary	**female**	English Writing (I)	**Transfer Exam**	**- the first year of junior high school (English as a compulsory subject)** - at a junior high school in Taipei	- three-year junior high school in Taiwan - four-year evening division of vocational high school in Taiwan **- three-year English language course including writing and conversation at a language institution in Taiwan** **- one-year intensive course of multi-disciplinary subjects including English at a cram school in Taiwan**	- several years of full-time and part-time work experiences before entering the university **- work part-time while studying at the university**
Linda	**female**	**English Writing (I)**	**Transfer Exam**	- the sixth year of primary school - at a language institution in Taipei	- three-year junior high school in Taiwan - three-year senior high school in Taiwan **- four-year undergraduate study in the Dept. of Economics at a university in Taiwan** - four-week English language course in Britain	- several years of full-time and part-time work experiences before entering the university - work part-time while studying at the university
John	**male**	**English Writing (I)**	**Transfer Exam**	- the sixth year of primary school	- three-year junior high school in Taiwan - five-year junior college in Taiwan	- already completed the twenty-two months of military service

				- in the Kaohsiung home (one-to-one style of teaching-learning)	- self-study of academic subjects including English during his twenty-two months of military service	- work part-time while studying at the university

NB: To maintain confidentiality, we in the study offered these six participants pseudonyms.

In terms of sampling, we assumed that the individuals' previous experiences in either school or workplace settings would to a varying extent affect the values and attitudes, as well as the approaches they adopt to their EFL literacy learning. It is very likely that those who had no work experience might come to study at the university just for the sake of learning, while those who experienced in the social communities might study with their vocational ambitions in mind. Our concern here was to uncover how the individuals who had different educational backgrounds and work experiences engaged in different roles, values and attitudes of their learning. And this would in turn help us identify the ways in which the individuals made use of their literacy practices to assist them in dealing with the academic demands, and find out to what extent a social context could influence the approaches they utilized to their EFL literacy learning.

With such an assumption, the six Taiwanese EFL undergraduates who had different educational backgrounds and work experiences were selected, with three having successfully passed the Joint College Entrance Exam (JCEE) and the other three passed the Transfer Exam to study at the university (see also Table 2). This is because, more generally, students who undertook the Transfer Exam tend to have more experiences in either school or workplace settings than those who undertook the JCEE.

In terms of methodology, we combined in-depth interviews, observations and systematic collection and analysis of documents and students' assignments in English. The transcripts, field notes, documents, and students' assignments written in English were then utilized as the database. With the use of alternatively multiple methods—triangulating data collected from different sources—we were constantly evaluating the reliability and the validity of the analysis. Besides this, we also checked the interview transcripts that we translated from Chinese to English with the participants to see whether our interpretations fitted with the reality of participants' perspectives (see Birbili, 2001). This in turn helped us to evaluate the validity of our data and thus the outcomes of our research. Such a constantly comparative analysis provided us with a better understanding of Taiwanese EFL students' English literacy learning.

4. Applying the Notions of Literacy as Social Practice and Situated Learning to a Specific EFL Learning Context

In this section, we utilize some key theoretical concepts in the NLS and CoP, discussed in Section 2, to EFL learning contexts in Taiwan. One major notion in our analytical framing is developed from Wenger's theoretical framing of 'the duality of participation and reification' (1998, p.63). According to Wenger, 'reification' refers to "the process of giving form to our experience by producing objects that congeal this experience into 'thingness'. In so doing, we create points of focus around which the negotiation of meanings becomes organized… Any community of practice produces abstractions, tools, symbols, stories, terms and concepts that reify something of that practice in a congealed form" (*ibid,* pp.58-59). In his view, 'reification' and 'participation' are constitutive of each other in the sense that 'reification' can be seen as both a process and a product, and that 'participation' in the community of practice will depend on reification.

Since Wenger in his book uses the term 'reification' very broadly, we in this paper re-define the term more specifically and juxtapose this theoretical concept with that in the NLS (Barton & Hamilton, 2005), and then apply these concepts to EFL learning contexts. Considering EFL learning as practices socially and culturally constituted, here we use the term 'reification' to refer to the productions of learning or an individual's learning efforts. The notion of 'reification' in this sense embraces the existing experience and knowledge of each individual, and it may depict in social practices accomplished through various modes of communication, such as in the forms of spoken language (talk), written language (text), or visual artifacts. Alongside this term, we use the plurality of 'things' to refer to social resources, which may occasionally be needed at different times, in different locations, and for different purposes. More specifically, 'reification' is utilized to examine the productions of learning or an individual's learning efforts in which specific features of 'things' reify meanings and social relations in particular contexts.

We endorse the perspective of Barton and Hamilton (2005, p.28), "most reifications are, in practice, literacy artifacts". In discussing our data, we intend to illustrate how social practices get reified in artifacts, disseminated, distributed and recontextualised for different purposes in particular contexts to achieve learning. Those artifacts do not exist as static entities but are (re)constructed as social resources moving across time, physical space, and context with differing degrees of durability. Here we make out social practices in which reification takes place in different domains of literacy.

The focus of scrutiny is on both classroom tasks, which contain 'talk around texts' and 'talk about texts', and documentary things, which include course handbooks, assignment guidelines, handouts, worksheets, students' written assignments, and texts which students learn with respect to English literacy in their everyday lives. Here, 'talk around texts' refers to the ways in which students take meanings from texts, which may include textbooks, handouts and worksheets, and learn through talking around the texts; 'talk about texts' refers to the ways in which the students talk about the texts.

Besides the term 'reification', we use the term 'participation' to refer to the engagement of learning which further explains what Wenger means 'participation' as "a process of taking part and also to the relations with others that reflect this process. It suggests both action and connection" (1998, p.55). Conceiving 'participation' as the engagement of learning captures Wenger's social-practice perspective of learning which puts emphasis on the integral relationship among learners as the agent, activity and social world, incorporating the notions of identities and community memberships of the learner when s/he engages in related activities. Also, the definition of the engagement of learning extends Wenger's notion of community, which can be enriched by the view of 'context' in the NLS. Engagement does not simply mean engaging in activities performed by a single learner but taking account of historical, social and cultural aspects of context in which activities take place and in which the learner may or may not actively get involved. More specifically, in the process of participation, a student writer engages in the alternative stages of interactions in related social practices by which a range of artifacts are used as means to orchestrate reification. The duality of 'reification' and 'participation' can be traced in terms of three interconnected social actions: selecting 'things' which entails the negotiation of shared understandings in the particular context of learning, applying those 'things' to learning practices which a learner currently engages in, and appropriating social constructs of what a learner previously learned to shape particular forms of social relations and negotiate meanings in the processes of participation. Taken together, the duality of 'reification' and 'participation' may have constantly occurred in the process of each EFL learner's English literacy learning.

Central to the duality of 'participation' and 'reification' is socio-cultural construction of identities, which is an integral aspect of a social theory of learning, namely, identity-in-practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The notion of 'identity' here is used

to depict how learning changes and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of communities. Building an identity consists of negotiation of meanings of the human experience of membership in social communities. As such, a person's relations to communities of practice may inevitably involve the dual identities of 'newcomers' and 'old-timers'. Taken as a whole, communities of practice "have histories and developmental cycles, and reproduce themselves in such a way that the transformation of newcomers into old-timers becomes unremarkably integral to the practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.122).

Weaving all of these related concepts together in this study, EFL undergraduate students in Taiwan are seen as active agents situated in a textually mediated pedagogic community of practice. It is hoped that EFL teachers can empower their students not simply by imbibing prescriptive knowledge from textbooks but making the maximum use of relevant resources from different domains of literacy in order to accomplish effective literacy learning. This also means that students negotiate meanings in social practices which they involve in both everyday life and pedagogic contexts, and construct their identities and social relations.

5. EFL Literacy Learning as Socially Situated Practice

This section focuses on a discussion of our research data in an attempt to answer the aforementioned two research questions: (1) What literacy practices do the Taiwanese EFL students utilize to assist them in writing?, and (2) What approaches do the Taiwanese EFL students utilize when they learn and write in English? (see also Section 3: Table 1). Based on the perspective of literacy as a social practice and the view of situated learning, we intend to demonstrate EFL students' learning of writing in this paper as socially situated. Our analysis reveals that EFL students are situated in different social practices when learning to write; the complexity of their literacy learning makes it difficult to discuss the two research questions separately. Instead, the discussion here is presented in terms of three major themes derived from our data analysis: constant shifts from reification to participation and vice versa (5.1), learning as a (re)construction of experience and knowledge (5.2), negotiating meanings and identities in the socialization process (5.3).

5.1 Constant Shifts from Reification to Participation and Vice Versa

Starting from when EFL students entered the university, the six participants, or what Lave and Wenger (1991) call 'newcomers', received a wide range of student handbooks, university and department rules, and the like. These sorts of document might not be used at that time but they might be used at some other times within different courses throughout their studies at the university, and thus illustrate the duality of 'participation' and 'reification'. The interview transcripts along with our field notes also suggest the convergence of two constitutive processes of 'participation' and 'reification', where the negotiation of meanings takes place. In the English Writing class attended by the six participants, the teacher gave students documents, such as course handbooks and assignment guidelines, when the classes initially started. Such documents might not be used after the class but they might be used again, for example, when students would like to know the details of course requirements to engage in relevant literacy and learning practices. As long as the documentary things were once again used, they would shift from 'reification' to 'participation'. In other words, the materials which students received in previous schooling contexts (reification) were not involved in the negotiation of meanings until students read them (participation). Reification as a 'process' occurs when students draw upon words, linguistic structures or ways of using language to make sense of their actions or social relations in target learning events (participation).

At this point, Winnie's case is a salient example. In the interview, Winnie pointed out that she had not really taken account of the issues of 'penalty' for the late submission of the first draft of her cause-effect composition. Here, the negotiation of meanings is mainly to do with meaning-making through language, but not limited to language, as the construction of meaningfulness, in Winnie's case, partially arises from her devaluing 'penalty' as positive reinforcement for her learning of writing. Referring to Wenger's definition of 'reification' as the process of "making into a thing" (1998, p. 58), reifications here are used as both material objects (e.g. assignments, teacher's evaluative comments, course syllabi) and abstract concepts (e.g. learning outcomes shown in Winnie's composition draft, penalty as part of assessment) to congeal something of the practice, which Winnie engaged in. The duality of 'reification' and 'participation' is demonstrated in Winnie's negotiation of meanings in related social practices in time and space.

More generally, the six participants would apply major elements of prior social practices which they exposed to and recontextualized them in the target community of practice. That means, Taiwanese EFL learners read and reflected upon what they used to be taught in high schools and/or cram schools before writing their assignments required in the department at the university. These documentary things would, at different times and for different purposes, shift from 'reification' to 'participation' when they engaged in literacy events, located in time and space. Furthermore, in the individual teacher-student conference meetings required in the English Writing class, the six students would have discussed their written works with the teacher. Such a process of learning and teaching as dynamic and socially situated is also the process of negotiating meanings, where the two constitutive processes—'reification' and 'participation'—converge. Participation in the community of practice for meaning-making implies reifications, and vice versa.

In the case of Mary, one of the learning strategies she found useful was pre-reading textbooks or some relevant texts before class, as she put it: "I have found that previewing the textbooks before attending the class did help me understand what the teacher said in class, and if I still have time I will also read some additional materials which are related to the class" (authors' translation from Chinese). Besides, she usually read and re-read the teacher's comments on her written assignments in English, used color pens to emphasize the main points, carefully thought about the process of writing, and then discussed with the teacher whenever possible. Along with this is the process of her research paper writing—drafting, discussing with the teacher, disputing, compromising and transforming what the teacher said into written words on the final version of her paper. This ongoing shift from 'reification' to 'participation', and vice versa, seems to have constantly occurred in the process of Mary's EFL literacy learning at the university.

For James's case, one of the learning strategies he utilized to help him make great progress in English writing was to critically observe how other writers presented their papers in terms of organizational structures and syntactic forms, and took notes on what he found useful to assist him in writing. As James pointed out that "I normally read English articles very carefully and took note of how the authors structured their papers and expressed their ideas. I think reading did help me write better in English which is not my first language" (authors' translation from Chinese). The process of James's EFL

literacy learning—critically reading, taking notes and writing—also illustrates the duality of 'reification' and 'participation'.

In terms of pedagogic practice, the teacher, from time to time, kept reminding students to do things, as this was found in the following extract of our field notes on observing the EFL students' learning of writing:

Teacher: How about another group?

Mary: It's an article about a 'cemetery'.

Teacher: [give more explanation and examples and then ask students] Do you remember what you learned last semester—e.g. introduction (Writing Strategies)? This semester puts emphasis on 'the "purpose" of writing'—think about 'why' you want to write a composition. You need to have your 'stance'—try to persuade your readers.

<Field Note Extract 1; original in English>

From this it is seen that the teacher reminded students what they had been taught during the first semester, whereby the talk *around* and *about* the texts had been recurrently mediated in the English Writing class. Such an ongoing process of teaching and learning in the EFL classroom exemplifies the duality of 'participation' and 'reification'. A similar circumstance was also found in the class:

The bell rings. At first, the teacher reminds students to submit their assignments on Friday, saying that: "*This Friday you have to give me your composition assignment: Composition 2—Draft 1, and you can pick up your Composition 1. Any questions for assignment submission?*" Then, the teacher asks students to organize their seats into circles. After that, the teacher states that "*Form a group of 3 or 4 and discuss the issue in the textbook page 47.*" and thus the start of the first activity.

<Field Note Extract 2; original in English>

In fact, issues relevant to the submission of students' written assignments were clearly pointed out in the class requirement sheets, and were explained by the teacher when the class initially started. The textbook page 47, for example, was already discussed in the previous session(s), and importantly, students were required to read it before attending the class. Indeed, similar circumstances had constantly occurred in the English Writing class, and thereby exposed an ongoing shift from 'participation' to 'reification', and vice versa, in time and space. This in turn reveals a fluid, dynamic and ongoing process of EFL teaching and learning, culturally embedded in the educational setting in Taiwan. Wenger's notion of reification is proven useful to pursue in this data analysis because it allows us to see the analytical connection across communities of practice, literacy events, and broader contexts. Reifications, mostly mediated by literacy artifacts such as textbooks, handouts, and related curriculum documents, are crucial for interactions in which Taiwanese EFL students in this particular community of practice participated across times, locations and purposes to negotiate and stabilize meanings.

5.2 Learning as a (Re)construction of Experience and Knowledge

Wenger's (1998) work on communities of practice has moved a long way from learning as the internalization of knowledge through the reifications of artifacts towards the negotiation of meanings in contexts. The framing of CoP does not end in what he terms 'reification' of knowledge as educational design, but focuses on forms of participation by which learners get access to the target community of practice. This emphasis draws attention to the way in which knowledge is socially situated, constructed and negotiated through participation in communities of practice. Here what we concern is not knowledge as the transmission of facts or skills, but the socially negotiated character of meaning.

As time elapsed, when the six research participants had been studying in the English Department at the university for a period of time, their identities would transform from 'newcomers' to 'old-timers'. All textbooks, handouts and worksheets they studied in the preceding year(s) would become things of 'reification'. Some of these things might be used again in the following academic year but others might not. As long as these things were once again used either within academic subjects or across interdisciplinary

subjects at the university, they would shift from 'reification' to 'participation'. At this point, it is also noteworthy that all the assignments kept in the students' portfolios were inextricably intertwined with the duality of 'participation' and 'reification' in time and space. This does not mean that the concept of CoP is simply used to trace what teachers put to foster communities of practice. Instead, we scrutinized EFL students' English literacy learning by looking into how the students entered into the target community, engaging in the unfamiliar literacy practices through interaction and communication among individual members in the communities.

Viewing 'portfolio' through this lens seems to suggest that portfolio is one of the effective approaches to bringing together the individual students' experience and knowledge they obtained from the English Writing class. Five among six EFL students (Winnie, Daisy, Mary, Linda and John) in the interviews voiced their thoughts on the paper works collected in the portfolio as sometimes more meaningful and sometimes less, depending on what the individual intentions and circumstances were, and how they relocated them as learning resources in the target context for generating new knowledge. For instance, when reflecting upon 'portfolio', Daisy said in one reflective interview:

> Portfolio is a good way which the teacher assigned us to keep record of my compositions and relevant materials in English Writing course. Most of my classmates found difficult to do it at the beginning as we spent time on figuring out what the teacher expected, but we all considered that it is helpful for our learning. I would suggest the instructor could actually show some examples to let us know how to do it properly in addition to the detailed guidelines which she gave to us. As a learner, from the process of doing the portfolio, I have been learning how to draw upon the materials, and then use them again in different tasks, since different courses may have different requirements.
>
> <Interview Extract 1, with Daisy; authors' translation from Chinese>

Daisy's feedback, although not explicit, indicates the ways learning is socially situated and constituted. The transition from peripheral participation to full membership which foregrounds learning is not always smooth and directed to success, yet constantly negotiated and contested. Most importantly, learning as participating in social practices

underlines the knowledge as negotiated, generated and shaped through particular texts, genres, and discourses in communities of practice. The notion of knowledge here is parallel to the (re)construction of the individual's experience across boundaries, which are culturally constructed in the particular educational setting in Taiwan. This concept seems to link with the ideas of Wenger who uses the term 'style' to exploit many kinds of "resources that can be used in the context of various practices" (1998, p.129). In a broader view, the term 'style' may also cover any technical terms or jargons used in specific subject areas, such as accounting, economics, computer studies, business English, English literature, and so on. To illustrate this, we give the case of John for an example. In actual fact, John would have liked to study Computer Science, but he eventually decided to study English mainly because he noticed that his knowledge of computers was relatively poor and because English was the disciplinary subject where he could make the most of his resources. As John pointed out in the interview:

> Those who graduated from a five-year junior college (instead traditional three-year senior high school) are required to take the Transfer Exam for further education. This also means that I wanted to use my 'resources' to the best advantage for the exam. As such, 'English' might not be my most favorite academic subject but it was the resource that I could make maximum use of it to fulfill my objective. Indeed, it's not the department that I expected to study in…. I have been interested in computers but if I would like to study about computers in a university, I must know a certain amount of the particular technical skills in the area of computers so that I was able to pass the exam. It's not easy to pass such an exam. Since I had not been trained or given practice, I realized that my technical knowledge in that particular subject area would never beat others at the competitive Transfer Exam. In view of that, it's only 'English' that I had studied as the main subject during the five years at my junior college, and that I could make use of in order to pass the exam.
>
> <Interview Extract 2, with John; authors' translation from Chinese>

Moreover, from the case studies, the results reveal the six individuals' different repertoires of experience and knowledge. Take learning experience of Linda for example,

her identity had occasionally transformed from a 'newcomer' to an 'old-timer', and vice versa, through the process of her learning in the Department of Economics at a university in Taiwan and in the Department of English at the university. Along with this is the 'practices' of the two academic communities, which include curriculum practice, assessment practice and pedagogy practice (see also Baynham, 1995). Despite the fact that the practices of the two educational settings might differ, the documentary things (e.g. textbooks, handouts, worksheets, etc.) which Linda used when she studied in the Economic Department might have occasionally shifted from 'reification' to 'participation', and vice versa, when she studied in the English Department. For example, the English Linda learned in the Economics Department would, to some degree, overlaps the English she later studied in the English Department. As Linda said that "Actually the English I learned previously at the university could somehow help me learn the main subject of English here. But I have to learn how to apply those knowledge in different learning contexts" (authors' translation from Chinese). This demonstrates Linda engaged in an ongoing process of (re)constructing knowledge and experience when she studied in the two academic communities in Taiwan. Linda's knowledge and experience across boundaries appeared to have assisted her in dealing with the academic writing demands required in the English Department.

By and large, adopting the concept of CoP to understand the particular group of Taiwanese EFL students' English literacy learning enables us to explore the ways in which learning took place, and how learners engaged in knowledge construction through interactions in social and historical contexts. Although most students, as shown in aforementioned accounts, were acculturated as novices into the established academic community through participating in related practices, their selections of the particular knowledge and experience for meaning-making pointed to the contested nature of participation in communities of practice. Most of the research participants like Daisy, John, and Mary appeared to know how to cope with academic demands of the target community. Nevertheless, underpinning the certain ways of knowledge (re)construction is the operation of power and agency in processes of learning, i.e. inclusion and exclusion of reified artifacts, participation modes, and social beings. Taking account of negotiation

of meanings and identities in relation to the institutional and broader social context is what we next turn into.

5.3 Negotiating Meanings and Identities in the Socialization Process

As Lave & Wenger (1991) argue, socializing into the particular community of practice is far more complex than participants acquiring and reproducing established knowledge and skills, but being involved in a process of negotiation and transformation of identities. Critiques of Lave and Wenger's work, such as Barton & Tusting (2005), Casanave (1995) and Haneda (2006), have pointed out that power relations are inherent in social structures of the community of practice, which reproduces or weakens legitimate peripherality. Seen in this light, while this group of EFL students situated in the constant interplay between 'reification' and 'participation', they might struggle over the access to resources, negotiation of meanings as well as identities.

Here, Mary's case, which is significantly different from the case of Linda who found her knowledge and experience gained from the previous schooling and informal learning useful, illustrates the instance of the conflictual process of assimilation and transformation into the target community of practice. What Mary studied at the vocational high school seemed not to help her later studies in the English Department at the university, mainly because the disciplinary subjects she studied were the two extreme dimensions of business English and English language and literature. The former corresponds to English for General Business Purposes (EGBP); the latter corresponds to English for Specific Purposes (ESP), or more specifically, English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) (see Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Robinson, 1991). Besides this, her work experience in business seemed unlikely to be relevant to what she studied at the university where the academic subjects were more concerned with English literature. Furthermore, in Mary's view, what she learned in the English Writing course with respect to particular modes of English composition (e.g. illustration, comparison and contrast, etc.), seemed not to assist her in writing a research paper, required in the other courses, as shown in the following interview transcript:

Researchers: When you wrote your assignments in English, did you use a similar approach to writing assignments for other academic subjects?

Mary: I feel somehow different! I feel that, at least for me, the English Writing teacher made me feel that I just needed to meet her writing requirements in terms of 'organizational structure', and that I could write whatever I wanted in my assignments. Like when I decided a 'title' of 'Outside and Inside [of Mary]' (the first draft of comparison and contrast composition assigned by the English Writing teacher), I could write what I really wanted to write. But the assignments required in the Research and Bibliography course was different… There were a number of technical terms and other things…because I was told that a 'research paper' should be written for those who are 'teachers'. …(silence)… Basically, the teacher told us that when writing a research paper, we should try to express two or three ideas in one sentence. At that time I discussed the relevant issues with my classmates. This seemingly in turn caused a kind of 'bad habit' when we, the students who took the Research and Bibliography course, wrote the assignments. However, in actual fact, we could use a simple sentence to express ideas but we would rather use a complicated sentence to do so—made it sound like very difficult. Then, we thought that what we wrote covered many ideas. But, in reality, it was not the case!

Researchers: You said that the 'readers' are different. When writing your composition assignments, who would be your 'readers'?

Mary: The 'readers' of my English Writing assignments were expected to be those who were in my peer group of the same age. Like me, they were 'students'. When I wrote assignments for the English Writing class, the 'readers' were supposed to be the same as those when I wrote in Chinese. I thought that I wanted to write for the 'reader' who were almost the same age as me, enabling them to understand what I wrote and informing them how I thought. It's relatively like 'creative writing'! This also means that I indeed wanted to step out of line—not to follow the conventional style of writing in English.

<Interview Extract 2, with Mary; authors' translation from Chinese>

The example of Mary here seemed to illuminate the ideas of Wenger who points out that "[w]ithout mutual engagement and accountability across generations, new identities can be both erratically inventive and historically ineffective" (1998, p.276). It can be seen as a starting point for examining the tensions around participation at the periphery. In Mary's case, on the one hand, the view of CoP makes it possible to conceptualize Mary as an EFL learner, along with other classmates and teacher, mutually engaged in the joint endeavor of learning and teaching. The notions of 'audience' and the 'convention' of writing in Mary's account suggest the particular ways of meaning-making were crucial to move towards full participation in a community of practice, recognized by Lave and Wenger (1991). The NLS perspective of literacy practices, on the other hand, has laid bare the ways which meanings are contested in Mary's case—through particular texts from different domains of life (e.g. her written assignments, course materials, handouts, the texts she read in previous schooling contexts and everyday life), genres (e.g. academic essays, creative writing pieces) and discourses (e.g. the emphasis on the organizational structure in learning of English writing, writing as the creative expression). She obviously did not engage in a comfortable process of acculturation into the academic community. In our view, Mary's desire to take up the alternative approach to writing creatively but not actually to implementing it ("This also means that I indeed wanted to step out of line—not to follow the conventional style of writing in English."—from Interview Extract 2) was an active decision, which positioned her on the periphery of the target community. Mary's movement between peripheral participation to full participation might be one way in which Mary as a novice in the target community retained power and maintained her own sense of identity in her English literacy learning.

Applying Wenger's social practice perspective of learning to examine the cases of Linda and Mary enables us to recognize students' thoughts on successful learning taken place when they were able to grasp their existing 'practices' and master them to become core members, rather than peripheral (or 'novice') members, of the academic community. We use the term 'practices' here to refer to an integration of both everyday knowledge and academic knowledge of the individual students. The previous learning experiences of Linda and Mary was simultaneously regarded as their existing knowledge and resources.

They had not only been accumulated but also negotiated, as this resulted in the continuity and discontinuity of their day-to-day engagement in both academic and non-academic literacy practices at school, at home, and even in the workplace. However, focusing on the contested nature of meaning-making helps us to find out more about what is going on in particular teaching-learning contexts, and thus understand more about the particular successes and failures for the learners, such as Linda and Mary, which often remains implicit in the way of participation. This focus offers a critique to the benign view of the novice learner gradually moving towards full participation in a community of practice without difficulties. Within the processes of socialization, the focal EFL student participants were aware of the gatekeeper of the target community of practice as powerful, complying requirements to a certain degree, to constantly switch between 'old-timer' and 'newcomer' identities, as well as to (re)construct and take up their identities by negotiating social relations with other actors for meaning-making.

Winnie is another noteworthy case of subscribing to the perspective of pedagogic authority and simultaneously exercising her agency with 'creativity'. In one interview, Winnie frankly spelt out that "I had not really taken account of the issues of 'penalty' for the late submission of my homework assignment until the teacher returned the assignment together with her comments on it back to me" (authors' translation from Chinese). As part of the evaluative comments, the teacher suggested that Winnie should have a careful look at the class requirements in the syllabi. Winnie's previous experience in understanding the requirement of assignment submission and her insistence of integrating the teacher's feedback into the revision of her assignment intriguingly points to the issue of power. Her action of dismissing 'penalty' implies she exercised her 'restrictive' agency to some extent, despite her limited linguistic repertoire and role as a novice member.

Daisy's retrospective self-report on working on the particular writing task is another illustration of how the EFL students negotiated the complexity of social interactions when appropriating into the target community of practice. Daisy, along with other students in the English Writing class, was asked to compose one argumentative writing task: 'Film Proposal Writing'. The teacher provided students with some brief suggestions on how to write the film proposal: "to get the contract, you need to write a

short proposal that would describe the movie you want to make, which can be something you do very well, or about particular aspects of your culture to provoke a better understanding of that target community, or any other creative idea you want to present. Write a well-organized proposal to convince the firm why they should choose you instead of others." (Extract from teacher response to Daisy's assignment; original in English).

From the account of Daisy's writing process, we found that she was situated in a struggle of negotiating institutional expectations for doing the target writing task (institutional domain) and socio-cultural beliefs about the functions of films (socio-cultural domain). The struggle here could in turn result in identity conflict. Daisy seemed to be trapped in this struggle, however, her address of selecting and relocating both institutional and socio-cultural assumptions revealed that she adopted the knowledge and resources in both domains for making claims in her written proposal. Besides endorsing the institutional values of what constitutes a good film as the film which touched upon the particular aspect of the culture she was familiar with: "people go to movies for emotional or intellectual stimulation", Daisy subscribed to the assumption of the particular culture, youth culture in Taiwan: "people go to movies for entertainment". Her choice of taking account of resources in two contextual domains was much influenced by her formal and informal learning of literature and her critical observation of popular art as she accumulated experiences from doing a part-time job in a local theater.

The findings here show that Daisy, as a novice member of the particular community of practice, brought particular resources into her writing of argumentation, and in the meantime, was cautious about demonstrating her 'creativity' appropriately in the particular institutional context. A range of resources she mentioned point to the fact that Daisy's EFL literacy learning shifted from 'reification' to 'participation', and vice versa. The notion of 'dual identities' in turn allows us to trace the continuous shift between 'old-timer' and 'newcomer', underlining negotiation of identities over the shifting power relations in the particular context, moving between two ends: the assimilation into the target culture of the community and the construction of agency. Daisy, as a novice member of the community of practice, engaged in social interactions

by subscribing to the status quo of the institutional community, and meanwhile applied her creativity to express her voice by drawing upon the particular socio-cultural beliefs.

Researchers: When you worked on your assignments such as 'Film Proposal Writing', what did you do? Could you briefly talk about your writing process?

Daisy: To be honest, when I first took a look at the instruction ('Film Proposal' task), I thought it was very difficult. After spending a few minutes, I got some ideas from my Western Literature class. (silence)…Um, it's the journal that I wrote for Western Literature class and that I got a good mark…so I think it should be good to adopt a similar way to write this film proposal….Then I decided to make it like 007 movie, using the recent drought event as a topic and making up a story to produce the artificial rain to rescue people in this island. It was written like a detective story, as this was what we just learned from our Western Literature class when analyzing the suspense in a short story. The audience won't feel bored but interested in it. Most importantly, I wanted to add some 'creative' elements in my film proposal. (haha)

Researchers: I see! You tried to be creative.

Daisy: Yes, that's what I intended to do. (silence)...I intended to present the drought in an entertaining tone as it might appeal more youngsters. My experience of working in the local theater has led me to do this. I noticed that nowadays youngsters like to watch movies. They did not like serious topics of movies; rather, they considered something relevant to their day-to-day lives! In so doing, I was quite confident because my film proposal could stimulate the audience's concern. They could find the enjoyment by seeing something with which people in Taiwan are familiar and something which might be taken place in our lives, not something theoretical, too abstract or too ideal.

<Interview Extract 3, with Daisy; authors' translation from Chinese>

Thus far, it would seem that the EFL literacy learning experiences of Linda, Mary and Daisy imply that literacies as well as languages were associated with their domains of life which might, at some points, overlap. This key finding shows that English writing is a very complex human activity which is inextricably intertwined with other practices (e.g. reading, negotiating, drafting, revising, etc.) for any stage of the process of academic writing event, and explicates the reason why we in this study apply the theoretical concepts in the NLS and CoP to Taiwanese EFL learning contexts.

Briefly summarized, the results derived from the case studies reveal that the community of pedagogic practice shaped the approaches the participants adopted to their EFL literacy learning. The results also reveal that student learning is inevitably situated, and that EFL literacy learning is a (re)construction of knowledge and experience in time and space. The processes of the six participants' EFL literacy learning appeared to be dynamic and ongoing, culturally embedded in the academic community in Taiwan. Most importantly, the complex nature of CoP in which the Taiwanese EFL university learners participated, as shown in our analysis, suggests that more attention should be paid to explore what counts as knowledge and to scrutinize the ways which meanings and identities are contested, negotiated and constituted for the EFL students in the processes of their learning. This has in turn illuminated the reason why we in this study synthesized and applied the notions of literacy as social practice and situated learning to the specific learning contexts in Taiwan, and thereby can shed new lights in the field of ESP/EAP.

6. From Participation to Design: Moving Towards a Contextualized Pedagogy

Wenger's work on communities of practice has moved from the focus of learning on acquiring decontextualised, transferable skills to examining how and what meanings are invested, negotiated and subtly transformed as learners participating in interactions in the community. Since the last decade, the social practice perspective of learning has become popular as a paradigm for understanding teaching and learning, although still little attention has been paid to language and literacy learning (e.g. Barton & Tusting, 2005; Norton, 2001; Norton & Toohey, 2002), particularly in the EFL contexts (Morita, 2004).

Our research findings presented in Section 5 illustrate the importance of juxtaposing the theoretical concepts in the NLS and CoP, discussed earlier in Sections 2 and 4, and considering EFL literacy learning as socially situated practice. Thus, we argue that there is a need to integrate the theoretical concepts in the NLS and CoP in order to explore the value of understanding EFL literacy learning through this lens. The emphasis of the NLS perspective on the broader 'context' of learning in which power and authority were played out could lay bare some of differential ways in which meanings were both constituted and contested for the Taiwanese EFL students in the processes of socialization in the communities of practices. It also helps to understand the ways in which pedagogic practices, dominated by literacy practices, were integral to some of the students' (re)construction of identities, as well as their alignment and detachment from the more central academic community of practice. Although Wenger (1998) indicated that one of his main concerns is to have formal schooling integrate more elements of informal learning in communities of practice, he did not make explicit of how curriculum design can support the creation of learning opportunities. It is where the notion of course design in the field of ESP/EAP can be useful for us to rethink the effective EFL literacy pedagogy.

Overall, our research findings indicate that EFL literacy learning should be regarded as the situated nature of practice, and as "an interplay of experience and competence" (Wenger, 1998, p.50). Here, the 'competence', in our view, "is not just linguistic, but also incorporates socio-cultural or everyday scientific/technical knowledge, and the ability to apply cognitive processing strategies" (Hutchinson & Waters 1984, p.10). The approach adopted in the ESP courses should be learning-centered which "implies taking into account the needs and expectations of all the parties involved in the learning process when designing courses and selecting methodology" (*ibid,* p.108; their emphases).

Here it is also worth mentioning that John, one of the six participants, pointed out in the interview that: "I feel that everyone may need a different approach to his/her learning. It may be that everyone has to learn and then find an approach, which suits him or her most" (authors' translation from Chinese). John's account underlines that the nature of ESP process is "concerned not with knowing or doing, but with learning"

(Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 61), and that "[l]earning needs should be considered at every stage of the learning process" (Hutchinson 1988, p.75). In Wenger's view, "[t]o the extent that teaching and learning are linked in practice, the linkage is one not of cause and effect but of resources and negotiation" (1998, p. 266; italics added). As such, "[g]iven enough resources, the practice of a learning community can be rich and complex enough to be the driving force of a complete education" (*ibid,* p. 272). In this paper, we have shown that EFL students, despite being considered as 'language deficient', their English literacy learning involved meaning-making in different communities of practice, engaging in contrasting texts and literacy practices both in pedagogic and non-pedagogic contexts, and negotiating some levels of participation and identities (peripheral or core members). One key implication thus might be if English literacy teachers use a variety of activities in EFL classroom and make the classroom activities achieve a certain degree of recycling and reinforcement, students would be able to learn from a range of the assigned field-specific topics they are more/less interested in.

Taken as a whole, it may be time for English language teachers to construct a learning-centered, reflective curriculum for literacy, and simultaneously, encourage ESL/EFL students to take an ethnographic stance towards their English literacy learning (see Barton, 2007; Health & Street, 2008; see also Table 3 below). Such a curriculum can help both EFL teachers and students adopt reflective practices, and as a result, may enable the teachers to adapt their teaching materials wherever possible and help the students develop self-awareness of their language and literacy learning. This calls for taking up reflective practices which is based on our analysis of the six focal EFL students' English literacy learning in this paper. We have illustrated the need to understand about student learning not dependent upon the access to the target academic community, but the importance of different literacy practices enacted by reifications of literacy artifacts in the EFL students' learning processes. Incorporating this understanding in reflective practices challenges the view of the novice learner only being on the periphery when participating in the target academic community. In addition to this, to address socially situated and contested nature of practices, meaning-making and identities, EFL students should be encouraged to build up everyday practices in the community, which includes home, school, and even workplace. This sort of practices, in

our view, will help the students create English-like surroundings whereby the students can make use of their practices to learn English in their day-to-day lives.

Here, we would like to introduce a project work which is considered an instance of implementing a learning-centered, reflective curriculum (see also Lai, 2006). This type of group project is aimed at providing EFL students with opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers and learn from each other. These students are given more control to define their own learning goals, and simultaneously the teacher can involve the students in this process by helping them create their project assignment to undertake cooperative learning with peers. Such a project work can help connect the world of school with the students' experiences, making learning more relevant to their daily lives and enjoyable. Briefly, the procedure for implementing this project work in the EFL literacy curriculum is shown in the following table:

Table 3 Moving towards the curriculum grounded on an ethnographic stance: A project work

Project stages	**Project activities**	**Foci of learning**
Teacher's introduction	● Specifying the task	● Discussion
Planning	● Dividing into groups ● Distributing the assigned readings on each topic ● Selecting one topic ● Making a proposed reading list	● Discussion ● Speed reading
Data collection	● Finding readings relevant to the selected topic ● Selecting interesting texts	● Scanning ● Skimming
Consultation	● Reporting the progress of implementing group project to the teacher ● Discussing the selected readings with the teacher	● Discussion ● Consultation skills
Preparation	● Reading on the selected topic ● Drafting a group project report	● Careful reading ● Note making
Writing-up	● Composing a final version of the project report	● Writing skills

(Developed from Lai, 2006, p.9)

Table 3 presents, in chart form, the processes which a teacher takes to be involved in group project work. The first column shows the 'Stages' in the production. The second column shows the 'Activities' EFL students engage in at each stage. And the third column lists the 'Foci of Learning' that the teacher expects the students to learn. Initially,

the teacher outlines to the class the five Stages of the group project—Planning, Data collection, Preparation, and Writing-up, and sets the deadlines. The responsibility for all the 'Activities', listed in the second column, lies on the students. Each group of students has control over the process, which individualizes the rate and nature of their learning, under the teacher's guidance. The responsibility of the teacher is to provide input and instruction related to the 'Foci of Learning', listed in the third column of Table 3. In the processes of conducting the group project, the third stage of 'data collection' provides the students with opportunities to learn English both in and out of the EFL classroom, whereby the students are encouraged to take an ethnographic stance towards their English literacy learning.

In our view, such a project work requires an integration of both process and product approaches to the teaching of academic writing for EFL students (see Dudley-Evans, 1995; Dudley-Evan & St John, 1998; Jordan, 1997). This pedagogical practice "is directly relevant to target needs and yet provides the opportunity for process-oriented language learning" (Bloor & St John, 1988, p. 85), and thereby will help not only EFL students but also EFL teachers to adopt reflective practices. As a consequence, the students will become critically aware of their learning as well as language use, and the teachers will be able to adapt teaching materials and modify classroom activities to suit learners' needs and interests (see also McDonough & Shaw, 1993). Crucially, constructing a reflective English literacy curriculum will provide both the teachers with a profound understanding of the learning contexts of students and the students with opportunities to work together with their peers, and thus become more engaged in learning. As Hounsell (1997, p. 257) puts it, "reflective teaching and the quality of learning go hand in hand."

Finally, based on the research findings we would like to end up this paper by suggesting a learning-centered, reflective approach to course design (see Table 4).

Table 4 A learning-centered, reflective approach to course design

Types of needs analysis	**Phases of teaching**	**Types of investigation**	**A learning-centered, reflective approach to course design**
Initial-phase Needs Analysis: Target Situation Analysis (TSA)	*before* teaching	● pre-course information questionnaires	● syllabus construction ● selection of materials and classroom methods
Ongoing-phase Needs Analysis: Learning Situation Analysis (LSA) and Present Situation Analysis (PSA)	*while* teaching	● classroom observation ● informal interviewing ● documents ● in-course information questionnaires	● a project work ● pair/group discussions ● individual conference meetings ● paper-and-pencil tests
	after teaching	● documents ● evaluation questionnaires	● portfolios ● test and other assessment results
	follow up	● documents	● course evaluation

Table 4 shows that there are two types of needs analysis suggested: initial-phase needs analysis and ongoing-phase needs analysis. The former, initial-phase needs analysis, is parallel to the target situation analysis (TSA) and the latter, ongoing-phase needs analysis, contains both the language situation analysis (LSA) and the present situation analysis (PSA), identified by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998). Initial-phase needs analysis is done in the phase of 'before teaching'; ongoing-phase needs analysis is done in the phases of 'while teaching', 'after teaching' and 'follow up'. In the early phase of 'before teaching', administering pre-course information questionnaires, which are concerned with students' goals, social roles, interaction patterns and language proficiency, may assist EFL literacy teachers in selecting materials and classroom methods suited to the learners. In the phase of 'while teaching', a project work in support of the teacher, pair/group discussions, individual conference meetings and paper-and-pencil tests can be considered as part of classroom activities. At this stage, administering in-course information questionnaires, which cover issues relevant to the expectations and progresses of individuals' language learning, may help students to identify their needs, their wants, and their own language and literacy practices. In the phase of 'after teaching', the use of portfolios is suggested; at the same time, administering evaluation

questionnaires may help the teachers as well as the students to reflect on their own teaching and learning. And this may in turn help the teachers develop future course design in the later phase of 'follow up' (see also Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001, for a discussion of EAP curriculum). In our view, such an approach can provide EFL literacy teachers with an understanding of students' needs—not only their initial needs or expectations but also the needs, which may be in tandem changed when particular courses actually started—and thereby may assist the teachers in designing appropriate curricula (see also Hutchinson & Waters, 2001).

To all intents and purposes, the integration of the theoretical concepts in the NLS and CoP enables us to raise questions about the socially situated and contested nature of meaning construction and identities by paying attention to literacy practices in school and in everyday life, and the interplay between these two. In terms of pedagogy, an overall aspect of taking a socially-situated practice perspective of literacy is worth pursuing in order to uncover possible ways to enhance the Taiwanese EFL undergraduate students' English literacy learning.

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Mediated Processes in Writing for Publication: Perspectives of Chinese Science Postdoctoral Researchers in America

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Abstract

Sociocultural theory provides an explanatory framework for understanding human activity in the community of practice. This paper aims to address science researchers' scholarly writing for publication processes from a sociocultural perspective. The author conducts a study via in-depth reflective interviews with three Chinese science postdoctoral researchers in America in an attempt to find their specific mediated actions and dynamic processes in writing for publication. In light of Engeström's (1987, 1999) activity system, this paper, drawing on the interview data, explores the four mediating factors: objects/goals, artifacts, community, and roles, which afford and constrain the goings-on in the researchers' writing for publication activity. Results reveal that in order

to achieve their publication goal, the three researchers comply with the publication norms, mediate with a diversity of cultural artifacts, socialize with different people from academic and editorial communities, and fulfill their dual social roles. All these mediated actions are essential components of their writing processes that contribute to their international-refereed publications. The current study, exploring the link between writing for publication and activity theory, will inform L2 writing research in more encompassing ways.

Keywords: writing for publication, mediated processes, activity theory, ESP

1. Introduction

With English becoming increasingly dominant as an international language of research and publication, more and more research investigates scholarly writing for publication in English, the lingua franca of the scientific world. Writing research papers and having them published in international-refereed journals in English, has become a requirement for hiring, promotion, tenure and even conferral of Ph.D. degrees in some non-English speaking countries (Braine, 2005; Flowerdew, 2000). Publishing research findings, especially for science researchers, will also add their own voices and home country's perspectives to the international conversation in their professions (Casanave, 2002). Therefore, the significance of scholarly writing for publication in English has inevitably resulted in much research from multiple perspectives.

1.1 The social orientation in writing- for-publication research

The previous two decades have witnessed a social turn in writing research. Departing from the traditional cognitive framework regarding writing as a "non-linear, exploratory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning" (Zamel, 1983, p. 165), more and more scholars called for studying writing in context. Prior (2006) argued that the cognitive paradigm is "too narrow in the understanding of context and was eclipsed by studies that attended to social, historical, and political contexts of writing" (p. 54). Casanave (1995) proposed that learners' learning-to-write processes should be understood across three levels of context: the local, historical, and interactive levels. Cumming, Busch and Zhou (2002) posited that writing strategies should be "analyzed in reference to the goals people have

to motivate and guide their task performance as well as other essential aspects of these activity structures and contexts in which they are embedded" (p. 193).

Echoing the social turn in the writing literature, research on writing for publication is currently switching to the sociocultual and sociopolitical orientations. Okamura (2006) interviewed thirteen Japanese researchers, investigated their L2 writing process and examined how researchers succeed in mastering scientific discourse in English. Findings showed that all the researchers focused on reading academic texts in their field to learn typical writing patterns, whereas only junior researchers gave direct attention to mastering English speakers' language use by reading English texts written by notable writers in and outside their field, and contacting English speakers about the use of English. Selecting participants from multiple nations, Cho (2004) had interviews with four doctoral students studying in America, who came from Greece, Japan, Korea, and the Ukraine. The study revealed similar themes across participants regarding writing for publication, such as co-authoring, getting professor and native-speaker assistance, making the most use of local knowledge, and negotiating feedback from editors and reviewers.

As to the writing research on Chinese native speakers, Flowerdew (2000) presented a case study of a nonnative-English-speaking scholar from Hong Kong majoring in mass communication, reporting his experience and process in publishing a scholarly article in an international-refereed journal on his return from doctoral study in the USA. This article applied social constructivist theory, especially the notion of "discourse community" (Swales, 1990) and "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) to interpret the mediated nature of writing for publication. The study indicated that the participant was "peripheral" because he was not central but on the margins of the activity. He was meanwhile involved in "participation", acquiring knowledge through his involvement with activity. In mainland China, Li (2006) conducted a case study of a Chinese doctoral student who was authoring a paper for international publication to better understand the sociopolitical processes involved. Regarding written texts as sociopolitical artifacts, and drawing on "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave & Wenger, 1991), Li discussed how the novice scholar's writing-for-publication process was influenced by power-infused relationships between him and the institutional context, the supervisors, as well as the gatekeepers of his target journals.

The above studies examine writing processes in the social, historical, and political context, but little research in the writing-for-publication literature has investigated what researchers perceive about their mediated process during writing for publication. Also, although some literature addressed science researchers' perceptions of their writing experience via interviews (Gosden, 1996; Matsumoto, 1995; Okamura, 2006), there has yet been any study guided by activity theory (Engeström, 1987, 1999). Activity theory helps people interpret individual actions more deeply, by situating individuals' actions in collective activities and delving into the diversity of interrelated mediating factors. While L2 research utilizing activity theory is modest in volume, it has made significant contributions to SLA and applied linguistics research (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Activity theory, as one of the core constructs in sociocultural theory, can provide an explanatory framework for understanding the processes of scholarly writing for publication.

1.2 Mediation and Activity theory

Sociocultural theory posits that human mental function is a fundamentally mediated process that is organized by cultural artifacts, activities, and concepts (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). According to Vygotsky (1978), humans are not restricted to simple stimulus-response reflexes; they are able to make direct connections between incoming stimulation and their responses through various links. Such devices that "intervene in the context of an interaction between human beings and the world of objects, events, and behavior" are referred to as "mediation" (Block, 2003, p. 100). From a sociocultural perspective, "development of language learning strategies is mainly a by-product of mediation and socialization into a community of language learning practice" (Donato & McCormick, 1994, p. 453). Second language learning can be regarded as a mediated process which involves mediation by artifacts, mediation by self through private speech, and mediation by others in social interactions (Lantolf, 2000).

Based on Vygotsky's (1978) model of mediated action, Engeström (1987, 1999) proposed activity system (Figure 1) which further developed the conceptualization of mediation. He identified the participants and processes of an activity system as subject, object, outcome, community, division of labor, and rules. Activity system provides a framework that stresses human agency, which is mediated by the mediational means, the communities relevant to the situation, the rules and divisions of labor in these

communities, and the object of the activity system (Thorne, 2004). The framework of activity theory provides a broad theoretical basis for studying different kinds of human practices. It will definitely shed light on research investigating writing. Lei (2008) studied two proficient EFL learners' writing strategy use within the activity theory framework. Drawing on the data collected from interviews, stimulated recall, and process logs, her study investigated how the two EFL learners strategically mediated their writing processes with diverse resources and identified four types of writing strategies: artifact-mediated, rule-mediated, community-mediated, and role-mediated strategies. Her research bridged the gap between traditional cognitive views and sociocultural perspectives on L2 learner strategies.

2. The Study

Following the framework of a basic qualitative study, which seeks to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives of the people involved (Merriam, 1998), the present study, via reflective in-depth individual interviews, investigates three Chinese science postdoctoral researchers' writing-for-publication process from the perspective of activity theory. Drawing on interview data, the paper discusses important factors which mediate researchers' writing for publication processes, i.e. objects/goal, mediating artifacts, community, and roles. It aims to explore the researchers' specific mediated actions and the dynamic processes in scholarly writing for publication. The following two research questions are addressed:

1) What motives and artifacts mediate the postdoctoral researchers' scholarly writing for publication?
2) How do the postdoctoral researchers mediate and interact with others within the scholarly writing community so as to achieve their publication goals?

2.1 Participants

Convenience samples were used in this study. Three Chinese science postdoctoral researchers in America participated in this study. One is an acquaintance with the researcher, and the other two are friends of the former participant. Two of them are working at a southern university in America, and the other is working at a northern

university in America. All participant names used in this study are pseudonyms. Liu, a 31-year-old male researcher, earned his doctorate degree in medicine in 2006 and then worked as a researcher and lecturer in a national university in China before coming to the US. To this day, he has worked as a postdoctoral researcher in the US for over two years. He has had five research papers published in international-refereed journals, with the first accepted in 2006. Yang, a 30-year-old female researcher, obtained her Ph.D in pharmacy in China in 2007 and afterwards worked in a major pharmaceutical company for half a year after graduation. She has conducted postdoctoral research in the USA for almost a year and a half. She published in an international refereed journal in 2006 for the first time and she has had a total of six research papers published in international-refereed journals. Zhang, a 40-year-old male and associate professor in a Chinese medical university, has worked in America as a postdoctoral researcher for over a year. He obtained his doctorate degree in 2001 and has five international publications, with the first accepted in 2004.

2.2 Method of study

The three researchers were invited to participate in semi-structured reflective individual interviews to elicit their writing-for-publication experience and their mediated processes in writing for publication. Based on the research questions on the motives and artifacts that mediate the researchers' writing-for-publication process and the interactions within the writing community, interview protocols were formulated (see Appendix) to guide the interviews. All the interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese and audio-recorded. The interviews lasted from 45 to 60 minutes. Following Okamura (2006)'s method that he adopted in interviewing Japanese scientists, the interviewees were asked to provide revision samples from their published work so that texts might be referred to when they talked about their experience in writing and publication.

2.3 Method of data analysis

In this study, the author mainly draws on the activity system (Engeström, 1987, 1999) to understand how science postdoctoral researchers write for publication. The data collected from the interviews were transcribed in English. The author first translated each participant's recorded interview data and read and reread the detailed transcripts

carefully. By making notes in the margins to comment on the data (Merriam, 1998), the author coded the data in terms of themes that could be identified with respect to four mediators within the activity system: objects and goals, artifacts and mediating means, community (including division of labor), and roles. The author then categorized responses addressing the same themes or patterns. Revision of the categories and recoding of the data were conducted until a satisfactory framework was proposed to explain the data.

3. Findings

The reflective interviews, from the insiders' perspective, revealed various important factors which afford and constrain the researchers' writing for publication process. The themes were explicated with excerpts from the three participants' interview data. The findings were discussed in the following four respects: objects and goals; artifacts and meditational means; community: academically and editorially; dual roles: as author and as researcher. The former two respects addressed what motivate researcher's writing-for-publication action and what artifacts mediate the researcher's scholarly writing for publication. The latter two respects indicated how the researchers mediate and interact within the scholarly writing community so as to achieve their publication goals.

3.1 Objects and goals

Asked about their motives for publication (Interview Question 1), Liu and Yang addressed their different goals at home and in the States. For them, publishing was a requirement for graduation and degree-obtaining several years ago. Publishing in an international journal is a must for Ph. D. science students in national universities in China. As Yang pointed out,

> Publish or perish! I know one student who entered my program two years earlier than me had to stay and continued to struggle to get published when I graduated. I also heard that someone dropped out after four years' Ph.D. study just because of the strict requirement of publishing. To be or not to be! The majority of us worked so hard that we had our paper published internationally before the admission to candidacy. …Reflecting back, now I think it was not that difficult

> to meet the publication requirement stipulated by the university. I benefited a lot from the experiences of publishing during my Ph.D. years.

Now in the USA, all three researchers aimed at journals with strong SCI (Science Citation Index) impact factor ratings. All of them mentioned that their ideal target journal in the future will be a top-tier science journal such as Cell, Nature, and Science. The following excerpt from Liu indicated his publication motive:

> I came to the USA two years ago, in an attempt to have an overseas research experience and strengthen my academic background. Now I realize that only having this experience is far from enough; what really counts is a good paper, which will reflect one's research capacity. You know, I am pressed to publish in a renowned journal. If there were no good publication I would lag behind my colleagues who conduct research at home. There is a policy in the college I am affiliated with in China that whoever has a publication in an international-refereed journal with a SCI impact factor of 10 plus will be promoted to the position of full professor immediately. My former supervisor encouraged me to strive for this goal.

It is a similar case with Zhang. He intended to acquire knowledge about cutting-edge technology and get published in a renowned journal so as to get a promotion and secure better career prospects when returning to his home country. In contrast, the motive for publishing for Yang is to get credit for her research career, which will smooth the way for her to apply for a "green card" (permanent residence in the USA). She stated a very clear goal, "To publish is everything -- the more, the better. The higher the impact factor, the better."

3.2 Artifacts and mediating means

Asked about the criteria of good science wiring, the usefulness of tools, and their use of language (Interview Question 2, 6, 7, respectively), three interviewees acknowledged numerous artifacts mediating their writing. These artifacts include tools, signs, as well as rules.

3.3 Mediating tools

The participants use various mediating tools in their writing for the publication process. One important tool that they mentioned is online bilingual medical dictionaries. Zhang commented like this:

> I often use electronic dictionaries like Jinshan Ciba and Wangji Jingdian (Chinese English bilingual medical dictionary). It is very helpful to pinpoint vague words and check the spelling and usage of some words when I am writing. It is also convenient to consult a dictionary for unfamiliar technical terms while reading.

In terms of language checking tools, Liu mentioned his use of Google. He liked to type a sentence or phrases in the search bar so that he can see what patterns others use to express similar ideas.

As the three interviewees also indicated, a target journal article is definitely a beneficial tool. They spent most of their time reading relevant literature, from which they acquired not only novel ideas but also good language that they may reuse in their own writing. Referring to the function of the source texts, Liu commented:

> Every time I read an article, I highlight the important sentences. In the past, I attended much to the language and tried to learn the formulaic expressions, classic sentence constructions, and technical terminology. After years of reading and writing, I have formed my own writing style. Now I attach more importance to the original viewpoints and the new method adopted in others' research.

The above excerpt exactly reflected the "scaffolds" of source articles in "serving as rhetorical models" (Zhu, 2005, p.146). The source articles mediated Liu's scholarly writing, allowing learning to occur in his "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978).

Yang seems to be even more attentive in studying the research journal articles. She explained:

> I created my literature folder by myself. The literature is organized according to IMRD (introduction, method, results, and discussion). Some readings provide foreground and background knowledge and I copy them and put them in the folder of introduction, while some are constructive for the part of discussion, and I place them in the folder of discussion. Apart from the folders for the four

> sections, I have thirty complete articles in my resource database. These papers are guiding articles in my discipline; all the sections are helpful for me, both in content and language. I am proud of my literature folders and it proves to be very useful.

Interestingly, these words echo the scenarios of source-based language re-use reported in Flowerdew and Li (2007). In their study, the Chinese doctoral students reported that they have collections of papers, from which they tend to adopt useful expressions and sentences in their own writing.

Also, Liu and Zhang make use of reference management tools. Liu reported that "Endnote" is a nice tool to manage the literature and it makes the work very neat. Zhang spoke highly of a Chinese reference management tool named "Yixue Wenxian Wang" (Medical Reference King). "It served as a very helpful tool when I did scholarly writing in China."

Moreover, all the researchers pointed out the importance of a library database (e.g., PubMed). In order to keep abreast of updated research, they frequently consulted a library database at every stage of the scholarly writing process.

In addition, Yang mentioned her recent research was from her boss' grant. The grant proposal guided her throughout the experiment. When it was time for her to write and publish the findings of the experiment, the grant proposal became a valuable source for writing. As she put it:

> The grant proposal functions as a compass to our research. During my research writing, I revisited the grant proposal, for example, focusing on the objective part to check whether we have reached our purpose. I adapted the introduction in the proposal to my own writing. I also tailored the expected results in the proposal to my writing, based on the research findings. A grant proposal not only directs the process of our writing-for-publication, but it also offers guidance for future grant proposals to be drafted.

3.3 Signs/ Languages

Regarding their use of languages (signs), the three participants mentioned that they predominantly use English. They seldom use Chinese during writing. They believe translation of a whole passage is almost impossible because there is a huge difference between the Chinese writing style and the English writing style. As Zhang commented:

> I once attempted to write down part of my draft in Chinese and then have them translated in English. I just got frustrated at that attempt, only to find it was very time-consuming and ended with a rather poor translation. I dropped this idea and never translated again.

However, they did not negate the role of the L1, for Chinese helped them generate ideas. Liu uses Chinese when drafting the outline of a specific paper. For Yang and Zhang, they occasionally take notes in Chinese. The findings are in line with Matsumoto's (1995) observations, which reported that Japanese professional writers do not use their L1 once they have started to write in English, although they may do so while brainstorming on the topic in the prewriting stage.

3.4 Publication Rules

Regarding the question of what they attend to before and during the writing process (Interview Question 4), all the participants reported that complying with the submission guidelines of target journals is significant for publication. Liu shared his experience of consulting the PowerPoint slides made by editors.

> It is advantageous to search and study the PPT slides that editors made for a certain journal. Generally, these slides elaborate on the submission guidelines and converse good strategies and skills. These materials enable writers to be sensitive to the distinctive style of a journal, which are definitely conductive to paper publication.

All the interviewees expressed some criteria for a well-written science article (response to Interview Question 2). They think that good science writing is characterized with originality, integrity, accuracy, clarity, and persuasiveness. Also, both Liu and

Zhang addressed the importance of visual aids for scholarly publication, such as pictures, figures, and graphs. As Liu stated:

> Generally every journal has rigorous requirements on the format of electronic artwork, like the minimum resolution of images. The images which are not presented appropriately or accurately have to be resubmitted and even suffer rejection.

Zhang echoed Liu's perspectives on the rigor of visual aids and also highlighted the effective use of pictures, "A picture is worth a thousand words. The graphs illustrating the results neatly can sure be a plus for the manuscript. I am very concerned with the graphs I draw in my paper."

In addition, Liu particularly mentioned the mediator of time in writing for publication. With the rapid advancement of science, scientists strive to reveal their findings in a timely manner so as to disseminate the updated knowledge and to add their voice to the international conversation. As Liu maintained:

> Nowadays, time really counts in science publication. If you have obtained some novel findings in your research, you should write the article and have the results published as soon as possible. Or else, it may not be considered innovative when more researchers conduct similar experiments and get the insightful results.

3.5 Community: academically and editorially

In the writing for publication process, there are lots of participants who lend direction to the shared publication activity at hand. These participants form a community with members interacting and mediating with one another. The interviewees' strategic mediation within the community is reflected from their responses to the questions of others' revisions and suggestions (Interview Question 5) and the activities beneficial for their publication (Interview Question 9). According to the interview data, the author classified the community into both academic and editorial communities. The participants stated that successful publication involves meaningful communication with the members from both these communities.

The academic community consists of the researcher himself/herself, supervisor/boss, language professionals, colleagues, and peers, etc. The importance of interaction with the community members was indicated in Yang's excerpt:

> During my Ph.D. study, my supervisor was strict in my academic endeavors. He encouraged me to aim high and ushered me general guidance for scholarly publication. I also received great help during writing from language professionals. I turned to my friend, an English teacher, for language assistance. In my current working contexts here in America, more people can provide support. The most important person is my boss. He not only negotiates with me before I write, but also offers detailed feedback after I write. Look, this is her written response to my previous paper (taking out the revised text). Also worth-mentioning is coauthors' or colleagues' reactions. My current lab is cooperating with other labs. These collaborators in other labs offer valuable feedback to us about our paper in different disciplines: i.e. statistics, chemistry, and biology.

Worthy of note, academic communities may display different power relations. Postdoctoral researchers are subordinate to their bosses, and they have to be subservient sometimes. Liu implied the subtle relations with his boss:

> We do not always negotiate well on our experiment design. Sometimes we are not on the same page. I had to either try to convince her that I am right or I had to follow her ideas when she firmly defended them. Anyway, she is my boss and I need to take any actions that she suggests.

Liu continued with the theme of power relations and implied the contradictions between him and his boss in response to Interview Question 8 regarding the hindrance of their scholarly writing for publication.

> I derived some interesting findings using a novel research technique in my experiment previously and I wanted to have them disseminated as soon as possible. However, my boss did not assent my idea. She would like me to delve deeper and reach more 'exciting' results before we wrote for publication. Recently, I reviewed the literature and found a newly published paper addressing

> a similar technique as we used in our experiment, so now we have to kind of switch our attention to explore something new and novel.

In addition to the above community members, both Zhang and Liu reflected on the scaffolding from a professional editorial service when they submitted to an international journal for the first time in China. Zhang said:

> For the first time I decided on submission to an international journal, I first had one of my friends who is an EFL teacher proofread my paper and then I found a professional editorial service from Europe, which charged me like 500 Euros. Their revisions shaped my manuscript in a large degree.

Liu also stressed the importance of professional editorial services and he referred to one revised version of his manuscript from an editorial service. He stated that an editorial service can provide professional assistance, especially for novices. The people in the editorial services can be regarded as "shapers," who participate in the editorial process, but whose names are not listed on the publications (Burrough-Boenisch, 2003).

Regarding the shapers' role in enhancing rigor of the manuscript, Liu said:

> It directed specifically to your target journal and led you to be sensitive to rigid publication norms and the statistics rules, etc. You see, it is mentioned here that 'Please note the title should not exceed 60 characters with spaces. We have used the abbreviation MAPK as this appears undefined in many Medline titles.' It is also stated here 'Please consider stating if the data were first tested for normality of distribution.'

Moreover, as the three researchers regarded, even more important are the comments from the editorial community, i.e. the reviewers and the editor. The courteous interaction among the community members facilitates the activity of publication. Liu commented that he was very receptive to reviewers' feedback so as to move things forward. He said:

> We always carefully evaluated the reviewers' critical comments, responded to their suggestions point-by-point, and revised the manuscript thoroughly. All the

> changes made to the text were marked in red so that the reviewers and editors could easily identify the modifications.

In addition to showing meticulousness in response to reviewers' comments, Yang stated the necessity of having a diplomatic negotiation with editorial members using her anecdote.

> If your paper is not rejected, you are lucky. You may receive a letter requiring modification from the editor and he or she will also forward to you insightful comments from three reviewers. I always took their ideas very seriously and responded to each reviewer' ideas meticulously. Generally, their comments are in great detail. They may point out grammatical mistakes (i.e. tense); they may ask you to rephrase a certain passage; they may require you to revisit the literature and improve your synthesis connecting the established literature to your study. What we may be reluctant to do is to conduct further experiments and make major changes to the paper, before the revised paper is reviewed once again. I once had a successful experience handling this situation. For one of my studies, one reviewer suggested a follow-up experiment. However, considering it unnecessary, I convinced him to stand on my side by showing similar strands of literature and offering consolidate research evidence. All in all, the external verifications are very crucial in the whole writing for publication process.

3.6 Dual Roles: as author and as researcher

During the writing-for-publication process, the postdoctoral researchers assume two main roles, one as author and the other as researcher. Their reactions to questions of goals, target audience, and activities before and during writing (Interview Questions 1, 3, and 4 respectively) elicited the two types of roles that they play.

As the first author, all the researchers take initiative to communicate with all the other co-authors before, during, and after writing. They communicate via emails with their collaborators on a regular basis. Zhang pointed out that the collaborators in the group share their ideas in Google Docs. Though he keeps most notes in Google Docs, there are occasions that other co-authors make modification and add the viewpoints.

Meanwhile, these authors attached great importance to readers. Liu regarded his target audience/reader as fellow researchers in the same field or similar discipline, including editors and university faculty. Zhang targeted his audience as senior scientists, in his words, "Da Niu" (literate translation: big bull, which means influential figures in Chinese) in the field. As for Yang's target audience, there is a special group – researchers from laboratories of corporation in addition to academia. She said:

> The researchers from the company pay great attention to our experiments, because it is interdisciplinary and can be applied in pharmacy. It may bring economic benefits to a company through the joint efforts in research after the acknowledgement of mutual interests.

Furthermore, Liu highlighted the importance of the editor as audience. As Mungra and Webber point out (2010), the editor has the final responsibility of accepting or rejecting manuscripts and thus can confer authority and help to disseminate knowledge. Liu says:

> It is vital to leave a good impression on the editor by writing well, providing appealing graphs, and interacting with courtesy in correspondence. A delicate knack is to cite in your article one or two papers which have been published in the same target journal, which is of great interest to the editors. This may be a general implicit rule applied in all scholarly writing across disciplines.

As to the role as researcher, Liu mentioned that he publishes scholarly papers so as to disseminate insightful results, to spread their research achievements, and to influence fellow scientists so that they will be able to make concerted efforts to further advance science. Yang pointed out the importance of a bridge linking previous research to current research. "We make advancements in our research by standing on the shoulders of many giants. Our current research, of course, should in turn offer some insights for future research." Zhang commented that as a researcher, he would strive for quality publications, not only for himself, but add more Chinese voices to the international communication in his field.

4. Discussion of findings

Through the interviews with three Chinese science postdoctoral researchers who reflected on their writing for publication experiences, the present study has investigated what motive and artifacts mediate the researcher's writing processes for international-refereed publications and also explored how the three researchers strategically mediated their writing within academic and editorial writing communities. From a sociocultural perspective, human actions are mediated by social-semiotic tools, material artifacts, and the communities that they are situated in. According to activity system (Engeström, 1987, 1999) and based on the analysis of data collected from the study, the author proposed Writing for Publication System (Figure 2) to illustrate researchers' mediated actions in the process of writing for publication.

In the writing for publication diagram, mediating artifacts located at the vertex of the triangle, afford and constrain researchers' cognition and writing activity. In the upper part of the diagram, the "subject" is the postdoctoral researcher, who is portrayed as mediated by cultural tools and signs. "Object", describing the orientation of the activity, refers to the research paper writing and reviewing at which mediated activity is directed and which is molded or transformed into the outcome of publication. The interview revealed that the researchers' writing for publication is a "process mediated by semiotic resources" (Donato, 2000, p.45). The three participants develop their scholarly writing through appropriating and internalizing a variety of mediating artifacts.

These mediating tools include electronic bilingual dictionaries, relevant literature, library database, Google search, grant proposals, and such reference management software as Endnote, which reflect the social cultural historical contexts. Their language reuse of academic texts echoes with the findings of previous literature (Flowerdew & Li, 2007; Okamura, 2006). The utilization of L1 and L2 also provide roles on some occasions. Though they do not negate the use of L1, the three researchers in the current study stated that they predominantly use L2 to mediate their writing actions. This finding is different from that identified in Flowerdew (1999), which addressed the frequent use of L1 during L2 writing process among science researchers in Hong Kong. The discrepancy may be attributed to the participants' high English proficiency in this study or more likely stem from the monolingual working context in which they are exposed to the target language.

The bases of the diagram–rules, community, and division of labor provide a "conceptual framework that brings together local human activity and larger social-cultural-historical structures" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 222). In the writing-for-publication process, the rule or the publication norm plays an indispensable role. The three researchers pointed out their awareness of diverse publication rules, ranging from submission guideline, slides made by the editors, widely acknowledged criteria of well-written science articles to visual aids, publication efficiency, and citation of papers in the same target journal. These implicit and explicit rules afford the goings-on within a writing-for-publication activity system.

The researchers' writing process is by no means isolated. The researchers have an explicit view of writing as a nonlinear dynamic process by interacting with other community members. "Community" in the activity system refers to all the participants who lend direction to the shared publication activity at hand. As indicated in the findings, the writing for publication community falls into two categories: academic and editorial communities. The academic community consists of the researcher himself/herself, supervisor/boss, language professionals, colleagues/peers etc. The editorial community is mainly comprised of the reviewers and the editor. The interaction and contradiction among the community members facilitate the activity of publication. As the three participants reflected, the academic community members set the same publication goal, share the joint responsibility, and negotiate their roles for writing for publication. Within the editorial community, the researchers try the best possible means to initiate a good negotiation with the gatekeepers.

Whether academically or editorially, members of the community interacted and mediated, each playing a dispensable role, which constitutes "division of labor" i.e. writing papers and reviewing papers. According to Engeström (1993), the division of labor refers not only to the horizontal actions and interactions among the members of the community but also "to the vertical divisions of power and status" (p.67). The findings in this study exactly corroborated this viewpoint. In the interview, Yang more than once stated that she did her utmost to express her boss' perspectives in writing. She has been hired by the boss and her research is part of her boss's grant. The difference in power between her and the boss was strongly inferred. To take another example, the higher status of editors was implied in Liu's scenario. He regarded it vital to leave a good

impression on the editor by writing well, providing appealing graphics and engaging in courtesy correspondence. He also considered it important to refer to the PowerPoint slides made by the editors for some publication strategies and to cite in the manuscript one or two papers published in the target journal.

In the writing for publication process, the researchers assume two different roles: author and researcher. As the first author, they cooperate with their respective coauthors closely by face-to-face negotiation, email correspondence, or document sharing via Google Docs. They also bear their readers in mind when they write their research papers. As researcher, they displayed some degree of dedication to the science career. They set high publication goals to advance their future career. Their actions are highly motivated by concrete objectives. Despite the fact that the three researchers set similar publication targets, their activities are mediated by different motives. For Zhang and Liu, they strive to publish in a prestigious international journal with a high SCI impact factor rating so as to be promoted to the position of full professor on their return to their home country. For Yang, she works hard to publish more influential papers in order to facilitate the process of her application for U.S. permanent residence. Therefore, researchers, as historically and sociologically situated active agents, are recognized through sharing their writing for publication experiences.

Taken together, as discussed in the findings, the three researchers reported their mediated processes in the writing for publication. They set publication goals for specific purposes. They use a variety of cultural artifacts, including tools, signs, and rules to mediate their writing. In order to achieve their publication goals, they comply with the publication norms, socialize with people from both academic and editorial communities, and fulfill their social roles. It is worth noting that some changes occur in their mediated writing processes after they came to America, such as their publication motives, academic communities, and artifacts mediating their writing. All of these mediated actions are essential components of the writing process that contribute to the ultimate goal of getting their research accepted in an international publication.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, this study explored three Chinese postdoctoral researchers' writing-for-publication experiences from a sociocultural perspective by using individual reflective

interviews. Departing from the traditional cognitive view of writing strategies, this study explored L2 learner strategy as "socially mediated plan or action to meet a goal, which is related directly or indirectly to L2 learning" (Oxford & Schramm, 2007, p. 48). The reported mediated writing-for-publication processes are analyzed within the framework of activity theory. Drawing on Engeström's (1987, 1999) activity system, the author has evaluated the four important constituent factors: objects, artifacts, community, and division of labor, which afford and constrain the goings-on in the researchers' writing for publication processes. On one hand, the study identified different motives and a variety of artifacts which mediate the three researchers' writing for publication. On the other hand, it discovered how the researchers, as agents, negotiate and interact with other community members so as to achieve their publication goals. The current study, introducing the happy marriage between writing for publication and activity theory, will contribute to L2 writing research in more encompassing ways.

In the future, more research is needed to further examine researchers' writing for publication processes from a sociocultural perspective to provide a broader picture of the dynamics of post-doctoral researchers' writing for publication. The participants may include researchers from different disciplines, novices or experts, who will be invited to reflect on their writing for publication strategies and mediated processes. Also, since the recursive and dynamic process of writing for publication would require a long time commitment, a longitudinal study needs to be conducted to further examine the dialogic within academic and editorial communities. Ethnographic approach is also encouraged so as to document researcher's strategic development in situ and to explore the community of practice through which novice researchers are apprenticed into full participation and develop into competent members (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Moreover, to delve into the influence of historical, cultural, and social contexts on the writing-for-publication process, the study would be significant on comparing the ESL writing-for-publication process of researchers working in their home country and those working in the country of a target language.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

I. Basic information of the participants:

1) What is your major? When did you obtain your Ph.D. degree?

2) When did you embark on the postdoctoral research in the USA? Why?

3) How long have you been working on the scholarly writing for publication since you submitted your first paper to an international journal?

4) How many of your research papers have been accepted for publication in international refereed journals?

II. Questions about their publication strategies and experiences

1) What goals do you set for your publication? Do the goals affect how you write?

2) What makes a good science writing in your opinion?

3) Who do you think the reader/audience is when you write?

4) What do you attend to before and during the writing?

5) Do you revise? Do others edit and offer suggestions? If yes, please elaborate on it (using texts when necessary).

6) What useful tools do you employ for your academic writing?

7) How do you use Chinese and English when thinking and writing?

8) Is there any factor that hinders your scholarly publication, to some extent?

9) Combining the study-at-home and study-abroad experience, please reflect on the activities you benefit from to have your research paper published in the target journal.

Figure 1: Activity system (based on Engeström 1987, 1999)

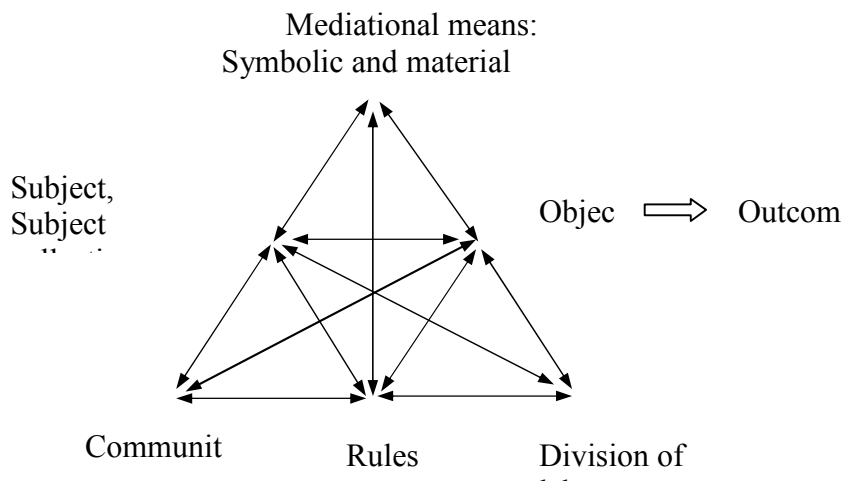
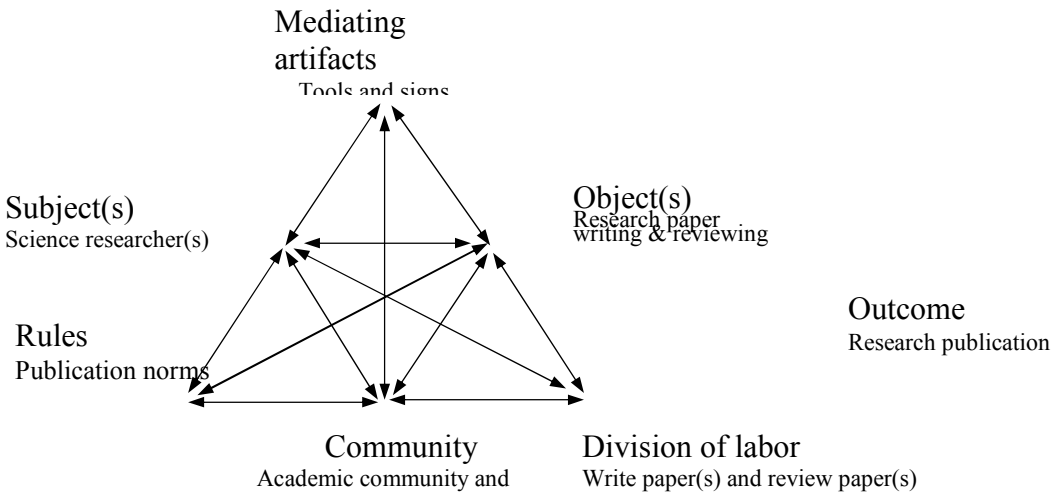


Figure 2: Writing for publication system (based on Engeström, 1987, 1999)



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A Cross-Cultural Study of Generic Structure and Linguistic Patterns in MA Thesis Acknowledgements

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Biodata

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Abstract

Acknowledgements are an indispensable part of academic writing such as print books, research articles, and student theses. This paper adopts a contrastive generic analysis approach to explore the move structure and linguistic patterns of MA theses and their variation from three varieties of English: Philippine English, American English, and Chinese English. A corpus of fifteen samples of acknowledgements in MA theses by linguistics majors from each variety of English is set up. Three research questions are raised: 1. What is the move structure of MA thesis acknowledgements in Philippine English, American English, and Chinese English? 2. Is there any cross-cultural variation in MA thesis acknowledgements in Philippine English, American English, and Chinese English? 3. What linguistic patterns are often used to express gratitude in MA thesis acknowledgements in Philippine English, American English, and Chinese English? A two-move-step scheme is identified and the obligatory move in student theses is the thanking move, two steps of which are mandatory, thanking for academic assistance and thanking for moral support. Difference in cultural background among the three varieties of English was used to explain the variation. In terms of linguistic pattern, American

English tends to use performative verbs more often while Chinese English prefers nominalization. In the concluding part, the implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: MA thesis acknowledgements; Philippine English; American English; Chinese English; move structure; language pattern

1. Introduction

Since the early 1980s, applied linguists and language teachers, especially those concerned with the teaching of EAP and ESP, have shown a great deal of interest in genre-based approaches to the analysis of academic and professional discourses (Swales, 1990; Hyland, 2004; Paltridge, 2007). This interest has largely assisted EAP and ESP teachers in that it has helped to show how the meaning potential of language is actualized in various contexts. That is, genre analysis constitutes a useful framework to explain the choice of forms that are appropriate in particular contexts, and how this knowledge can be applied in classroom settings.

This purpose of this study is to explore the move structure and linguistic patterns of MA theses and their variation from three varieties of English; Philippine English, American English, and Chinese English from a constrative generic perspective.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. The first section introduces basic concepts and reviews previous studies, justifies the significance of the study, and presents the research questions. The second section describes the methodology. The third section presents and discusses the results. This last section summarises the findings of the paper and provides orientation for future studies.

2. Literature review

2.1 Genre analysis

Genre analysis is a long-established research approach in literary studies (Corbett, 2006). But interest in analysis of non-literary genres and endorsement of genre analysis as a pedagogical approach is a recent trend (Coffin, 2001). Drawing on Swales (1990), Bhatia (1993) defines a genre as "a recognisable communicative event characterised by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalised with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of

their intent, positioning, form, and functional value" (p.13). Bhatia's (1993) definition points to the shared knowledge of a genre by a discourse community. Genres differ from each other on the basis of the different purposes they serve. For example, research articles, grant proposals, and books belong to different genres. Furthermore, a genre places structural constraints on its componential parts, such as its beginning, body, and ending. Writers may exploit the conventions for private intents and have the freedom to use linguistic resources in the way they like (Kachru & Smith, 2008). Nonetheless, they have to conform to certain standard practices.

Yunick (1997) and Paltridge (2007) identified three schools of genre analysis in non-literary genres: English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (e.g., Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993); Australian educational linguistics (e.g., Martin, 1989; Halliday & Martin, 1993); and New Rhetoric (e.g., Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995). According to Yunick (1997), "all the three schools share the common goal of analyzing the relation of social function to language use in particular culturally recognized contexts and applying the analysis to language learning contexts" (p. 322).

However, ESP and Australian educational linguistics are more pedagogy oriented while New Rhetoric is more theoretically and research oriented (Coffin, 2001). As a result, ESP and Australian educational linguistics endorse linguistic methods as a means of analyzing texts by paying more attention to form of discourse and advocating explicit instruction of schematic structures and their associated grammatical features, whereas New Rhetoric adopts an ethnographic approach, examining the relationship between genre and context and stressing the importance of consciousness of genre structure through performance. ESP and Australian educational linguistics are grounded in different linguistic theories. ESP is built on applied linguistics, while Australian educational linguistics originates in systemic functional linguistics (SFL). Additionally, Australian educational linguistics relies first on a genre analyst's intuition to break a text down into stages and then justifies the analysis with realizational patterns, while ESP checks moves against evidence gathered from the discourse community, through observation and interview (Corbett, 2006).

This paper follows Swales's (1990) and Bhatia's (1993) move analysis method, in which moves are considered semantic/functional units or segments of texts which can be identified first because of their communicative purpose and second because of linguistic

boundaries typical of the moves. A more rigorous definition of move can be found in Nwogu (1991), who defines move as "a text segment made up of a bundle of linguistic features (lexical meanings, propositional meanings, illocutionary forces, etc.) which give the segment a uniform orientation and signal the content of discourse in it" (p.114). Furthermore, each move is made up of several constituent elements or sub-moves. Nwogu's (1991) elaboration highlights two things; moves are composed of steps (constituent elements) and each move is made up of distinct linguistic features so as to signal boundaries between moves.

In move analysis, a text is broken down into several purposive moves. A move in turn divided into its componential steps. Take for example Swales' (1990) create a research space (CARS) model for article introductions. An article introduction usually comprises three moves: move 1 (establishing a territory), move 2 (establishing a niche) and move 3 (occupying the niche). Move 1 (establishing a territory) can be brown down into three steps; step 1 (claiming centrality), and/or step 2 (making topic generalization(s)), and/ or step 3 (reviewing items of previous research). Because each move has a different purpose, it is reasonable to assume that each move is realized differently in linguistic terms. Hence analysis of lexico-grammatical features is an indispensable part of move analysis (Bhatia, 1993).

2.2 Contrastive rhetoric

Kaplan (1966) examined papers written by several ESL students including Arabic speakers, native speakers of Korean, native speakers of French, and native speakers of Latin American Spanish and found that linguistic patterns and rhetorical conventions from the L1 often transfer negatively into L2 writing. This seminal work marks the beginning of contrastive rhetoric.

In its first 20 years, contrastive rhetoric was mainly concerned with expository essay writing by ESL students. Then in the 1980s, student essays of other text types, such as narration and argumentation were also investigated. Connor (1996) defines contrastive rhetoric as "an area of research in second language acquisition that identifies problems in composition encountered by second language writers and, by referring to the rhetorical strategies of the first languages, attempts to explain them" (p. 5). However, that definition fails to reflect recent developments in the field. A growing number of scholars have

extended the contrastive rhetoric concept to comparisons of writing in specific genres in different languages or different varieties of the same language, thus it is no longer restricted to the study of student essays.

2.3 Contrastive generic analysis

Genre analysis was adopted into contrastive rhetoric as a research approach in the 1980s and has been proven quite fruitful in that it has resulted in many contrastive genre-specific studies, which include cross-linguistic genre-specific research (e.g., Connor, 1996) and genre-specific studies across varieties of Englishes (e.g., Kathpalia, 1997). For example, Kathpalia (1997) explored the cross-cultural generic variation in book blurbs in books published by international publishers and Singaporean publishers. He observed that the publishers of the two categories followed the general conventions of book blurbs. However, there are also differences between them. First, there are differences in the favored moves and the distribution of moves across scholarly popular books. In addition, there are also differences in the exploitation of linguistic patterns that international and local book blurbs seem to prefer. Evaluation-related lexical items and expressions can be found in more moves in international book blurbs while such expressions are restricted to the evaluation move in local book blurbs. While contrastive rhetoric has expanded to examine many domains in academic writing and professional writing, such as research articles, grant proposals, business writing, editorials, resumes, and political discourse, although there is an increase in cross-cultural genre-specific studies, some genres are represented by only a single study (Connor, 1996). Thus Connor (1996) called for more research using contrastive rhetoric to triangulate and strengthen findings.

In addition, with the development of the notion of World Englishes, some linguists claim conventions of writing also differ across varieties of English. For example, Kachru & Smith (2008) maintained, "There are different conventions that govern the structure of writing in various world Englishes" (p. 135). That is to say, conventions of writing differ across varieties. For one thing, writers are socialized to different cultural norms in their local communities and will bring with them these socio-cultural conventions in their writing. For another, phonology, vocabulary, and grammar differ across varieties of English. Finally, discourse, for example, genres and structures of texts differ in World Englishes. According to Kachru's (1985) three concentric circles of

English, the countries involved in this research lie in each of the different circles; American English is in the Inner Circle, Philippine English in the Outer Circle, and Chinese English in the Expanding Circle.

2.4 Acknowledgements

Written acknowledgments, as can be found in print books, MA theses, PhD dissertations, and research articles are pragmatically elaborate texts which are not purely informational but also interactive in the sense that they always accomplish a reader sensitive interpersonal meaning (Giannoni, 2002). Acknowledgements as a genre have received little research attention despite its being an indispensable section in published texts and student theses. Giannoni (2002) was one of the first few scholars who paid attention to the genre of acknowledgements in academic writing. He studied the difference between English and Italian research article acknowledgements and identified two moves, an optional 'introductory move' and an obligatory 'credit mapping' move comprising three possible steps; allocating credit to institutions, to individuals, and claiming responsibility. Giannoni (2006) looked into the genre of acknowledgements in English academic books. Cross-disciplinary differences in the distribution of pragmalinguistic features, such as hyperbole, irony, and emotivity, were found in the hard sciences (mathematics, medicine, and biology) and the soft sciences (applied linguistics, economics, and social sciences).

Following Giannoni (2002), Hyland (2004) explored thanks expressing in the genre of acknowledgements in PhD and MA dissertations written by 240 Hong Kong English speakers from 6 different broad academic disciplines; Electronic engineering, computer science, business studies, biology, applied linguistics, and public administration. He identified three moves in those acknowledgements: a reflecting move, a thanking move, and an announcing move. Each move is composed of one or more steps and not all moves show up in all the acknowledgements; only the thanking move is obligatory while the other are optional. Hyland (2004) found that all thanks included reasons for acknowledging the person who gave help. He concluded writers weren't only addressing the people they acknowledged, who presumably knew the help they had given, but a much wider audience.

2.5 Significance of the study

The genre of student acknowledgements has received little research attention. Hyland's (2004) study is on the generic structure of acknowledgements by EFL writers (Cantonese and Mandarin speakers writing in English). Thus the research needs to be extended to English L1 writers (American English), and ESL writers (Philippine English) so that cross-cultural similarities and differences in acknowledgements writing can be explored. Similarly, deeper investigation should be carried out in one particular discipline such as the field of linguistics.

In addition, the current study tests Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimension of power distance and uncertainty avoidance in the genre of MA thesis acknowledgements, which highlights the negotiation of interpersonal meaning. Along the power distance dimension, culture is divided into low power distance cultures, in which superiors and subordinates are considered more equal, and high power distance culture, in which a rigid social hierarchy is maintained. On the basis of the index values in Hofstede (2001), the United States is low power distance (40), while the Philippines (94) and China (80) are high power distance. Terms of address and honorifics are two linguistic vehicles to mark power distance. Along the dimension of uncertainty, a distinction between high uncertainty avoidance and low uncertainty avoidance cultures is made. High uncertainty avoidance cultures show low tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity and vice versa. The difference between high and low uncertainty avoidance can be likened to Hall's (1976) dichotomy between low context vs. high context culture. In language-specific behavior, high uncertainty avoidance is oriented towards explicitness, directness, and linearity, while low uncertainty is related to implicitness, indirectness, and circularity (House, 1996). On the basis of Hofstede (2001), China (30) represents low uncertainty avoidance, while the Philippines (44) and the United States (46) are comparatively high uncertainty avoidance.

2.6 Research questions

The research questions addressed in this research are the following:

- What is the move structure of MA thesis acknowledgements in Philippine English, American English, and Chinese English?

- Is there any cross-cultural variation in MA thesis acknowledgements between Philippine English, American English, and Chinese English?
- What linguistic patterns are often used to express gratitude in MA thesis acknowledgements in Philippine English, American English, and Chinese English?

3. Methodology

This section presents the data collection method and data coding scheme.

3.1 Data

A corpus of 45 acknowledgements in MA theses was created, with 15 texts from the Philippines, China, and the United States respectively. The theses were selected from one university based in the United States, one in China, and one in the Philippines. The student writers were all linguistics majors. To ensure the writers of the 15 American MA theses are native speakers of English, the writer's curriculum vitae at the back of the MA was referred to and they were confirmed to be native speakers. As for the Philippine English data set, I mainly relied on the Philippine attributes of the thesis writers' family names to make sure they are Philippine English speakers. Table 1 describes the word counts of the acknowledgment corpus. As can be seen, Philippine English data contains the largest number of words in the three data sets, while Chinese English data contains the smallest number of words.

Table 1. Acknowledgments corpus

Varieties of English	**Texts**	**Words**	**Average**
Philippine English	15	4846	323.1
American English	15	4549	303.3
Chinese English	15	3457	230.5
Total	**45**	**12852**	**856.9**

3.2 Coding scheme

Hyland's (2004) move-step scheme, as shown in Table 2, was used to code the data.

Table 2. Move structure of thesis acknowledgements

1. Reflecting move	Introspective comment on the writer's research experience
2. Thanking move	Mapping credit to individuals and institutions
2.1 presenting participants	Introducing those to be thanked
2.2 thanking for academic assistance	Thanks for intellectual support, ideas, analyses feedback, etc.
2.3 thanking for resources	Thanks for data access and clerical, technical or financial support
2.4. thanking for moral support	Thanks for encouragement, friendship, sympathy, patience, etc.
3. Announcing move	Statements delineating responsibility and inspiration
3.1 accepting responsibility	An assertion of authorial responsibility for flaws or errors
3.2 dedicating the thesis	A formal dedication of the thesis to an individual(s)

(Hyland, 2004, p. 308)

One example of coding is given below in Example 1, from a Chinese MA thesis. First, a move is identified on the basis of its communicative purpose, whether to reflect on the process of thesis writing, the pursuit of an MA degree, gratitude to those who give help to the writer, or claim responsibility for flaws, or to dedicate the thesis. Then, the move is broken down into its constituent elements (steps) which contribute information about the move from a different perspective.

Example 1. Coding

2. Thanking move	
2.1 Presenting participants (one instance)	Permit me to express my gratitude to the people that have extended their helping hands during the preparation and compiling of this thesis.
2.2 Thanking for academic assistance (one instance)	And first of all, my heart-felt thanks should be given to Pro. Xi Xiaoming, who has spared me so much of her time and effort to read and listen to my research plan and proposal, and whose instructions and encouragement, I think, are the most strong support and incentive that help me to carry about my plans. In fact, I could never thank her enough for her contribution to my research work.
2.3 Thanking for resources (one instance)	Secondly, I should thank Dr. Li Bing of Hunan University, for his generosity in providing with the materials I need in the thesis. My trip to Changsa to collect materials was very happy and fruitful.

2.4. Thanking for moral support (two instances)	Thirdly, I am grateful for my family. They have given me a lot of encouragement and understanding in the three years' study. Finally, I thank my classmates for their help in my study and research.
3. Announcing move	
3.1 Accepting responsibility (one instance)	All errors occurring in this thesis remain my responsibility.

4. Results and discussion

This section reports and discusses the results of the move-step structure of MA acknowledgements, illustrates the steps with examples from each variety of English, and finally analyses the linguistic patterns of expressing gratitude.

4.1 Move structure

Table 3 displays the percentage of acknowledgements in each step by variety of Englishes.

Table 3. Percentage of acknowledgements in each step by variety of English

	Philippine English	American English	Chinese English
1. Reflecting move	0	0	0
2. Thanking move			
Step 2.1	67%	60%	73%
Step 2.2	100%	100%	100%
Step 2.3	93%	73%	73%
Step 2.4	100%	100%	100%
3. Announcing move			
Step 3.1	0	0	13%
Step 3.2	20%	0	0

As shown in the table, no instance of a reflecting move was found in the three sets of data, implying this move is optional in MA acknowledgements. Likewise, move 3, announcing move, was under-represented, since only two occurrences of step 3.1, accepting responsibility, were found in the Chinese English data, and only three instances

of step 3.2, dedicating the thesis were identified in the Philippine English data. In my opinion, there are several reasons for the underrepresentation of move 1 and move 3 in the data. First, both the moves are optional, so students majoring in linguistics may be more likely to opt out of the two moves, confirmed by Hyland's (2004) findings, as he reported that in applied linguistics only 13% of the data contained step 3.1 and 11% step 3.2. Another reason for their underrepresentation lies in the fact that "dedication" was treated as a separate section in some MA theses, rather than as an optional move in the acknowledgment section. Indeed, five instances of standalone dedication sections were found in the American English data and four in the Philippine English data. However, no sign of stand alone dedications were found in the Chinese English data.

In contrast, move 2, the thanking move, was identified in all the texts from each variety of English. Out of the total of 15 samples from each variety of English, step 2.1, presenting participants, was identified in ten MA theses in the Philippine English data, nine MA in the American English data, and eleven in the Chinese English data, indicating little difference between the three sets of data. Step 2.3, thanking for resources, was found in 14 MA theses in the Philippine English data, eleven in the American English data, and eleven in the Chinese English data. Judging from the instances of occurrence, it can be concluded that step 2.1 and step 2.3 are optional in MA acknowledgements. By contrast, step 2.2, thanking for academic assistance and step 2.4, thanking for moral support, were identified in all the MA theses sampled from each variety of English, indicating they are obligatory in MA acknowledgements.

In addition, recursion of steps within the thanking move was a common feature of the corpus. Table 4 shows the average number of steps per text. Philippine English acknowledgements were the most complex since each text contains the largest number of steps. This can be explained by the *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude) culture in the Philippines and the Philippines as a high uncertainty avoidance culture, both of which would encourage expressing explicit gratitude to many different individuals.

Table 4. Text complexity: Average number of steps per text

	Total steps	Average steps	Average words per step
Philippine English	194	12.9	25

American English	113	7.5	40
Chinese English	93	6.2	37

Chinese English acknowledgements were the least complex not only in terms of the average number of steps per text, but also because of the arrangement of steps. From a low uncertainty avoidance culture, Chinese writers tend to conflate gratitude towards different people into a single step, by expressing thanks to a group of people (e.g., friends) rather than using separate steps to deliver gratitude to individuals. Most Chinese MA acknowledgements in the data followed the pattern of presenting participants, thanking for academic assistance (usually involving recursion, such as thanking supervisor and thanking other professors for instruction), thanking for resources and thanking for moral support, as seen in Example 1.

Unlike their Chinese counterparts, no regular arrangement pattern was observed in Philippine English acknowledgements. Some acknowledgements begin with thanking for moral support (usually thanking for Jesus Christ). Some begin with the step of presenting participants, and others with thanking for academic assistance (usually thanking for committee members). Steps of different types tended to be scattered around the text. In the American English data set, no regular pattern of step arrangement was found. However, steps of the same type tended to border on each other rather than occur randomly.

Table 5 shows the average frequency of each step in each text. In the Philippine English data, step 2.4, thanking for moral support was the most frequently recycled step, followed by step 2.3, thanking for resources. Thanking for moral support was the most frequently repeated in the Philippine MA thesis acknowledgements because there is always a step of thanking for moral support from Jesus Christ, in addition to moral support from family members, colleagues, friends, and sometimes professors.

Table 5. Relative frequency of steps in each text

	Philippine English	American English	Chinese English
1 Reflecting move	0	0	0
2 Thanking move			

Step 2.1	0.7	0.7	0.7
Step 2.2	3.1	3	2.6
Step 2.3	3.9	1.3	1
Step 2.4	5.1	2.5	1.7
3 Announcing move			
Step 3.1	0	0	0.1
Step 3.2	0.2	0	0
Total	13	7.5	6.1

In the American English data and the Chinese English data, step 2.2, thanking for academic assistance, is often repeated. In Chinese MA thesis acknowledgements, the thesis adviser and professors who taught the thesis writer on courses are often thanked separately. In American MA thesis acknowledgements, there are separate expressions of gratitude to the committee members.

4.1.1 Thanking move

This is the only obligatory move in the genre of MA thesis acknowledgements. It is used to map credit to individuals and institutions for their support in the process of taking the MA program and thesis writing. In the following, all the four types of steps that constitute a thanking move will be illustrated with examples from each variety of English respectively.

Presenting participants

In this step, the thesis writer introduces those to be thanked. Thanks to specific persons for specific reasons are extended in following steps, such as thanking for academic assistance, thanking for resources, and thanking for moral support. In the following three examples, the thesis writer used this step to signal the purpose of the move, that is, to express thanks.

> *Example 2.* The author wishes to give recognition to the following persons without whose inspiration and support, this thesis would never have been possible. (Philippine English)
>
> *Example 3.* The key aspect to any good work is a support system of people. I have experienced so much support and help from my family, friends, students, and

colleagues through the process of creating this thesis and I am so very grateful. (American English)

Example 4. Permit me to express my gratitude to the people that have extended their helping hands during the preparation and compiling of this thesis. (Chinese English)

Thanking for academic assistance

In this step, the thesis writer expresses thanks for intellectual support, ideas, analyses feedback, etc. In Example 4, the writer expresses her gratitude to her thesis adviser. In Philippine MA theses, members of defense panel are also likely to be thanked in addition to the thesis adviser. However, in Chinese MA theses, the supervisor and other professors who played a teaching role and in American theses committee members receive the gratitude.

One difference was noticed between American English and Asian Englishes (including Chinese English and Philippine English) in the data. American thesis writers often tended to address thesis adviser by his/her full name or first name, whereas Chinese and Philippine MA thesis writers opted for Title + Full Name, as shown in Examples 5-7. This is perhaps because teachers and students are more or less on equal terms in the American context and students are encouraged to address their teachers by their first names to show intimacy while in Asian context, teachers are usually considered authorities who demand respect from their students. This interpretation corroborates Hofstede's (2001) distinction between low power distance culture (the United States) and high power distance culture (the Philippines and China).

Example 5. Of course, these acknowledgements would not be complete without mentioning the great help extended to me by my gentle but firm, meticulous but patient, wise but humble thesis adviser---Dr. Remedios Miciano. Had she not been my thesis adviser, this thesis would not have been accomplished in a very short span of time. To you, Ma'am, sincere admiration and heartfelt gratitude are hereby accorded! Thank you for making me realize that I still have a lot of things to learn. (Philippine English)

Example 6. I gratefully acknowledge Catherine Travis, my advisor and thesis chair, for her inspiration and guidance, and above all for her patience as I worked

to complete this thesis. In my early graduate classes, her enthusiasm for grammar and interaction inspired me to find my own passion for conversational analysis and throughout my graduate experience Catherine always encouraged me to reach higher, work harder and go the extra mile. I appreciate her professionalism, and the respect that she has shown me as I consulted with her about my data and methodology. I have immensely enjoyed working with her because she has always treated me in a way that made me feel more like a colleague and less like a student. (American English)

Example 7. Deep gratitude is given to my supervisor, Professor Yang Min for her valuable instructions, guidance and help during my writing of the thesis. Without her support and instruction, I would not have completed this thesis. (Chinese English)

Another difference between American English and Asian Englishes (Chinese English and Philippine English) is the prevalent phenomenon of name-dropping of people who may have had only a marginal contribution to the development of the thesis in the Chinese and Philippine English data set, illustrated in Example 8.

Example 8. Further, I do owe thanks to J. R. Martin and Peter R. R. White for sharing their extraordinary linguistic talent. (Chinese English)

It seems that the thesis writer is using such rhetorical choices as a strategy to win the protection of established figures in the field.

Thanking for providing resources

In this step, the thesis writer expresses his or her thanks for data access and clerical, technical or financial support, as in the following examples:

Example 9. The writer of this thesis acknowledges the help extended to his by the following individuals without whom this thesis would not have been a reality.

…Ate Nilda, the Department of English and Applied Linguistics Secretary, for efficiently arranging the schedule of both the proposal defense and final defense. She has also been of great help and assistance in several occasions since this writer's undergraduate years. (Philippine English)

Example 10. I am also sincerely thankful for those who have provided me with different forms of technical assistance. I am grateful to Ana Aurora Medina Murillo for assisting me in converting and cutting my sound files and for being an invaluable resource on Praat. I am also appreciative of Barbara Alt, who helped me with my statistical analysis, and Brittany Kubacki, who provided technical assistance during my thesis defense. (American English)

Example 11. Secondly, I should thank Dr. Li Bing of Hunan University, for his generosity in providing with the materials I need in the thesis. My trip to Changsha to collect materials was very happy and fruitful. (Chinese English)

Thanking for moral support

In this step, the thesis writer expresses thanks for encouragement, friendship, sympathy, patience, etc. The sources of moral support include Jesus Christ, family members, friends, colleagues, and sometimes teachers. In Examples 12 and 13, the thesis writers are grateful to Jesus Christ for his guidance. Example 14 highlights moral support from family members. The step of expressing gratitude to Lord was identified in all the 15 MA theses sampled from the Philippines. The same step was found in only two MA theses in the United States data and none were identified in the Chinese English acknowledgements. This is perhaps due to the majority of people in the Philippines being Catholic, making it customary to express gratitude to God for achievements.

Example 12. This piece of work would not have been possible without the intercession foremost of the Heavenly Father. He provides me with good health, endurance, and wisdom to move on despite odds and difficulties. (Philippine English)

Example 13. The resounding scripture that I referred to throughout this work was Proverbs 16:3 which states, “Commit your works to the Lord and your thoughts will be established.” Words on a page seem inadequate to thank my Savior, Jesus for what He has done to supply the joy on this road of life. His provision was abundant in bringing so many amazing people to aide me in this specific chapter of the journey. (American English)

Example 14. I am also indebted to my family, especially to my husband and my two brothers, for their love, encouragement and endless help, with whose support I could finish this thesis and lead a happy and peaceful life. (Chinese English)

4.1.2 Announcing move

In this move the thesis writer makes statements delineating responsibility and inspiration. In the following sections, the two types of steps that constitute an announcing move will be illustrated with examples from each variety of English respectively.

Accepting responsibility

The thesis writer uses this step to make an assertion of authorial responsibility for flaws or errors. This step was also identified in Giannoni (2002) as a constituent of the obligatory move "credit mapping" (p. 10).

Example 15. All errors occurring in this thesis remain my responsibility. (Chinese English)

Example 16. It goes without saying that I alone am responsible for any shortcomings that remain. (Chinese English)

However, only two instances were identified in the corpus and the step was restricted only to the Chinese MA theses.

Dedicating

The thesis writer uses this step to mark a formal dedication of the thesis to an individual or individuals.

Example 17. To the following who in one way or another made this study a realization of an illusive dream; thus, they keep my life meaningful and full of promises. This piece is dedicated. (Philippine English)

Example 18. This thesis paper is sincerely dedicated to them for making this challenging endeavor be possible in such a short time. (Philippine English)

However, only three instances were identified in the corpus and the step was restricted only to Philippine MA theses.

4.1.3 Outliers

This subsection reports and discusses some data that do not readily fit into the move-step scheme proposed by Hyland (2004). For example, half of the Philippine MA acknowledgements (7 instances) contained signatures and sometimes dates at the end of the text. Two Philippine acknowledgements also included quotations from the Bible or famous sayings. Half of the American MA acknowledgements (7 instances) bore the date at the end of the text. Do signature and date constitute optional moves? The answer to this question can only found if a larger corpus is built that covers more disciplines.

4.2 Linguistic patterns expressing gratitude

Besides differences in terms of move structure among the three varieties of English, the cross-cultural linguistic variation in expressing gratitude should also not be neglected. Hyland and Tse (2004) identified five patterns of expressing gratitude; nominalization, performative verb, adjective, passive, and bare mention in the MA and PhD dissertation acknowledgements.

Table 6 shows occurrences of such linguistic patterns across genre steps in American English and Chinese English MA thesis acknowledgements (Note: all these five linguistic patterns were underrepresented in Philippine English acknowledgements, and are hence not included in the statistics. Reasons for such underrepresentation will be discussed later). As can been seen, in the thanking for academic support step, American thesis writers tended to use performative verb patterns more often, which accounts for nearly 50% of all the linguistic patterns used, followed by bare mention (31%), while Chinese thesis writers were more likely to use nominalization patterns, which accounted for 57% of all the linguistic patterns used to express gratitude for academic support. In the step of thanking for moral support, American thesis writers again tended to use performative verb patterns, almost 50% of all the linguistic patterns used, followed by bare mention (nearly 25%), whereas Chinese thesis writers tended favored nominalization, performative verb, and adjective patterns equally, with the three patterns accounting for 92% of all the linguistic patterns used to express thanks for moral support.

Table 6. Occurrences of linguistic patterns across genre steps

	Noun		**Verb**		**Adjective**		**Passive**		**Mention**		**Total**	
	AE	CE	AE	CE	AE	CE	AE	CE	AE	CE	AE	CE
Presenting	2	5	4	5	2	1	0	0	2	0	10	11
Academic	6	24	23	4	4	10	0	3	15	1	48	42
Resources	6	8	9	6	5	1	0	0	0	0	20	15
Moral	8	9	20	7	5	7	0	1	10	1	43	25
Total	22	46	56	22	16	19	0	4	27	2	121	93

In the presenting participants and thanking for resources steps, the thesis writers did not seem to show a clear preference for a particular linguistic pattern, perhaps due to the small amount of occurrences. In all, American thesis writers tended to use performative verbs to express gratitude more often than Chinese thesis writers, who in turn showed preference for nominalization. American thesis writers also were more likely to use bare mentions in thanking for academic support and moral support. In the following subsections, each type of linguistic realization pattern will be illustrated with examples from the relevant variety of English.

4.2.1 Nominalization

Typical structures of expressing gratitude in nouns include "My sincere thanks to..." and "The author's gratitude goes to...". Here are some examples from the data:

> I would like to express <u>my gratitude</u> to my adviser, Dr. Corazon Balabar for her unwavering support throughout the writing of my thesis. (Philippine English)
>
> I would like to express <u>my sincerest thanks</u> to my thesis committee for their guidance, feedback, professionalism, genuine concern in my academic growth and exceptional patience. (American English)
>
> First of all, <u>my heartfelt gratitude</u> goes to Dr. Cai Jinting, my supervisor, for his inspiring guidance, unremitting help and warm encouragements that have supported me to finish this thesis. I am also indebted to him for the brilliant

instructions he gave in the course of the SLA (Second Language Acquisition) in the postgraduate program. (Chinese English)

4.2.2 Performative verb

The thanking act is expressed by performative verbs. Typical structures used are 'I thank...' or 'The author appreciates...'. For example:

The researcher feels so blessed that she wishes to thank the most supreme perfect Being for the constant blessings He is showering her and for the wisdom and light He gave her while she was accomplishing this simple thesis. (Philippine English)

I gratefully acknowledge Catherine Travis, my advisor and thesis chair, for her inspiration and guidance, and above all her patience as I worked to complete this thesis. (American English)

Besides, I warmly thank Professor Hu Yanling, for having provided me the valuable materials related to the Appraisal Theory and sound advice on practical matters. (Chinese English)

4.2.3 Adjective

The adjectives used to express gratitude are usually derived from noun and verb base forms which include 'grateful', 'thankful', 'indebted', 'appreciative', etc. Typical examples include 'I am grateful to...' and 'The author is thankful for...', as in:

Similarly, I am thankful for the significant contributions given by my former and current panelists, namely Dr. Paz Canilao, Dr. Midred Laurilla, Dr. Leah Gustilo, Dr. Allen Munoz, and the chair, Dr. Sterling Plata. (Philippine English)

I am also appreciative of Barbara Alt, who helped me with my statistical analysis, and Brittany Kubacki, who provided technical assistance during my thesis defense. (American English)

I am deeply grateful to Professor Chengang of Zhejiang University, who kindly answers my questions and from whose work I benefit a lot. (Chinese English)

4.2.4 Passive

In this pattern, the actor who offered the thanks was indirectly mentioned. Tpical structures include 'Y is thanked for ...' and 'Appreciation is given to ...'. According to

Hyland and Tse (2004), passive patterns, together with bare mentions, constitute low-key ways of expressing gratitude. As a result, they are not expected to occur in the personal acts of acknowledging committee members, panel members, friends, and family members. In my data, no such pattern was found in the American English MA theses and this pattern occurred only rarely in the Philippine English and Chinese English. For example:

> Similarly, sincere gratitude is hereby extended to the very prudent, considerate, and supportive members of my defense panel Dr. Corazon Balarbar, Dr. Lenoisa Mojica and Dr. Leah Gustilo. (Philippine English)
>
> Deep gratitude is given to my supervisor, Professor Yang Min for her valuable instructions, guidance and help during my writing of the thesis. (Chinese English)

4.2.5 Bare mentions

There was no explicit act of thanking when bare mentions are used. The writer simply described the help or support received. Typical structures include 'I cannot go without mentioning...' and 'X has been helpful in...'. For example:

> The burden of writing of this thesis was lessened substantially by the loving support of my family, my husband and children including my parents and siblings. (Philippine English)
>
> Ms. Corrie Igo was such a wonderful beacon of light through my "research" phase. She brought knowledge to the study as well as kindness and friendship. (American English)
>
> Associate professor Yu Hui has shown sustained concern for my thesis and has given me valuabe advice and source material. (Chinese English)

In all three examples the writers were not performing any thanking act.

4.2.6 Linguistic patterns of Philippine English acknowledgements

Philippine English has a unique pattern of acknowledgements. Twelve acknowledgements (out of the 15 samples) employed "presenting participants in general" and "presenting specific participant using parallel structures" patterns. For example:

The writer wishes to acknowledge with profound gratitude and sincerest appreciation the following: (presenting participants in general)

Dr. Montano F. Salvador, President, Mindanao Polytechnic State College, for strongly supporting the faculty and personnel development program of this college;

Dr. Marietta Y. Rodriguez, Vice President for Academic Affairs, for her sincere concern on matters related to this writer's study;

Dr. Nenita D. Palmes, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, for keeping the writer's hope and moral high amidst uncertainties and bureaucratic obstacles;

…

Her children, Reynan, Rodney and Lester, who are the well-spring of her inspiration to reach new heights in her life.

Above all, she recognizes the Source of everything, without Whom, she is nothing and this humble accomplishment, meaningless---God Almighty.

(Philippine English)

In the above text of acknowledgements, only two occurrences of linguistic patterns (the two underlined performative verbs) were found, which explains the underrepresentation of the five linguistic patterns used to express gratitude in the Philippine sample.

5. Conclusion

In this paper I described the generic structure and linguistic patterns of acknowledgements in MA theses from three varieties of English; Philippine English, American English, and Chinese English. Contrary to Hyland's (2004) move structure, no instance of reflecting move was found in my data. Announcing move was also underrepresented in the corpus. Hofstede's (2001) dimensions of power distance and uncertainty avoidance were used to account for the cross-cultural differences encountered. Some outliers that did not readily fit into the scheme were also reported. In terms of lexico-grammatical features, it was found that Chinese English prefers nominalization and performative verbs to express gratitude, American English mainly

relies on performative verbs and bare mentions, and Philippine English makes frequent use of parallel constructions.

A well-written acknowledgment will certainly give opportunities for thesis writers to make a good first impression on the readers and align themselves with the academic community. EAP teachers should help students realize the significance of building a competent scholarly identity through a well-written acknowledgement. To this end, students should be explicitly taught the rhetorical strategies available to them and the consequences of the options they make. Hyland (2004) emphasized the importance of explicit instruction of the acknowledgement genre in helping student writers express their genuine gratitude, build scholarly networks, and acquire disciplinary membership. In this way, student writers will more firmly grasp "the valued academic ideals of modesty, gratitude, and appropriate self-effacement" (Hyland, 2004, p. 323).

However, before teachers provide assistance to student choice of rhetorical strategies, more research involving more disciplines and larger corpora need to be done. Future studies, especially those conducting genre analysis in conjunction with interviews with thesis writers, will yield more fruitful results.

Note: The author is grateful to Professor Winnie Cheng, Professor Theron Muller, and an anonymous reviewer for their critical comments and suggestions. Needless to say, all the remaining errors are my own.

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Book Review

Bruce, Ian (2011). *Theory and Concepts of English for Academic Purposes*. USA: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. x+227, ISBN 978-0-230-24974-5 (hardback).

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Biodata

Dr. Tharwat M. EL-Sakran is a Professor of Linguistics at the English Department in the American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. He has a master's degree in Teaching English for Specific Purposes (TESP) from Aston University in the UK and a Ph.D. in Discourse Analysis from the University of Bangor in the UK. His research interests are in the areas of TESP, Discourse Analysis and Translation. He may be contacted at this email address: telsakran@aus.edu

This book is a valuable resource and guide for teachers already teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) as well as those wanting to teach and design their own in-house tailored EAP courses. The practical approach represented in introducing theory, showing how to put it into practice and how to assess the work, has made the book a true-reader friendly guide. It is a valuable addition and a long-awaited response to the calls for putting applied research results into practice (Nickerson, 2005; Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson, & Planken, 2007; Wolfe, 2009). Research findings in the field of teaching EAP have been skillfully synthesized in this book and pragmatically and functionally applied to the EAP field to close the gap between theory and practice.

This book is a step-by-step EAP guide that takes readers from theories and theoretical background, needs analysis, teaching approaches, design of EAP courses,

teaching the four language skills, to implementation of EAP courses and assessment. The author, unlike many other EAP textbook writers, has successfully described a large number of theoretical and practical EAP-related research studies and effectively demonstrated how they could be practically and pragmatically implemented in EAP courses. It is not uncommon to find textbooks claiming to be written for the teaching of EAP, but many of them make no reference to applied research outcomes in the respective field.

It is the practice in most, if not all, ESP-related titles to comprise a collection of several individual articles touching on different aspects of the ESP field: occupational, academic, etc. However, this book is inclusive as it solely covers EAP and all EAP pertinent issues from theory to practice to EAP course design and implementation. The chapters are closely related. Early chapters introduce coming ones and following chapters nicely relate and elaborate on several theoretical and practical issues presented in earlier chapters. Each time new information is brought into the discussion, it is clearly explained, and if an aspect of this information is of more relevance to other chapters, then more elaborations on this specific aspect(s) are given in the coming chapters. Therefore, readers of this resourceful text should follow the order of the chapters; that is start from chapter 1 and proceed to the end. As an example, the author has made several references to the genre approach, the principles of bottom-up and top-down processing, discourse community, etc., which is a good strategy for bringing key concpets into the readers' consciousness throughout the whole book. But new mentions of these concepts are always done in new contexts with newly added dimensions of the concepts. This has resulted in the author making recurrent and frequent cross-references to several theoretical and practical applications throughout the parts and the chapters the book contains.

This book falls in three parts, as follows:

Part one, titled 'A Theoretical Basis for English for Academic Purposes', comprises three chapters. The first introduces key issues and concepts in EAP; the second presents more concepts and terminologies in use in the academic world; chapter three discusses students' needs analysis and EAP course design.

Part two consists of three chapters, too. The first presents approaches and models of EAP syllabus design; the second deals with EAP courses and subject discipline knowledge; the third one tackles EAP courses and language knowledge.

Part three, unlike other parts, comprises six chapters with the first one exploring EAP and teacher competencies, and the second, the third, the fourth and the fifth dealing with EAP and teaching writing skills, EAP and teaching reading skills, EAP and teaching listening skills, EAP and teaching speaking skills and critical thinking, respectively. The final chapter concludes the book with a detailed practical discussion of assessment in EAP. The index can be used as a theme tracing guide. Through it, readers interested in a certain theme or topic can go to the relevant pages and acquire a better understanding of these themes or topics.

The author, through putting himself in the readers` position and anticipating some of those to have little, or virtually, no knowledge concerning EAP, has introduced some core concepts related to the design and implementation of language assessment. On the basis of this, later chapters and sections discuss in more contextualizing details the issues that the readers are prepared for. Although the author has exerted great efforts to present readers with contextual background information that will help them put the discussion in its appropriate context by bringing in information and terminologies used in the EAP teaching field, such as schematic and rhetorical structures of EAP texts, discourse community, genre-based approach, etc., still some readers, especially prospective non-native speakers EAP teachers may need more details on concepts such as the above.

Of course, readers may opt for obtaining more details through the very rich and up-to-date comprehensive list of references provided at the end of the book. Nevertheless, since the author has dwelt much on theories of discourse and genre analysis, he could have included more details in the introductory chapter and sufficient examples of practical applications of discourse analysis and genre theories that have impacted EAP course design, especially samples of Swales' and Dudley-Evans' analyses of the research article. It seems that the author has assumed more shared knowledge with his readers, or had in mind English native teachers of English educated in Western universities. For example to fully understand the genre-based approach, the book readers need to have some previous knowledge of discourse analysis theories on which minimum information

is given. However, this is not the case with chapter twelve, which requires no pre-reading knowledge of assessment.

The author has always given a 'summary' or most of the time a 'conclusion' at the end of the chapters, but did not do so for chapter eleven. I would have wished that the author had included a conclusion for the whole book at the end as well as a preface stating who the target readers are.

To conclude, reading this book is a rewarding experience in terms of fully grasping and understanding EAP courses, their theoretical foundations, students' needs analysis, syllabi and course designs, teaching approaches and testing.

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Book Review

Basturkmen, Helen (2010). Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Xiv+157 pp. US 32.95 (Paperback), ISBN: 978-0-230-22798-9.

Reviewed by Maryam Sherkatolabasi

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Biodata

Maryam Sherkatolabasi holds a BA degree in English Translation from Esfahan University and MA degree in TEFL from Guilan University in Iran. She has been teaching English at several institutes and universites. Her area of interest is CALL, ESP, critical pedagogy and psychology and research on English language teaching and learning.

As English continues to dominate as the lingua franca of business, technology, media, medicine, education, and research, the demand for developing ESP courses is growing rapidly. Apart from providing the literature on designing ESP courses, showing how ideas about ESP course development in the literature can be put into practice is of great significance. Nowadays, ESP practitioners are in need of information on how to design an ESP course and how professional ESP teachers set about developing courses. In order to meet the need, Helen Basturkmen, based upon her solid ESP knowledge and research background, has provided a richly exemplified volume on developing and teaching ESP courses.

Launched in 2010, *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes*, will enlighten any students on TESOL courses and practicing teachers of ESP. It provides an introduction to the topic of developing courses for learners with specific academic or

occupational language needs. In this book, readers will encounter both theoretical and practical ideas to orientate their classes. This volume is about how ESP courses are developed and designed, introducing the reader to three major dimensions of ESP course design (needs analysis, specialist discourse investigation and the curriculum determination). It presents case studies and discusses them in relation to issues and considerations in these three areas.

Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes has two major parts, comprised of nine chapters. The first part called 'Main Considerations in ESP Course Development' includes four chapters and introduces three key areas in developing ESP courses: analyzing needs, investigating specialist discourse and curriculum planning, and providing examples from a wide range of ESP and EAP courses. The second part called 'Case Studies in ESP Course Development' presents four case studies of a different ESP course in different contexts of English for specific purpose, such as English for Police, Medical Doctors, Visual Arts, and Thesis Writing contexts. The courses were developed by professional ESP teachers and are widely different. Each case is discussed in relation to decisions made and how the ESP course developers set regarding major aspects of ESP course design.

Chapter 1 is an introduction on ESP, giving different definitions of ESP and describing common themes and different ESP areas, such as EAP, EPP and EOP, demands of teaching ESP, and effectiveness of ESP with reference to conceptual and theoretical models ad empirical research evidence.

Chapter 2 focuses on needs analysis and its importance in ESP. The chapter describes the types of needs and the role of needs analysis in ESP course development. It makes suggestions regarding how teachers and course developers can set about investigating needs and describes the types of information that are collected. It also describes the ways by which teachers and course developers can make use of published needs analyses. The author refers to the work of various researchers who have developed needs analyses, and provides ESP checklists for the needs analysts while carrying out their own analyses.

Chapter 3 presents the way in which one can investigate specialist discourses, and briefly describes approaches to such investigations - ethnography, genre analysis and corpus analysis. The chapter considers the importance of descriptions of specialist

discourses in teaching ESP and discusses the circumstances in which course developers need to conduct their own investigations and shows how this can be done. The chapter also makes suggestions about when and how teachers and course developers can use published descriptions of specialist discourses.

Chapter 4 provides suggestions for establishing a focus and developing a course curriculum based on the results of the needs analysis, knowledge of the target discourse, and evaluations of previous courses. It also discusses selecting or developing course materials and evaluating the efficacy of the course. It also explains how the results of a needs analysis can be used in determining and designing the curriculum. Clearly, Chapters 2, 3 and 4 examine key areas in ESP course development.

Chapter 5 reports the development of work-related ESP courses, with an example of the development of an English course for prospective police recruits in a private language school. The English for Police course aimed to focus on a number of communicative events in policing.

Chapter 6 reports on the development of another work-related ESP course for overseas-trained medical doctors. The English for Medical Doctors course focused on just one event in medical practice which is the patient-centered medical consultation.

Chapter 7 reports the development of study-related courses for students on a foundation course in visual arts. This case traces the development of a course that focused on the needs of students in one discipline (visual arts) and combines language instructions with disciplinary content.

Chapter 8, the last case study, is a report on the development of study-related courses for students writing their thesis reports in their final year of study. The English for Thesis Writing workshop series focuses on needs of students across disciplines. But, as the reader will see, the courses differed in other respects as well.

The four case study chapters follow the same organization. These chapters first describe the context in which the course emerged and then focus on investigating needs and specialist discourses, designing the course curriculum and course materials, and responding to difficulties and constraints specific to each context.

Chapter 9 reflects on the three main considerations in ESP course development introduced in Part I, namely needs analysis, specialist discourses, and ESP course curriculum, and links them to the four case studies in Part II as a conclusion. This

chapter considers what can be learnt from the case studies in the three key areas, offers a visual representation of ESP course development, and identifies trends in the field.

All in all, *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes* provides not only information on the previous literature of ESP, but also guidance on the real practice of ESP through the case studies. The author has clearly depicted the relevant theoretical framework and examined its application in the real world by bringing the four case studies together so as to illustrate how ESP courses are developed to meet the needs of learners.

One of the demerits of the book is that the book is described as fulfilling practical purposes and having a 'how to do it' type of orientation. The readers, therefore, expect more than four case studies so that many more aspects of ESP course development could have been represented. Second, by focusing on course development in ESP, the book fails to take a more meticulous view on the other issues of ESP. Third, the book assumes background knowledge on the part of readers about the discipline ESP to understand and make use of the content of this book more effectively.

To sum up, the strengths of the book include its organization in such a way that readers can easily find the information they need in developing ESP courses and the clear writing style. The volume is useful for both experienced and novice ESP courses developers /practitioners as well as TESOL students.