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# A Survey of New Readability Formulas<sup>\*</sup>

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Readability is how easily written materials can be read and understood. Readability depends on many factors, including: (1) the average length of sentences in a passage; (2) the number of new words a passage contains; (3) the grammatical complexity of the language used; etc.. This paper is a survey of new readability formulas based on readability studies with a brief review of the developmental stages. Nine representative formulas are surveyed with detailed description on the birth, the designer, the calculating methods and procedures, and the applications. Readability study is of great significance to language teaching, especially to the suitability of materials for students. The survey aims to provide a solid basis to the related future study on readability and readability formulas.

*Keywords:* survey, readability, readability formulas

## Introduction

Readability is how easily written materials can be read and understood. According to Gilliland (1976), a readability formula is a method of assigning to a text a numerical estimate of readability. McLaughlin (1969) offered a more theoretical definition—a readability formula is simply a mathematical equation derived by regression analysis which best expresses the relationship between two variables, which in this case are a measure of the difficulty experienced by people reading a given text, and a measure of the linguistic characteristics of that text. The formula can then be used to predict reading difficulty from the linguistic characteristics of the texts. This paper is a survey of nine new representative formulas with detailed description on the birth, the designer, the calculating methods and procedures, and the applications. The survey aims to provide a solid basis to the related future study on readability and readability formulas.

## Developmental Stages of Readability Formulas

Klare (1966) described the chronological sequence in the growth of readability formulas and outlined four main stages. An early series of formulas were produced between 1920 and 1934. Though crude and clumsy in operation, these formulas actually used aspects of the text, such as vocabulary range, and the number of prepositions or polysyllabic word. These early formulas were applied generally and gave only approximate ratings of the difficulty of the text. The second period is from 1934 to 1938 during which the formulas devised tended to become more detailed and reflected a concern for greater accuracy and reliability. These measures involved the use of aspects of the text, but required the laborious collection of statistics as well as lengthy

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calculations. The third period in the development of formulas extends from 1938 to 1953. In this period, efficiency and simplicity of use of formulas were the prime considerations. This change of emphasis compared with that of the second period reflected the practical requirements of the teachers and other workers who were using the formulas in situations where the time and effort which could be given were strictly restricted. The last period extends from 1953 to 1969. During this period, specialized formulas for particular purposes were put forward. These specialized formulas were designed to cope with the characteristics of particular kinds of reading material, or with particular readability factors such as the level of abstractness in a passage. A lot of applied studies with the help of readability formulas have been carried out in this phase.

### **New Readability Formulas**

Beginning in the 1950s, new developments transformed the study of readability, including a new test of reading comprehension and the contributions of linguistics and cognitive psychology. Researchers explored how the reader's interest, motivation, and previous knowledge affect readability. These studies in turn stimulated the creation of new and more accurate formulas.

#### **The Coleman Formula**

Edmund B. Coleman (1965), in a research project sponsored by the National Science Foundation, published four readability formulas for general use. The formulas are notable for their predicting mean cloze scores (percentage of correct cloze completions). Coleman was also the first to use cloze procedures as a criterion rather than the conventional multiple-choice reading tests or rankings by judges. The four formulas use different variables as shown here:

$$C\% = 1.29w - 38.45$$

$$C\% = 1.16w + 1.48s - 37.95$$

$$C\% = 1.07s + 1.18s + 0.76p - 34.02$$

$$C\% = 1.04w + 1.06s + 0.56p - 0.36prep - 26.01$$

Where:

C% = percentage of correct cloze completions

w = number of one-syllable words per 100 words

s = number of sentences per 100 words

p = number of pronouns per 100 words

Prep = number of prepositions per 100 words

Coleman found multiple correlations of 0.86, 0.89, 0.90, and 0.91, respectively, for his formulas with cloze criterion scores. The use of cloze scores as criterion consistently provides higher validation coefficients than that use of the multiple-choice scores.

#### **The Bormuth Mean Cloze Formula**

This formula involves three variables: number of words on the original Dale-Chall list of 3,000, average sentence length in words, and average word length in letters. This formula was later adapted and used in the Degrees of Reading Power used by the College Entrance Examination Board in 1981. The Bormuth Mean Cloze formula is:

$$R = 0.886593 - 0.083640 (LET/W) +$$

$$0.161911 (DLL/W)^3 - 0.021401 (W/SEN) + 0.000577$$

$$(W/SEN)^2 - 0.000005 (W/SEN)^3$$

$$DRP = (1 - R) \times 100$$

Where:

R = mean cloze score

LET = letters in passage X

W = words in passage X

DLL = Number of words in the original Dale-Chall list in passage X

SEN = Sentences in passage X

DRP = Degrees of Reading Power, on a 0-100 scale with 30 (very easy) to 100 (very hard)

### The Fry Readability Graph

Edward Fry (1977) created one of the most popular readability tests that uses a graph as a Fulbright scholar in Uganda (see Figure 1). Fry's original graph determines readability through high school which was validated with comprehension scores of primary and secondary school materials and by correlations with other formulas. In 1977, he extended it through the college years. Although vocabulary continues to increase during college years, reading ability varies much, depending on both individuals and the subjects taught, which means that a text with a score of 16 will be more difficult than one with a score of 14. It does not mean, however, that one is appropriate for all seniors and the other for all sophomores.

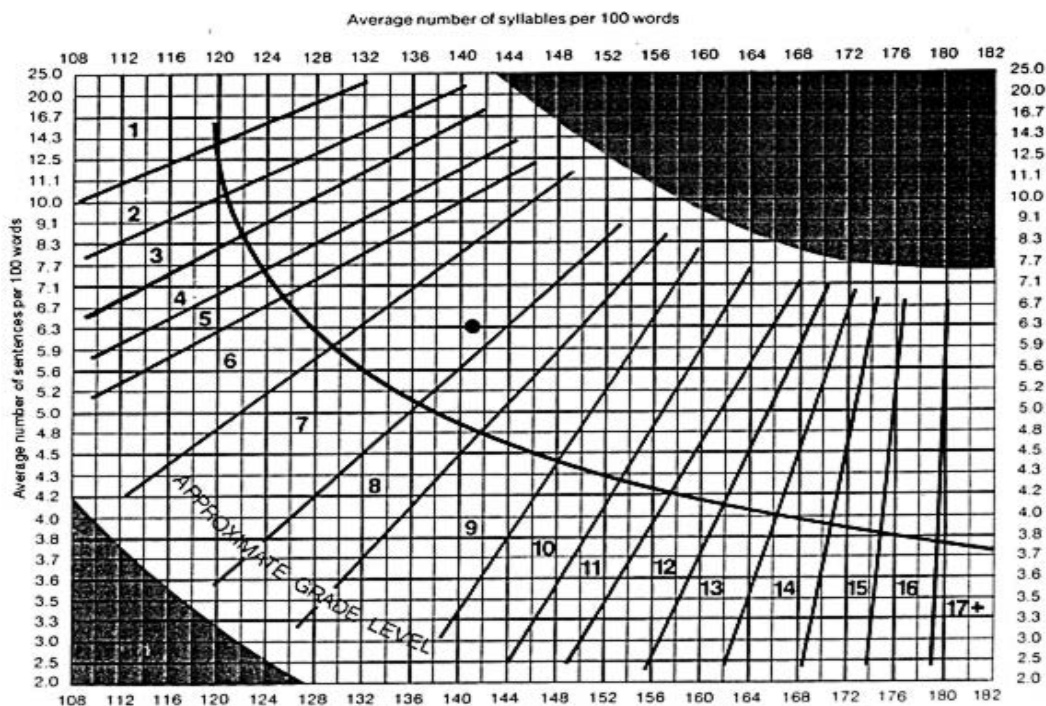


Figure 1. The Fry readability graph. Source: Fry (1977). Note. \* Scores that appear in the dark areas are invalid.

### The Listening Formula

People have been concerned about the clarity of spoken language perhaps for a longer period than written language. Because a listener cannot re-read a spoken sentence, it puts a greater demand on memory. Some formulas have been developed just for spoken texts. Rogers (1962) published a formula for predicting the difficulty of spoken texts. He used 480 samples of speech taken from the unrehearsed and typical conversations of students in elementary, middle, and high school as his data for developing his formula. Roger's formula has a multiple correlation of 0.727 with the grade level of his samples. The resulting formula is:

$$G = 0.669 I + 0.4981 LD - 2.0625$$

Where:

G = reading grade level

I = average idea unit length

LD = the average number of words in a hundred-word sampling that do not appear on Dale's long list



### **McLaughlin's SMOG Formula**

McLaughlin (1969) published his SMOG formula in the belief that the word length and sentence length should be multiplied rather than added. SMOG grading implicitly makes two claims: that counting polysyllabic words in a fixed number of sentences gives an accurate index of the relative difficulty of various texts; and that the formula for converting polysyllable counts into reading grades gives acceptable results. He provides this simple formula:

SMOG grading = 3 + square root of polysyllable count.

Reading Age = (square root of N) + 8 years

Where: N = the number of three or more syllables words in the 30 selected sentences (10 consecutive sentences near the beginning of the text to be assessed, 10 in the middle, and 10 near the end)

### **The FORCAST Formula**

The Human Resources Research Organization studied the reading requirements of military occupational specialties in the U.S. Army (DuBay, 2004). In order to resolve professional questions about using a formula for technical material read by adults, the authors first undertook the creating of a readability formula that would be: (1) based on essential Army-job reading material; (2) adjusted for the young adult-male Army-recruit population; and (3) simple and easy for standard clerical personnel to apply without special training or equipment. The study showed that materials for the different occupations all had texts above the 9th grade. This suggested the need for new quality-control measures for making materials more useful for the majority of personnel. The FORCAST formula is very unusual in that it does not use a sentence-length measurement. The resulting FORCAST formula is:

Grade level = 20 – (N ÷ 10)

Where: N = number of single-syllable words in a 150-word sample.

### **The Hull Formula for Technical Writing**

Hull (1979) claimed that an increase in the number of adjectives and adverbs before a noun lowers comprehension. His study justified both the subject sampling and the use of the test results to produce a new formula. The test results indicated that sentence length is a valid indicator for technical material, perhaps better than word difficulty (contrary to previous research). He created a formula, shown here, that uses only sentence length and the density of modifiers (called pronominal modifiers) and accounts for ( $r^2 =$ ) 48% of passage difficulty: Grade level = 0.49 (average sentence length) + 0.29 (pronominal modifiers per 100 words) – 2.71. In the conclusion of his paper, Hull advises technical writers to use shorter sentences so as to reduce their complexity and make them easier to read. He also recommends eliminating strings of nouns, adjectives, and adverbs as modifiers. Instead, writers should use prepositional phrases and place adjectives in the predicate position (after the verb) rather than in the distributive position (before the noun).

### **The New Dale-Chall Readability Formula**

Chall and Dale (1995) updated their list of 3,000 easy words and improved their original formula. The new formula was validated against a variety of criteria, including: 32 passages tested by Bormuth on 4th to 12th grade students; 36 passages tested by Miller and Coleman on 479 college students; 80 passages tested by MacGinitie and Tretiak on college and graduate students; 12 technical passages tested by Caylor, Sticht, Fox, and Ford on 395 Air Force trainees. The new formula correlates 0.92 with the Bormuth Mean Cloze Scores, making it the most valid of the popular formulas.

### **ATOS (Advantage-TASA Open Standard) Readability Formula for Books**

Paul (as cited in DuBay, 2004) and Touchstone Applied Science Associates produced the ATOS Readability Formula for Books. The readability formula was part of a computerized system to help teachers conduct a program of guided independent reading to maximize learning gains. Noting the differences in difficulty between samples and entire books, the developers claim this is the first readability formula based on whole books, not just samples. They found that the combination of three variables gives the best account of text difficulty: words per sentence ( $r^2 = 0.897$ ), the average grade-level of words ( $r^2 = 0.891$ ), and characters per word ( $r^2 = 0.839$ ).

### **Conclusions**

This paper is a survey of new readability formulas, which chiefly discusses nine new readability representative formulas selected from foreign readability study achievements with the focuses on the aspect of textbook reading, adult reading, army technical reading, language teaching, language learning, and language testing, etc.. The formulas have survived several decades of intensive application, investigations as well as controversy. Both reputations and limitations remain to be further explored. The variables used in the readability formulas show us the skeleton of a text. The research on readability and readability formulas will help us to increase the chances of success of our audience and contribute to the research on literacy.

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# Insertion or Deletion: Rethinking an Old Morphophonological Issue\*

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This study rethinks an old issue concerning the generation of the allomorphs of the English past tense suffix *-ed*. Based on historical and synchronic data, it is proposed that the underlying phonological representation of the suffix should better be /əd/ and the schwa gets deleted in the generation of the surface representation under phonological conditions. Given the proposal, the historical development of the suffix can be incorporated into the new account, and the spelling of the past tense suffix, which is highly connected with the phonological information of the suffix, is accounted for as well. This proposal thus implies that the English past tense suffix is generated through a different phonological process from the plural suffix and the third person singular present tense suffix.

*Keywords:* allomorph, English past tense, phonological derivation, doubling consonant rule

## Introduction

A key concept in an introductory course of generative phonology can be the ordering of rules that are required to generate the target phonological output. A classic case that serves to introduce to students of phonology the importance of correct rule ordering is the generation of the three allophones of the English past tense morpheme *-ed*, namely, [d], [t], and [əd]. The typical and classic account goes that the generation of the three allophones involves the application of two phonological rules and one assumption that states the default form, i.e., [-d], is devoiced when preceded by a voiceless consonants and the other rule states that a schwa is inserted when the preceding consonant is either [-t] or [-d]. Such an account prevails in all the introductory books to phonology and linguistics (Fromkin et al., 2000; Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2010; O'Grady & Archibald, 2004). This account is considered the optimal analysis of the generation of the three alternative allophonic forms of the English past tense morpheme, as demonstrated in Fromkin et al. (2000). Interestingly, the reasons that Fromkin et al. use to argue for this account may instead make it thinner as it seems. Moreover, other linguists can alternatively argue for an alternative account that assumes /-t/ as the underlying representation of the *-ed* ending (Honda & O'Neil, 2008). Apparently, the seemingly widely accepted account for the generation of the three alternative allophones of the English past tense morpheme may not be entirely convincing after all.

This paper will thus argue that the underlying representation of the English past tense ending can optimally

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be [-əd]—one of the discarded assumptions and the least endorsed one, as in Fromkin et al. (2000)—and the schwa form is deleted, instead of inserted, in the generation of the target phonological forms of the past tense morpheme. The new account can not only respect the phonological development observed in historical data of English, but also better reflect and account for the phonic relation among the past tense ending, its spelling, and its phonetic forms. In addition, based on the argument, this paper would like to propose a possibility that the division between derivational and inflectional suffixes in English may not be a distinct dichotomy, but a continuum; the inflectional ones could have been the result of a grammaticizing process and the English past tense can be seen as an example, just as the English present participle ending *-ing*, as argued in Brinton and Traugott (2005) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p. 1644).

The structure of the present paper is as follows: Section 2 reviews Fromkin et al.’s (2000) and Honda and O’Neil’s (2008) demonstration of the generation of the English past tense ending. Section 3 proposes the alternative account with historical and contemporary data. Section 4 concludes and indicates the potential influence this paper can make on generative phonology and morphology.

### The Generation of the Past Tense Ending

#### The Classic Account

Introducing the significance of correct rule ordering, books of introductory generative phonology mostly illustrate the concept with the generation of the allophones of the English past tense suffix *-ed*. In the illustration, the generation is accounted for under the assumption that the phoneme /-d/ is the underlying representation of the suffix *-ed*. Together with the assumption, two phonological rules are involved in the generation: One is devoicing and the other is the insertion of schwa. The former states that the underlying representation /-d/ is turned voiceless when preceded by a voiceless sound right before the morpheme boundary, and the latter states that a schwa is inserted when the consonant before the past tense suffix is similar to the suffix itself (Fromkin et al., 2000). For the derivation to generate the target outputs, the two phonological rules should be ordered correctly with the schwa insertion rule applied before the devoicing rule so that the inserted schwa can block the devoicing rule to keep the underlying /d/ voiced after the schwa sound. The derivation of the past tense morpheme can thus be exemplified as follows (Fromkin et al., 2000, p. 611)<sup>1</sup> (see Example 1).

Example (1) Underlying representation	/bʌg-d/	/lɪk-d/	/mɛnd-d/
Schwa insertion	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	mɛndəd
Devoicing	<i>n/a</i>	lɪk	<i>n/a</i>
Surface representations	bʌgd	lɪk	mɛndəd
(n/a = not applicable)			

In their demonstration and explanation for the derivation, Fromkin et al. (2000) argued for the schwa-insertion account and argued against schwa-deletion account. For one thing, the deletion of schwa that is required in the alternative analysis with an underlying representation /-əd/ may turn out redundant, since it is acceptable in the English phonological system to have a schwa sound between two consonants, such as *barrack* [bærək], *skeleton* [skelətən], *Pamela* [pæmələ] (p. 614). However, the attachment of the past tense suffix is a

<sup>1</sup> The ordering of the two phonological rules are not in question here and will not be elaborated in the present paper. For further detail of the ordering, please refer to any books in this respect.

morphological process, the insertion of the schwa is a derivational process applied across word boundaries. It is problematic whether word-internal sequencing can be considered a good justification for cross-morphemic cases.

A second argument held by Fromkin et al. (2000) is that schwa insertion is called for because of the English phonological rule that two similar consonants are not allowed to be in a consecutive order,<sup>2</sup> just as *mended* [mɛndəd] and *hunted* [hʌntəd]. In addition, when arguing against the alternative schwa-deletion alternative, they reinforce the acceptance of the appearance of schwa between two consonants with possible new words converted from existing nouns, for example, “*rhumba* and *fantasia*” (Fromkin et al., 2000, p. 614). After converted into verbs and inflected with the past tense suffix, a schwa is thus found between two consonants, as in Example 2 below:

Example (2) *rhumbaed* [rʌmbəd] *fantasiaed* [fæntɜːzəd] (Fromkin et al., 2000, p. 614)

Nevertheless, this argument may not suffice to justify the need for the schwa to be inserted. The schwa is found between two consonants for one thing that the verbs inherently end in a schwa. For the other, the consonant before the schwa sound, namely /b/ or /z/ in the above examples, is not at all similar to that in the suffix and yet a schwa appears. For another, such an argument also seems to ignore the morpheme boundary. The schwa sound in the examples belongs to the word stem, while the schwa sound in question in the derivation belongs to the past tense morpheme. Thus, these two examples may not be sufficient to justify the necessity of schwa insertion.

Moreover, Fromkin et al. (2000) argued for schwa insertion with such cases as “*crooked* and *aged*” (p. 614). However, the schwa insertion analysis seems ad hoc instead when such cases are taken into consideration, since in these two words, the surface representation of the past tense suffix is [krukəd] and [ɛdʒəd] respectively, which turns out impossible outputs of the derivation illustrated in Example 1, since the schwa insertion should never be called for in such phonological environments, /kruk-d/ and /ɛdʒ-d/, where the final consonants do not trigger the application of the schwa insertion rule. Thus, cases like *crooked* and *aged* appear to be counterexamples of the schwa insertion argument.

### An Alternative Account

Interestingly, some linguists argue for the other alternative analysis, even though most linguists endorse the typical analysis (Fromkin et al., 2000; Kenstowicz, 1994; O’Grady & Archibald, 2004). Honda and O’Neil (2008) demonstrated that the generation of the three allophonic variations of the English past tense suffix should be based on the assumption that the voiceless alveolar stop /t/ should be the underlying representation. Under such an assumption, the corresponding phonological rules are thus different from the typical analysis. Instead of devoicing, this alternative analysis calls for a voicing rule with which the underlying representation /t/ is turned voiced in the surface representation, under the condition where the sound preceding /t/ is voiced. The schwa insertion rule remains unchanged so as to block the unacceptable sequences of phonemes, such as \*/tt/, \*/dd/, \*/td/, or \*/dt/. This account can be illustrated in Example 3 below (Honda & O’Neil, 2008, p. 45).

Example (3) Underlying representation	/trit-t/	/flɪp-t/	/rab-t/
Schwa insertion	tritət	n/a	n/a
Voicing	tritəd	n/a	rabd
Surface representations	tritəd	flɪpt	rabd
(n/a = not applicable)			

<sup>2</sup> Here similar consonants refer to those that are only different in voicing.

Hondan and O’Neil (2008) argued for this alternative account on the basis of the cross-linguistic application of the two phonological rules, namely, assimilation and epenthesis. They maintain that voicing assimilation is a phonological rule found in many human languages, such as Japanese and Brazilian Portuguese (pp. 47-48) (see Example 4).

Example (4) Japanese (taken from Honda & O’Neil, 2008, p. 48; boldfaces the author’s)

*maki* + *sushi* becomes *makizushi* “vinegared rice and vegetables rolled in seaweed”  
*maze* + *sushi* becomes *mazezushi* “vinegared rice mixed with vegetables and seafood”

Brazilian Portuguese

<u>singular</u>	<u>plural</u>
<i>mes</i> /més/ “month”	/mé.zis/ “months”
<i>país</i> /pa.ís/ “country”	/pa.í.zis/ “countries”
<i>luz</i> /lús/ “light”	/lú.zis/ “lights”

As shown in Example 4, the initial consonant in the Japanese word *sushi* “seaweed” is turned voiced after it is compounded with another noun ending with a voiced sound. The same voicing assimilation can also be seen in Brazilian Portuguese where the final voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ is turned voiced when the nouns are inflected with the plural suffix /is/, since the suffix begins with a voiced sound and hence assimilates the final sound in the stem. These examples in Example 4 can thus show that voicing assimilation is a common phonological process.

In addition, Honda and O’Neil (2008) also argued for the commonality of vowel epenthesis with internal language evidence. In English, the suffixation of the possessive morpheme, the 3rd person singular present tense morpheme, and the contraction of *is*, *did*, *would*, and *had* also involves the insertion or epenthesis of schwa (see Example 5).

Example (5) (taken from Honda & O’Neil, 2008, p. 48)

(a) the possessive morpheme {poss} in English, as in:

*horse’s*, *dog’s*, and *cat’s tail* —/ɪz/, /z/, and /s/, respectively

(b) the 3rd person singular present tense morpheme for regular verbs, as in:

*He fusses*, *frets*, and *worries*.—/ɪz/, /z/, and /s/, respectively

(c) the contraction of *is* /ɪz/ and *has* /hæz/, as in:

*The horse’s fast*; *the horse’s won*.—/ɪz/

*The dog’s angry*; *the dog’s been chased*.—/z/

*The cat’s furry*; *the cat’s been fed*.—/s/

(d) the contractions of *did*, *would*, and *had*, as in:

*What’d he do?*—/ɪd/

*Jack’d’ve done it if we’d asked him to*.—/t/, and /d/, respectively

As shown in Example 5, when the two consecutive consonants are too similar or even alike, a vowel is thus inserted to avoid any violation of the English phonotactics that state that two similar sounds cannot be in a consecutive order.

### Summary

Based on the review above, it is obvious that two of the three alternative accounts for the generation of the

three allophones of the English past tense ending are equally reasonable, albeit some of the evidence provided by Fromkin et al. (2000) may not be robust enough to argue for their account. This may thus suggest that the third alternative account—assuming that /-əd/ is the underlying representation—can suffice to account for the generation of the three allophones of the English past tense ending. In other words, the surface representation [-əd] is not likely to be generated not because of the application of the schwa insertion rule, but otherwise. Therefore, this paper will propose that the underlying representation of the past tense suffix should be /-əd/ and instead of insertion, the schwa in the underlying form is deleted in the generative process. Such an argument will be supported with evidence of historical development of the past tense suffix, synchronic examples, and morphophonological examples. It will be shown that the new analysis will respect not only the historical development of the morpheme but also the interaction between morphology and phonology. Based on the new analysis, this paper will also propose a possible idea that considers the distinction between derivational suffixes and inflectional suffixes as a continuum, not a dichotomy, and the past tense suffix may be one of the medial cases in the continuum.

### The Derivation of the Past Tense Ending: Rethinking

Instead of concurring with either one of the account reviewed in the previous section (Section 2), this study argues that the third alternative account can better respect the linguistic facts of the generation of the English past tense ending. It is assumed here that the underlying representation of the English past tense suffix *-ed* should better be /əd/ and the underlying representation gets deleted and/or devoiced in the generation of the surface representations of the suffix. Thus, the phonological rules that are involved in the generation include: (1) schwa-deletion—the schwa is deleted except for the cases where the final consonant of the stem is similar to /t/ or /d/; and (2) the devoicing rule: the /d/ in the underlying representation /əd/ is turned voiceless when its neighboring sound is voiceless. In addition, the ordering of the two rules is crucial so as to generate the intended surface representations; the schwa-deletion rule should apply first so that the output of this rule can then feed the second rule or leave it inapplicable, as illustrated in Example 6.

Example (6) (Examples taken directly from Fromkin et al., 2000, p. 611)

Underlying representation	/bʌg-əd/	/lɪk-əd/	/mɛnd-əd/
Schwa deletion	bʌg-d	lɪk-d	n/a
Devoicing	n/a	lɪkt	n/a
Surface representations	bʌgd	lɪkt	mɛndəd
	(n/a = not applicable)		

As seen in Example 6, the schwa in underlying representation of the suffix /əd/ is deleted in *bugged* and *liked*, since the final consonants in the stem is not similar to /t/ or /d/—both are [+alveolar, +stop]—and the remaining /d/ in the suffix in *liked* is further devoiced because of the voiceless consonant /k/. This alternative account may seem unacceptable or even odd and not better than the typical account, but it is nonetheless based on diachronic as well as synchronic evidence.

#### Diachronic Evidence

It is generally agreed upon that the English language has undergone many significant changes in its

phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and uses over centuries. The development of English can be divided into the following periods: the Old English Period (449-1100) (OE, henceforth), the Middle English Period (1100-1500) (ME, henceforth), the Early Modern English Period (1500-1800) (EME, henceforth), and the Late Modern English Period (1800- Present) (LME, henceforth) (Algeo, 2010; Barber, Beal, & Shaw, 2009; Culpeper, Katamba, Kerswill, Wodak, & McEnery, 2009). The development of English definitely involves the past tense ending, especially when the phonological system and spelling-pronunciation correspondence change. As documented in the *Online Etymology Dictionary* (Harper, 2012), the English past tense ending *-ed* used to be attached to weak verbs, or regular verbs in terms of current terminology. According to the etymology dictionary, the *-ed* ending emerged in ME, which is believed to be leveled from *-ed*, *-ad*, and *-od* in OE. In addition, Hallmann (2009) also pointed out a similar pattern of the development of the past tense ending and proposes that the past tense endings in OE, including *-ode*, *-ede*, were leveled to *-ed* in ME, for example (Hallmann, 2009):

Example (7)

	OE		ME		EME	
	Present	Past	Present	Past	Present	Past
1Sg indicative <sup>3</sup>	<i>Lufie</i>	<i>Lufode</i>	<i>Loue</i>	<i>louede</i>	<i>love</i>	<i>loved</i>

In addition to the formal development of the morpheme, its pronunciation is also documented in the dictionary. Harper (2010) noted that the past tense ending was originally fully pronounced as an independent syllable, namely [əd]. As the English phonology changed, the schwa became deleted and the past tense ending syllable thus became simplified, around the time when the final letter <e> in some words, such as *life*, *love*, and *name*, was turned into a silent letter—spelled but not pronounced. The simplification of the pronunciation of the *-ed* ending and the silence of the final letter <e>, according to Culpeper and Archer (2009), occurred around the time when the spelling of English words were becoming standardized whereas the phonology of English kept changing over time during the late ME period and the EME period (Culpeper et al., 2009).

Based on the documentation of the history of English, it is clear that among the three allophones of the past tense ending *-ed*, the [əd] one is documented to be the earliest form, while the other two, [d] and [t], turn out to be later forms developed around the EME period. In other words, the historical data of the English language suggests that the schwa in the suffix should be deleted, but not otherwise.

### Synchronic Evidence

Synchronic evidence indicates that the past tense ending remains fully pronounced in some words. As pointed out by Fromkin et al. (2000), the past tense ending is pronounced fully as a separate syllable only when it is attached to a verb stem ending in the [t] or [d] sounds, such as *hunted*, *intended*, and *wanted*. However, some words or verbs with the *-ed* ending is still pronounced as a separate syllable as the original pronunciation, for example, *beloved*, *blessed*, *accursed*, and *naked* (Wells, 2000). Other examples are listed below in Example 8 (Prator & Robinett, 1985; Wells, 2000).

Example (8) <i>two-legged</i>	<i>ragged</i>	<i>rugged</i>
<i>wicked</i>	<i>wretched</i>	<i>markedness</i>
<i>markedly</i>	<i>supposedly</i>	<i>unreservedly</i>

As shown in Example 8, all the *-ed* suffixes are pronounced as a separate syllable, namely, [əd]. One should, however, note that the past tense suffix *-ed* in such words as *marked*, *supposed*, and *unreserved* is pronounced

<sup>3</sup> According to Hallmann (2009), the term *indicative* is used in declarative and interrogative sentences.



according to the current principle—as [t] after voiceless consonants and as [d] after voiced consonants (Fromkin et al., 2000; Prator & Robinett, 1985; Wells, 2000). Interestingly, the past tense ending is pronounced as a separate syllable when another suffix, such as *-ly* and *-ness*, is attached after it, as seen in *markedly*, *unreservedly*, *markedness*, and *supposedly*. How should the cases be so? Should it be a case of automatic alternations or of morphophonological alternations (Haspelmath & Sims, 2010)? Should the schwa be inserted, as suggest by the currently known principle, or remained undeleted?

The schwa should be better considered undeleted but fairly unlikely inserted. As stated by the current principle, as discussed in Fromkin et al. (2000) and stated in most books mentioning the pronunciation of the English past tense ending (Gilbert, 2005; Lane, 2005; Prator & Robinett, 1985; Wells, 2000), the English past tense ending *-ed*:

*has three regular pronunciations:*

1. *After t or d it is pronounced [ɪd] or, less commonly in BrE but regularly in AmE, əd, ...*

2. *After the other VOICED consonants or a vowel sound, it is pronounced d ...*

3. *After the other VOICELESS consonants, it is pronounced t....* (Wells, 2000, pp. 249-250, italicized and capitalized as the original text)

According to the commonly known principles, the past tense ending *-ed* in the words listed in Example 8 above should never be pronounced as [əd], but should be [t] or [d] instead. In other words, such words in Example 8 can be regarded as exceptional cases where the schwa remains undeleted, given the three principles cited above.

In addition, one may also argue that the words where *-ed* is pronounced as a separate syllable are actually adjectives in contemporary English, and the adjectival cases may not suffice to argue against the defectiveness in the current morphophonological rules with regard to the English past tense ending that are usually applied to verbs.

Valid as the argument seems, however, not all the cases listed in Example 8 are purely adjectives. Obvious as they appear, cases like *supposedly*, *markedly*, and *unreservedly* are adverbs, but not adjectives. These adverbs are clearly derived from their adjective stems, namely, *supposed*, *marked*, and *unreserved* respectively, and the *-ed* endings in these words are pronounced according to the currently known principles, that is, as [d], [t], and [d] respectively. Then, what triggers the insertion of schwa when these words are attached to with the derivational morpheme *-ly*? It would however be ad hoc to stipulate that for these cases the derivational suffix *-ly* not only turns adjectives as such into adverbs, but also triggers a phonological process where schwa is inserted. Moreover, such contemporary adjectives as *blessed*, *beloved*, *wretched*, *aged*, and *rugged* are originally stemmed from their respective verb forms, as documented in *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (Wight, 2011) as well as in Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p. 1644).

Some may nonetheless argue that most of the words listed in Example 8 are likely lexicalized into one integral word and thus the phonological form of the *-ed* endings may have been lexicalized as well. In other words, unlike most inflected verbs, whose verb roots or stems form a natural and apparent paradigm with the inflected verbs, these words appear not to have a paradigmatic counterpart. For example, *naked* can not be analyzed as an inflected or derived form stemmed from its verb stem or root *\*nake*. Nor can *wretched* and *wicked*.<sup>4</sup>

Although it may seem that such synchronic evidence does not suffice to argue for the alternative account of the morphophonological process involving the English past tense ending, historical evidence seems to show that

<sup>4</sup> There are such words as *wretch* and *wick* in English, but their grammatical categories and semantic properties are irrelevant to the inflection verbs with the past tense ending *-ed*. *Wretch*, according to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, is a noun and so is *wick*. Although *wick* can also be a verb, its meaning is irrelevant to the meaning of the word *wicked*.

the words in Example 8 were once inflected with *-ed*, according to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. In addition, the forms *markedness* and *markedly* are indeed inflected from the verb *mark*, but not *marked*, an adjective where the *-ed* ending is pronounced as a separate syllable. To accommodate these cases, the typical account, in which the underlying presentation is [d], may need to find a leeway, or in order not to complicate the generation, the typical account would then consider these cases exceptional such that they are morphologically-conditioned alternatives of *marked*. All in all, the alternative account, where the underlying representation of *-ed* is assumed to be /əd/ and the schwa is deleted in the generation of the surface representations, may be a better account at this point, compared to the typical account.

### Orthography and Phonology of the English Past Tense Ending

The orthographical and phonological correspondences can also suggest that the underlying representation of the English past tense ending *-ed* should be [əd]. A common spelling rule that is involved when some verbs are inflected with the past tense ending is the doubling rule of the final consonant letters (see Example 9).

Example (9)	Base form	Past tense form
	<i>rebel</i>	<i>rebelled</i>
	<i>control</i>	<i>controlled</i>
	<i>occur</i>	<i>occurred</i>
	<i>refer</i>	<i>referred</i>
	<i>plan</i>	<i>planned</i>
	<i>jam</i>	<i>jammed</i>
	<i>rob</i>	<i>robbed</i>
	<i>top</i>	<i>topped</i>
	<i>pat</i>	<i>patted</i>
	<i>lag</i>	<i>lagged</i>

The verbs listed in Example 9 all require the doubling rule of the final consonant letters so as to generate a well-formed and legitimate past tense forms, as far as their orthographies are concerned. An English phonotactic rule states that geminates of consonants are not allowed in English phonology and this is why the typical account insists on the insertion of schwa (to break up potential geminate consonants). According to this phonotactic rule, all geminate consonant letters are pronounced only once, such as *letter*, *ladder*, *boss*, *immense*, *apple*, and *rubber*, where the geminate *-tt-*, *-dd-*, *-ss-*, *-mm-*, *-pp-*, and *-bb-* are realized as one sound only. Then why is it legitimately necessary to spell the final consonant letter twice when the past tense ending *-ed* is attached to such verbs as those listed above? What triggers the reduplicated spelling of the final consonant letter? Would it be redundant to do so? What can such reduplication suggest to us?

In fact, the need to double the final consonant letter as the illustrating verbs above can serve as evidential clues to the proposal that the underlying representation of the English past tense *-ed* should better be /əd/. The consonant doubling rule applies under two conditions where the first one has a priority over the second one; once the first one is not met, the second one is thus inapplicable or void. The first condition states that the final syllable in the word stem should carry the primary stress, and the second condition states that the orthography of the rhyme of the stressed syllable consists of a vowel letter and a consonant letter and the consonant letter is realized

in one consonant sound, which will correspond to a lax vowel sound and a consonant sound in the phonological structure of the rhyme (D. E. Freeman & Y. S. Freeman, 2004; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). For example, in *permit*, the final syllable, namely, *-mit*, receives the primary stress, and the rhyme of the syllable is spelled in one vowel letter and one consonant letter and the phonological form of the rhyme consists of one lax vowel [ɪ] and a consonant [t]. Since the two conditions are met, the final consonant letter is thus reduplicated, when inflected with the past tense ending. On the other hand, in *retain* (*retained*, but not *\*retained*), *pilot* (*piloted*, but not *\*piloted*), and *mix* (*remixed*, but not *\*remixed*), the conditions are not met, so reduplication of the final consonant letter is not required when inflected with the past tense suffix. For *retain*, although the stress is on the ultimate syllable (condition one met), this syllable contains two vowel letters and one consonant letter in the spelling of the rhyme (condition two not met). For *pilot*, the primary stressed in on the penultimate syllable, but not on the ultimate syllable (the first condition not met), and since the first condition takes a priority over the second one, the reduplication of the final consonant is void. For *remix*, the primary stress is on the ultimate syllable and the spelling of the rhyme of the syllable consists of a vowel letter and a consonant letter, but the consonant letter is realized as two sounds in its phonological form. Thus, reduplication of the final consonant letter is inapplicable.

Based on the discussion above, it seems that the reduplication of the final consonant letter may not entirely relevant to phonology or morphology. In fact, the phonology of the past tense suffix and the English morphology trigger the reduplication. In addition, the reduplication of the final consonant letter conforms not only to basic phonic principles but also to the English phonotactics, as well as morphology. As an inflectional morpheme, the English past tense suffix, like the other inflectional morphemes, are principally not allowed to alter any information of the stem, phonological information in particular (Katamba & Stonham, 2006). Since the underlying representation of the past tense suffix /əd/, beginning with a vowel, it is thus potential to change the syllable structure of the stem and hence the vowel quality of the stem will therefore be affected, as other suffixes beginning with vowel (such as, *-ic*, *-y*, and *-ity*). Take *-ity* for example. This derivational suffix not only creates a new word with a new semantic concept with a new grammatical function but also changes the stress of the stem, as in *creative* and *creativity*. In *creative*, the stress falls on the penultimate syllable, but after the suffixation of *-ity* the stress, although it remains on the penultimate syllable, is no longer on the same vowel, as it is in *creative*; it is moved to the vowel in the suffix. To account for the stress shift in the derivation of *creativity* from *creative*, one may need to consider that derivational suffixes of this kind have a weak morpheme boundary and lead to the resyllabification of the word and hence the metrical structure of the word is altered (Katamba & Stonham, 2006). On the other hand, inflectional suffixes are basically with a strong morpheme boundary and only create a paradigm of the stem, as in *bakes* and *baked* (in a paradigm with the base form *bake*). Because of this peculiar nature, *-ed* is thus morphologically and phonologically not allowed to create any new words (with a new semantic concept and/or a new syntactic function) and to alter the metrical structure of the stem. That is, it is less preferred for inflected counterparts to be phonologically distinct from their respective stems.

The new thinking of the generation of the English past tense seems to be majorly motivated by spelling, not purely by phonological and morphological factors or conditions. In fact, such spelling-relevant morphophonological changes are not uncommon in English; the alternative spellings of the article *a/an*, the

possessive suffix -'s, and the plural and third person singular suffix -s/-es all involve the same process. When the article *a* is preceding a vowel sound, the spelling *an* should be used instead, for example, *a book* and *an apple* (vs. *\*a apple*). In addition, the spelling of the English possessive suffix is also subject to the phonological information of the stem it is attached to (see Example 10).

Example (10) *child's* (but not *\*childs'*) vs. *children's*

*girl's* vs. *girls'* (but not *girls's*)

*Charles's, Ross's* vs. *Bridges', Connors'*

According to *Oxford Dictionaries* (Pearsall et al., 2012), the spelling of the possessive suffix is under the condition of phonological information in the stem. Generally speaking, when the stem does not end with the phoneme /s/, the suffix is spelled as -'s. When the stem, on the other hand, ends with the phoneme /s/, the suffix is spelled as -(s)' (the *s* belongs to the stem. However, when the stem ends with /s/ and the possessive suffix is spoken as a separate syllable, the spelling of the suffix should be -'s, as in *Charles's* and *Ross's*. Albeit the suffix in such cases as *Charles's* and *Ross's* is pronounced as a separate syllable, the spelling of suffix does not call for an additional vowel letter *e*, unlike another similar case the plural suffix in English -s/-es. The plural suffix for nouns is realized in two different spellings and the two spellings are phonologically conditioned as well: when the stem ends with a sibilant, the suffix is spelled as -es, as the way it is pronounced. These three morphological examples thus lend support to the idea that some morphemes are pronounced and spelled in more than one way and such variations are closely connected to phonology. Therefore, it is not unusual to consider that the doubling consonants are triggered by the phonology of the past tense morpheme -ed.

In contrast with the typical account, it is argued here that the underlying representation of the past tense suffix should be /əd/ and with the potential to alter the metric structure of the stem. Take the verb *rob* for example. When it is inflected with the past tense suffix, the final consonant letter, -b, should be reduplicated and is hence spelled as *robbed*. What if the final consonant were not reduplicated? Inflected with -ed, if the final consonant were not reduplicated, the inflected form would be spelled as *robed*, a whole another word. Since the underlying representation of the suffix is /əd/ with a weak morpheme boundary and hence the stem is resyllabified as /rɒ•bəd/. After the application of the schwa deletion rule, the output will thus be [rɒbd], but not the target output [rɒbd], which thus yields an inflected form that is phonologically distinct from its stem. In order to attain the target output, the final consonant is reduplicated to eschew the resyllabification of the past tense suffix, so that the vowel in the inflected form remains the same. The typical account that treats the underlying representation form of the past tense suffix /d/, however, may not as well account for this aspect.

Moreover, the reduplication of the final consonant reinforces one of the English phonotactics. In English, lax vowels are not allowed to appear in stressed open syllables—those without coda, and can only appear in stressed closed syllables—those with coda (Ashby & Maidment, 2005; Ladefoged & Johnson, 2011; D. E. Freeman & Y. S. Freeman, 2004). The doubling consonant rule hence ensures that the lax vowel in the stem remains lax after the stem is inflected with the -ed suffix. Otherwise, the lax vowel in the stem may be turned into a tense one after the inflection of the -ed suffix, and this will in turn make the inflected form phonologically distinct from its stem because of resyllabification. However, the currently accepted account may not reflect such phonotactics in English. The underlying /-d/ phonological form of the suffix would be fairly unlikely to trigger any resyllabification and the doubling consonant rule in spelling.

The account provided here is endorsed by other researchers. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) mentioned that “[t]he inflectional suffixes that trigger the doubling [of the final consonant]... are the preferite or irregular past participle *-ed*. ... For historical reasons, ... *-ed* counts as a vowel-initial suffix even when it corresponds to phonological /t/ or /d/...” (p. 1575). Agreeing with Huddleston and Pullum, this study further argues that the underlying representation should be /əd/ and that the schwa is deleted in the generation of the target output. This new account not only is better and simpler, but can also explain the generation of the English past tense inflection.

### Conclusions

This study revisits an old issue of the underlying phonological representation of the English past tense suffix *-ed*. Based on historical data and synchronic data, the present study proposes that the underlying phonological representation of the *-ed* suffix should better be /əd/, and the schwa is deleted in the generation of the surface representations of the suffix rather than inserted as argued by the typical account. This proposal appears to respect the historical development of the suffix in phonology and in morphology. In addition, the proposal here also regards the synchronic English phonotactics and morphology. Above all, the proposal not only takes spelling into consideration but also connects phonology and orthography of the English past tense suffix. Furthermore, the new account can also imply that the English past tense suffix may not be a bound inflectional morpheme with a strong morpheme boundary (Katamba & Stonham, 2006), but a bound morpheme with a weak morpheme boundary that triggers resyllabification. Additionally, the generations of the English plural and third person singular present tense suffixes are typically considered to undergo the same derivational process as does the English past tense suffix. This study may thus suggest that the English past tense suffix is generated through a different phonological process from the plural and third person singular present tense suffixes.

The implication of the study can be multifold. First of all, the study suggests rethinking the generation of the plural suffix and the past tense suffix. Traditionally, the generation of these two suffixes is considered to undergo the same phonological processes; both involve devoicing and schwa insertion. Given the new account proposed here, the two suffixes are likely to undergo different phonological processes: The plural suffix undergoes devoicing and schwa insertion, while the past tense suffix undergoes schwa deletion and devoicing. Secondly, inflectional morphemes in English are typically considered to have a strong morpheme boundary, whereas only derivational morphemes are divided into those with a strong morpheme boundary and those with a weak one (Katamba & Stonham, 2006). Based on the account newly proposed here, it is likely that inflectional suffixes are also of two kinds as are derivational morphemes. The past tense suffix *-ed* is a morpheme with a weak morpheme boundary and thus leads to resyllabification. Other inflectional morphemes with a weak morpheme boundary may include the present participle suffix *-ing*, the comparative suffix *-er*, and the superlative suffix *-est*, since they all trigger the consonant doubling rule, although further study may be desirable to examine this respect.

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# Compliment in Televised Talk—Its Forms and Functions: A Chinese Case

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By taking an empirical approach, the paper addresses the compliment-responses taking place in the Chinese televised talk and attempts to find out the different functions realized by the different linguistic forms in such a context. Comparably differentiated from C-R (compliments-responses) in naturally-occurring context, it is shown that compliment in televised talk has fewer types of responses; however, it shows that compliment in televised talk can also perform the function of questioning and suggests the special attention should be given to the compliment which is implicitly given by the process of attribution or categorization.

*Keywords:* compliments, responses, news interview, questioning

## Introduction

Compliment is defined in OED (Oxford English Dictionary Online) as “A ceremonial act or expression as a tribute of courtesy, ‘usually understood to mean less than it declares’ (Johnson); now, esp. a neatly-turned remark addressed to any one, implying or involving praise; but, also applied to a polite expression of praise or commendation in speaking of a person, or to any act taken as equivalent thereto”. It suggests by this definition that firstly, compliment is involved with words of praise or positive evaluation; secondly, it is especially identified to take place in a neatly-turned remark or a polite expression of speaking of someone. It is a common phenomenon for us to find compliments in our everyday life, which usually take place in interpersonal communication or naturally-occurring conversation in social life; therefore, it has been considered as “grease the social wheels” and “social lubricant” (Wolfson, 1983). That is why compliment as an act draws wide attention from many researchers working in many fields and across many languages (Herbert, 1989, 1990, 1991; Henderson, 1996; Homles, 1986, 1988, 1991; Golato, 2002, 2005).

Compliment as a speech act involves the participants and the object/goal which the compliment is about. Golato (2005) suggested that when speakers pay a co-participant a complement, they somehow have to refer to the assessable (i.e., the object, trait, ability, characteristic, etc., that the compliment is about) for their co-participant to know what the compliment was about, and for the co-participant to know what the compliment appropriately.

By taking an empirical approach, studies of compliment have been conducted in the line of conversation analytic tradition, and thus compliments and responses are analyzed within a sequential context. In the previous studies, compliment has been identified to perform various kinds of actions. It has been noted in the literature (Wolfson, 1983, p. 88) that compliments can strengthen or even replace other speech act formulas such as

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apologies, thanks, and greetings, while they can also serve to mitigate or soften face-threatening acts such as criticism, requests, or directives (Holmes, 1986, pp. 488, 500; Holmes & Brown, 1987, p. 532).

Another thing to note is that most studies are more interested in compliments and responses which take place in naturally-occurring conversations from the perspective of either cross-gender or cross-culture, and it seems seldom to examine how compliment works in the media talk. Therefore, this project is more interested in exploring how compliment works in televised talk, especially in Chinese context.

Thus, the research questions are raised as follows: (1) How many types of complimenting can be identified in Chinese televised talk show? And it aims to discover what syntactic structures does compliment have in televised sequential organization?; and (2) How does complimenting work in televised sequential organization? The purpose of this is to identify what functions could compliment perform in the context of televised talk?.

### Data and Methodology

The primary data are selected from a famous and popular televised talk—*A Date With Lu Yu* (*Lu Yu You-Yue* in Putonghua pinyin)—which airs on Phoenix Television, named after its host and creator, CHEN Lu-yu, who is called “China’s Oprah”.

Data are collected from four episodes in this talk.

Four episodes selected are involved with three participants interviewed by Lu Yu and 14 data segments are identified and used in this project. The information of three participants in interaction is identified as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

#### *A Demonstration of the Episodes*

Name of episode:	Identification of the guest:	Number of episode (time span) + data segment
Talk with LIU Ruo-ying	A Chinese singer from Taiwan	1 episode (30 mins) + 5
Talk with ZHOU Li-bo and his wife	A famous comedian from Shanghai who married a wealthy lady HU Jie	2 episodes (1 hour) + 5
Talk with HUANG Su-ying	A 92 years old actress who is still working in movie	1 episode (30 mins) + 4

### Data Analysis

In this section, the author would like to analyze the formal structures of compliments in the televised talk in two aspects: One is to identify the syntactic structure of compliment itself, and the other is to look into the structure of compliment-giving in the sequence.

#### Syntactic Structure of Compliments

In this section, the distinction made by Schegloff (1996) between “reference position” and “reference forms” will be adopted to help with syntactic analysis of compliment in sequence. He refers the “reference position” as there exists a slot at which a reference could be matched in unfolding the stretch of talk; and the reference will take different linguistic forms to realize the reference according to its different position.

As suggested by Golato (2005), as to the person reference in compliments taking place in German context, a noun phrase or second person pronoun (locally initial referent) usually goes to the “locally initial position” where there is no prior referent in the talk, and in the subsequent talk the reference forms (locally subsequent forms) usually is realized by the demonstrative pronoun, personal pronouns (other than second person forms), or being no overt reference which is introduced to the position to accomplish the reference.



Along with this line, the structures of the data segments is examined and it is found that the reference forms in the author's data usually comes initially in the utterance, which is quite different from English or German identified in Golato (2005). Here the author mainly distinguished two positions in a sequential management: locally initial position and locally subsequent position.

#### Reference

(1) Locally initial reference forms in locally initial position

(a) Nouns phrase + adjective/adjunct (see Examples 1-2)

Example (1) 鲁豫：新专辑真得很漂亮

Lu Yu: New album really very pretty

The new album is really very pretty

Example (2) 鲁豫：你们的环境很好啊

Lu Yu: your environment is really good

(b) 2-person pronoun (the assessable) + adjective/adjunct

(2) Locally initial reference forms in locally subsequent position

(a) 2-person pronoun + adjective/adjunct (+ NP) (see Examples 3-4)

Example (3) 鲁豫：你现在状态很好 (compare)

Lu Yu: you now state very good

You are in a good state now.

Example (4) 鲁豫：你的确是越来越漂亮的那种女人

Lu Yu: you really more and more beautiful that kind of woman

you are really the woman who becomes more and more beautiful

(3) Locally subsequent forms in locally subsequent position

(a) Conjunction + NP + adjectives (see Examples 5-6)

Example (5) 鲁豫：而且您的皮肤现在也特别好

Lu Yu: and that your skin now is very well

and besides, you keep your skin so particularly well

Example (6) 鲁豫：而且腿很好看我看到了

Lu Yu: besides, the legs look beautiful I saw

and your legs are beautiful I found.

(b) Pronoun (demonstrative) + conjunction + adjective/adjunct (see Example 7)

Example (7) 鲁豫：你真不像92岁啊

Lu Yu: You but really not like 92 years old

but You don't look like a 92-year-old lady

(c) No overt reference (see Example 8)

Example (8) 鲁豫：哇

Lu Yu: wow

wow

(4) Locally subsequent form + locally initial form in locally initial position (see Example 9)

Example (9) 鲁豫：你今天真漂亮打扮的 (greeting)

You today really beautiful dressed up

You're beautifully dressed up today

### The Structure of Compliment-Giving in Sequence

By reference to the taxonomy of Chinese compliments-responses from CHEN (1993) and Golato's (2005) classification of compliments-responses in both American and German contexts, the forms and functions of compliments-giving in televised talk will be investigated and classified in this section. According to CHEN, Chinese responses could fall into five strategies: (1) disagreeing and denigrating; (2) expressing embarrassment; (3) explaining; (4) thanking and denigrating; and (5) thanking only.

Admittedly, CHEN made a good contribution in documenting the Chinese type of compliment-response in naturally occurring communication, especially in everyday life. However, in this project, the model offered in Golato's (2005) will be combined with the work of CHEN; because, firstly, 20 years after CHEN's work, there might be a change in Chinese people's mentality and the mode of communication in life; secondly, it is obvious to find the corresponding features in the data with Golato's model.

The structures of compliment are also examined in the context of sequence organization, and thus they are classified into four types according to their different features: explicit compliment, compliment as a component in question turn, compliment as a question, and implicit compliment.

**Explicit compliment.** The compliment of this kind appears in a pair of turns. When a compliment is offered, it is responded with another turn. There is an adjacency pair (compliment + response) in the talk.

We can find that once compliment is offered, the responses may take the following different types: acceptance, rejection, ignoring, evaluation shift, or referent shift.

Let us consider Example 10.

Example (10) 鲁豫：新专辑真得很漂亮 (compliment)

Lu Yu: new album really very pretty.

The new album is really very pretty.

刘若英：谢谢 (acceptance)

LIU Ruo-ying: thanks.

Thanks.

In this case, when Lu Yu compliments the album, the singer LIU extends "thanks" by courtesy and accepts it as a response, and it indicates that both the compliment giver and the compliment recipient are aligned to the assessable (the new album).

Example (11) 鲁豫：你现在状态很好 (compliment)

Lu Yu: you now state very good

You are in a good state now.

刘若英：其实你知道那天我上完你的节目我第二天就进医院开刀了 (ignore)

LIU: actually you know that day I finished your program I next day go in hospital have an operation.

Actually I told you the next day after talk with you, I just was hospitalized for an operation.

In Example 11, the recipient does not give a direct response to the compliment received—the expression of admiration about her being in a good state now; she puts the compliment aside and gives more information about the experience of being hospitalized after last date with Lu Yu. Emphasis is paid to the time marker "NOW" recalls a comparison of state between now and in the past days. It implicates that there is something not good in the past. To the audience, they are quite curious about why she says so and what happened to the singer "before now"?

Different from research in Herbert (1986) and Galota's (2005) about response types to compliment, they attribute the ignoring as a solution type as the one happening in conflicting preference. In televised talk, the singer—LIU Ruo-ying is unfolding the reasons why Lu Yu compliments her state so good “now”, and she needs to give more information about what story is behind the compliment. Ignoring in televised talk can also be interpreted as “information giving” which indicates that “let me tell you a true story” which shows authenticity of the speaker towards the event happened to herself.

Example (12) 鲁豫：而且腿很好看我看到了 (compliment)

Lu Yu: moreover, the legs look beautiful I saw

And the legs are beautiful I found.

刘若英：还 还可以啦 (scale down the compliment assertion)

Liu Ruo-ying: still still ok la

Um they are okay.

This compliment (see Example 12) takes place at the subsequent position after the first compliment is given in the greeting “you are now in a good state”; the next compliment comes after LIU states her experience of good recovery from an operation had on body. When received a second praise expressed by Lu Yu, LIU Ruo-ying just accepts it in a dispreferred environment by hesitation marker “hai (equals to um and literally as still)” and says “Hai ke yi la (they are just okay)”. This is a very Chinese type of in CHEN's survey which is like in the strategy of expressing embarrassment.

Example (13) 鲁豫：你今天真漂亮打扮的 (compliment + greeting)

Lu Yu: You today really beautiful dressed up.

You're beautifully dressed up today.

黄素影：见大家挺高兴，所以要喜庆一点对吧？呵呵呵呵 (reinterpretation)

HUANG Su-ying: See you all very happy so in order to be a little more joyous, right ba?  
Hehehehe

Very happy to see you all here so dress up myself in order to make it more joyous, is that right? Hehehe

In Example 13, the compliment happens in the beginning of the talk, and functionally it works as a greeting with Ms. HUANG in a phatic way and Ms. HUANG as an actress, she not only accepts the compliment but also attributes “the beautifully dressed up” to seeing audience in the studio; the compliment is responded with interpretation of attributable third party. It could be safe to suggest that compliment between the two parties could be shifting to the overhearing audience in televised talk. By doing so, the recipient avoids the compliment on the one hand, and on the other hand, she cleverly gets herself to be engaged with the audience.

Example (14) 鲁豫：传说你已经会做红烧狮子头了？ (a compliment on her ability to cook a complicated dish)

Lu Yu: It is said you have been able to cook the braised meat balls in brown sauce

It's said that you've been able to cook the braised meat balls in brown sauce

刘若英：那没什么 (evaluation shift)

LIU Ruo-ying: that no what.

That's nothing at all (that dish is not complicated at all for me to cook).

Compliment response may shift evaluation from on one assessable to another. In Example 14, Lu Yu evaluates her skills of cooking which is growing better, because she could be able to cook a very complicated

Chinese dish, whereas she makes a wise and quick response and naturally shifts to evaluate the dish as an easy job for her. By responding this way, she ostensibly rejects the compliment and does a face-threatening act to produce a sense of embarrassment for the both parties. It is worth noting that at the moment audience's laughter is thus evoked, which usually dilutes the embarrassment between the two persons on stage.

**Compliment as a component in question turn.** Compliment as a component could appear either in the preface of questions or in the post-elaboration of the question which forms a complete question turn. This category usually takes the formal structure as in this formula: (compliment) + question + (compliment).

Example (15) 鲁豫：在你碰到他以前，就在那个2008年8月4日是吧，之前你幻想过你今后的人生是这个样子的吗？会碰到这样一个人，有这么快乐的生活？ (compliment embedded in question)

Lu Yu: Before you met him that is on 4th of August, is that right have you fancied you future of life will be like this? That (you) will happen to such a man and have such a happy life?

胡洁：恩---，我没想过有这么快乐，但之前就是说怎么生活，当时我是想明白了，我只要一个安定安稳的家庭，我就想到事实上人最幸福就是过过小日子是最幸福的，当然，最后我一直在追求这种生活。

Hu Jie: En, I hadn't have thought I would be so happy like this, but I had been clear about how to live on, what I wanted is to have a stable family, and thought that the happiest thing for a person is to live an ordinary life, anyway, finally, I have been in pursuit of such life

In this turn, Lu Yu is asking HU Jie—ZHOU's wife to anticipate what kind of life would she prefer before she got married on August 4, 2008; a compliment is embedded in the post elaboration of the question as "that (you) will happen to such a man and have such a happy life?". Compliment as a component in the question turn is responded directly by the recipient, which we can find in her response, which the recipient focuses on interpreting the given compliment. In this sense, we could suggest that compliment is a way to elaborate the question after the question itself.

Another case is the compliment usually goes before the question such as in Examples 16-17.

Example (16) 鲁豫：这是你宿舍啊？你们宿舍真好啊，当时有这么好么？ (compliment + question)

Lu Yu: This is your dorm room a? your dorm room really good a, then has such good ma?

Is this your dorm? It's really good, was it as good as now?

周立波：这里有位，(ignore)

ZHOU Li-bo: Here has room.

There's room here.

In the above example, we could find that the assessable is the dorm room where ZHOU Li-bo spent his youth in a comedy troupe, and Lu Yu makes a compliment to appraise that the dorm room looks so good and then asks whether it was as good as it looks today. Compliment which goes before the question works as a phatic strategy. Obviously, the recipient does not make any direct response to the compliment and ignores it.

Example (17) 鲁豫：你当时穿的很漂亮哎呀去拿这个奖的时候激动吗黄老师？ (compliment as component of question—need no response)

Lu Yu: You then wore very pretty aya go to get the award excited ma HUANG teacher.

黄素影：嗯当然也激动但是我这个人哪就是也没没想到要这些我就觉得我要完成个任务这是我的工作我要完成任务就行了

HUANG Su-ying: En, of course excited but I am kind of person who doesn't long for these stuff (winning award ) what I thought is to complete my duty and this is my job and it's just okay for me to do my task.

鲁豫：恩

Lu Yu: en

黄素影：观众觉得好了我就挺高兴就得了我没想到要拿东西

HUANG Su-ying: I will be happy if audience thinks my work good that's it I didn't intend to get something more.

In this turn, Lu Yu recalls the scene when Ms. HUANG wins the movie award and asks whether she is excited at that time. And her compliments goes before the question as “you wore very pretty at that time”, the compliment starts but not expects to be responded as usual on Lu Yu's part; beside, it seems not like greeting, but works to contextualize the question “are you excited”. Like the above example, the compliment does not receive any direct feedback from the recipient.

**Compliment as a question turn.** Compliment of this kind is usually in the form of question that appraises the assessable, which performs the dual functions of talk: One is to raise question, and the other is to make a positive evaluation (see Example 18).

Example (18) 鲁豫：那你在家里面也是那么好玩的一个人吗？

Lu Yu: Then you at home also be such a funny person ma?

Then are you such a funny (interesting) person when you are home?

周立波：恩 就是那种蛮，反正我属于蛮搞怪的人

ZHOU Li-bo: Um be that quite anyway I belong to quite funny person

Um, I am quite anyway quite a funny person

胡洁：[好玩

Hu Jie: [funny

[he's funny

In this data segment, we could find that the compliment is given to ZHOU Li-bo in the form of question, and the question entails the presupposition that “You are a funny and interesting person”, actually this presupposition is a compliment for ZHOU Li-bo. So it is possible to suggest that in televised talk, IR (Interviewer)'s compliment could does not perform an assertive act but interrogative one due to the pre-allocated role of IR.

**Implicit compliments.** Compliments of this kind are usually realized through attribution/generalization of one category or the evaluation of the referent shifts to one category with shared attributes. It is interesting to find that the process of attribution or generalization is usually concerned with a moral evaluation (see Example 19).

Example (19) 鲁豫：我觉得这样爱吃的人特别好特别幸福的人== (moral evaluation)

Lu Yu: I think like this love to eat especially good especially happy==

I think those persons who love to eat are quite good and quite happy==

刘若英：[恩

LIU Ruo-ying: [en

[en

鲁豫 :==这就是享受生活最基本的如果连吃都不爱吃的话我觉得这个人活着基本上没有什么太大的乐趣和意义了

Lu Yu: == this is enjoying life the basic if eat not love I think this man live basically has no more interest and point

== this is the essential part to enjoy living in the world, and there will be no more interest and point for the man who doesn't love to eat

刘若英：真的，真的，真的

LIU Ruo-ying: true, true, true

In this sequence exchange, we could find Lu Yu attributes the trait of being an eat-lover conveyed by LIU Ruo-ying in the previous utterance to one category of people being good and happy; in other words, her utterance can be understood that “those people who love to eat are happy and you are loving to eat and you belong to them and thus it is good and happy for those who love to eat and you are a happy person”. So compliment is implicitly conveyed in her utterance through attributing of one of recipient's trait to a general class. Usually the process escalates the evaluation of specific aspect of the object to a universal value (see Example 20).

Example (20) 鲁豫：那你是我碰到的可能为数几乎没有的绝无仅有的一个心态能够这么好的一个人。

Lu Yu: Then you are I come across probably seldom unique one mentally well being one

You are probably for me the only person who has so good a mentality

胡洁：[没有的 [对=

HU Jie: [ no one [right=

[he is the only one [yes=

=他每天看的每天看但是他不建议我看但我还是磨练出来了

= he everyday saw everyday saw but he not suggest me see but I still get all through

= he read everyday everyday, but he doesn't suggest me to read the news, but after all they make me get through.

周立波：但她现在看着看着好像也坚强了

ZHOU Li-bo: But she now looks as if also tougher

But now she looks as if tougher than ever.

胡洁：[我也坚强了

HU Jie: [I also tougher

[I am tougher now

This exchange happens when ZHOU Li-bo is asked what mentality he keeps when encountering all kinds of criticism on Internet. After he states that he enjoys the criticism coming on internet, Lu Yu gives the comment like “probably, you are the very person who can have such a good mentality when facing up with the criticisms”. In this turn, we can find that through uttering “such a person”, ZHOU Li-bo is a categorized into one type of person with a specific attribute of being “owning a good mentality and etc.”. In the following turns, both ZHOU Li-bo and his wife made mention of becoming tougher in character than ever, which shows that being such a person does relate with being “tougher” in personality build-up. Compliment happens through a good evaluation of one's mentality in line with categorizing one trait of person's personality and seems to be involved in sense of a moral judgment.

Both data present us a semantic categorization of compliment attribution and the evaluation usually shifts

from one aspect or trait of an individual person to a generally-owned character of his/her group. The semantic contour of evaluation thus amplifies within the shift.

### Conclusions

First of all, compared with naturally-occurring conversations as studied in the previous work (Herbert, 1986, 1989; Holmes, 1986, 1988; CHEN, 1993), compliment in televised talk has fewer types of responses. Secondly, apart from the other functions identified in natural conversations (soften face-threatening greeting, request, directive, etc.), compliment in televised talk performs the function of questioning (embedded in questions and appear in the form of question); and thirdly, implicit compliment could be identified through data and compliment of this kind usually takes place by amplifying the positive evaluation of one specific assessable through categorization or attribution and it is worth noting that this process usually implicate a moral judgment or comment of speaker's stance.

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# A Study of *However* in Research Articles From a Systemic Functional Perspective

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*However* has been given as an example of a particle of concession, which within Appraisal Theory (Martin, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005) is considered one of the subcategorical terms in the engagement system. The engagement system of Appraisal Theory analyzes the intersubjective positioning of writers/speakers in their production of texts. Research Articles are highly heteroglossic texts whose authors take great care in their positioning with respect to the academic community to which they belong (Bakhtin, 1981). This paper analyzes the use of *however* in a corpus of Research Articles on Linguistics with the aim of designing a classification of its different functions in this genre. The corpus is made up of the 113 Research Articles on Systemic Functional Linguistics published after 34th and 35th International Systemic Functional Conferences held in Odense 2007 and Sydney 2008, respectively. The analysis focuses first on the grammatical category of *however*, its position within the clause and within the research articles. Finally, a taxonomy of the concessive particle is designed with the aid of contextual elements that contribute to the disambiguation of its functions.

*Keywords:* functional linguistics, Research Articles, *however*

Any grammatics that is going to be “good enough” will have to engage the protean minds of its teacher-consumers and to allow for the adaptations that occur in ordinary classrooms. This is a challenge for SF grammatics. (Macken-Horarik, 2008, p. 47)

The ways writers bring readers into the discourse to anticipate their possible objections and engage them in appropriate ways have been relatively neglected in the literature. (Hyland, 2005, p. 182)

## Introduction

Research Articles have been defined as the “written publications that communicate experimental results or transmit new knowledge and/or experiences based on facts already known in scientific fields” (Arribalzaga, Borracci, Giuliano, & Jacovella, 2005, p. 21)<sup>1</sup>. Puiatti de Gómez (2005) argued that Research Articles are “complex communicative events, whose textual occurrences—of informative and argumentative nature—reflect an intermediate position between directive and expositive texts” (p. 29). According to Swales (1990, p. 175), while Research Articles are “complexly distanced reconstructions of research activities”, they are disciplinary dependant: The more empirical the field, the more highly structured the Research Article. Traditionally, Research

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<sup>1</sup> The translation into English is the author's.



Articles have been considered objective monologic pieces characterized by their linguistically impersonal structures such as passive constructions, nominalisations, and the absence of first-person pronouns (Swales, 2004, p. 216). Nevertheless, this alleged conceptualization of objectivity and monologicity of the Research Article has lately been challenged (Fløttum, 2003a, 2003b, 2005; Gallardo, 2004; Gosden, 1993; Hyland, 2001). The aim of this paper is to continue this tradition of regarding the Research Article as ontologically heteroglossic in Bakhtinian terms (Ball & Freedman, 2004). In particular, the author will analyze the use of *however* in Research Articles on Systemic Functional Linguistics drawing upon a mixture of three perspectives, namely, Ducrot and Carel's Theory of Semantic Blocks (hereafter TSB), Bakhtinian notion of Heteroglossia, and the concept of Engagement from Appraisal Theory.

The paper unfolds in the following way: Section 2 very succinctly touches upon the theoretical concepts, which have been organized into three subsections dealing with the TSB, Bakhtin's concept of Heteroglossia, and Appraisal Theory, respectively. Section 3 deals with the corpus and methodology. Finally, section 4 analyzes the use of *however* in the corpus, in terms of its grammatical category, position, and use. With this aim, we will explore the position of *however* within the clause and within the Research Articles, and we will make a classification of *however* following the theoretical framework abovementioned.

### Theoretical Concepts

#### Ducrot and Carel's TSB

The TSB is one of the possible advances that stems from the Theory of Argumentation of Language developed by Ducrot and Anscombe in the second half of last century. Basically<sup>2</sup>, it states that the meaning of a linguistic entity, be it a clause, a phrase or a lexical item, does not lie in the linguistic entity itself but in its connections with other entities in the language. The meaning of an entity is thus conveyed/interpreted by the *argumentative chains* that such entity puts into play. These *argumentative chains* are of two kinds, namely, normative chains and transgressive chains. The former are characterized by *therefore*-bindings and the latter by *however*-bindings. Let us consider Example 1.

Example (1) [I]n this local environment, the logical and experiential are complimentary—it is impossible to work out a dichotomy between the two as both contribute to construing experiences. Therefore, in the following analysis, these two perspectives will be considered together. (203-204)<sup>3</sup>

According to TSB, in Example 1, “complimentary” is not understood by itself, or by its parenthetical explanation, but by its *therefore*-binding with the following sentence. Thus, if the meaning in Example 1 is codified as X therefore Y, the *complimentariness* referred to can be understood as *inseparateness*. Had the writer chosen to express Example 2 below instead, which can be codified as X however Y, the meaning expressed would have been that of *separateness*.

Example (2) [I]n this local environment, the logical and experiential are complimentary—it is impossible to work out a dichotomy between the two as both contribute to construing experiences. However, in the following analysis, these two perspectives will be considered together.

A further example will shed more light into TSB.

<sup>2</sup> For an extensive explanation of the theory, see Carel and Ducrot (2005) and García Negroni (2005).

<sup>3</sup> The numbers in brackets after the examples correspond to references in the author's corpus.

Example (3) Preliminary investigations as well as assumptions, suggested that learners had limited cooking skills and therefore a motivation for learners to engage in the social process of exchanging ideas. (98-99)

In Example 3, the poor knowledge referred to is understood as encouragement for socialisation, but this meaning does not lie in the expression “limited cooking skills” but in its interconnectedness with the following part of the sentence “therefore a motivation for learners to engage in the social process of exchanging ideas”. If the writers of Example 3 had intended to mean “poor knowledge *discourages* socialisation”, they would have resorted to a transgressive chain in *however* like Example 4 below rather than to a normative chain in *therefore*.

Example (4) Preliminary investigations as well as assumptions, suggested that learners had limited cooking skills and however a motivation for learners to engage in the social process of exchanging ideas.

In the following section, the author will very succinctly explain Bakhtinian concept of Heteroglossia.

### **Bakhtinian Concept of Heteroglossia**

For Bakhtin, language, whether spoken or written, is always alive and dynamic. Every stretch of language is heteroglossic in that it embraces a number of prior voices and posterior readings. It involves centrifugal and centripetal forces of solidarity and conflict. The friction between these voices and meanings is termed by Bakhtin as Heteroglossia. As he (1981) put it, “every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear” (p. 272). Though originally concerned with the reading of the Russian novel and dialogue in language, Bakhtinian concept of Heteroglossia has later been applied to the study of the different voices in the Research Article (Fløttum, 2005). The author will illustrate this point with an example from the author’s corpus (see Example 5).

Example (5) Among marked topical themes, absolute Theme has long been identified and described as a typical “ungrammatical” or “pidgin-like quality” of syntactic structure of Chinese English in the past studies (Bolton, 2003). However, in Systemic Function Linguistics, absolute Theme is considered as a strategy to specify the textual “subject matter” (Matthiessen, 1995, p. 552). (296)

At first sight, there are a number of voices involved in this example, namely, those of Bolton and Matthiessen, together with those of the three writers of the article in question. Still, after further scrutiny, more implicit voices can be detected through the use of different polyphonic markers. For example, the use of the scare quotes in “ungrammatical”, “pidgin-like quality”, and “subject matter” can either endorse or counter the writers’ voice. Additionally the passive reporting verbs *has [...] been identified and described* have been chosen from an extensive range of possibilities available in the language. Besides, the mention of both *long* and of the plural nominal phrase *past studies* makes reference to further voices, of which Bolton’s serves only as an example. The same holds true for the reference to *Systemic Function Linguistics*, from which a number of practitioners could have been named. Moreover, the use of *however* that binds the two sentences within the example may be taken to confront different voices (Matthiessen vs. Bolton, the writers vs. Bolton and the writers vs. Matthiessen). Finally, the mention of nominals as *Chinese English* and processes as *is considered* as if they were unquestionable entities devoid of different possible interpretation might both bring and silence other voices, giving this short passage a highly heteroglossic characteristic.

### Appraisal Theory

Appraisal Theory is concerned with evaluation, which encompasses the attitudes negotiated by writers/speakers of texts, the graduation of such attitudes and their sources. The Appraisal System has been divided into Attitude, Graduation, and Engagement (Martin, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005). Engagement, whereby different voices are silenced or introduced into the discourse, in its turn is subdivided into two categories: Monogloss and Heterogloss. The former refers to the voice of the writer of a text as the only source of an attitude. The latter involves the voice of a writer other than the writer/speaker. The three basic means of including other voices in a heteroglossic text are Projection, Modalisation, and Concession. Figure 1, which has been adapted from Martin and Rose (2003, p. 59), illustrates the system of appraisal with particular focus on engagement subcategorization.

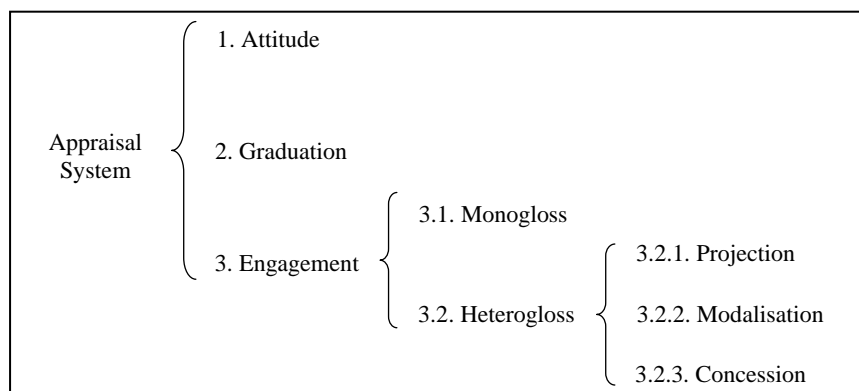


Figure 1. Appraisal System.

Later, Martin and White (2005) have refined the Appraisal System by adding subcategorizations to the taxonomy originally proposed. In particular, the heteroglossic section of the Engagement System has been subdivided into Expansion and Contraction, the former comprising those “formulations [that] open up the dialogic space for alternative positions”, and the latter involving those that “close down the space for dialogic alternatives” (Martin & White 2005, p. 103). Contraction in its turn is classified into Proclaim and Disclaim. Proclaim refers to those meanings whereby some particular stance is taken excluding alternative views. Disclaim, which directly rejects or displaces dialogic alternatives, embraces two final categories, namely, Denial and Counterexpectancy. Let us concentrate on the last one. Counterexpectancy signals a consequence other than expected (see Example 6).

Example (6) The criticism group criticizes fastfood—particularly McDonald’s—as the main cause of obesity. Particularly, as already mentioned above, the film “Super Size Me” (2004) exemplifies the drastic effects of fastfood diet to physical and psychological health. In this regard, the criticism group can be categorized into the right antagonist group as the “stirrer” on the issue. However, as the “resolvers”, the right protagonist and the left protagonist groups are placed in between the two antagonist groups. (350)

In this extract, the writer is dealing with groups that are critical of fastfood and of McDonald’s in particular, and qualifies the criticism group as right antagonist. This trait of the criticism group seems to preclude any plausible expectation of in-betweenness of a right protagonist. Countering such expectation, the last sentence of

the example, introduced by the concessive conjunction *however*, entails this interpretation of the right protagonist as in between two antagonist groups.

Figure 2, adapted from Martin and White (2005, p. 134), expands the heteroglossic taxonomy of the Engagement System into its full potential. The author has included in brackets the correspondent references to Figure 1.

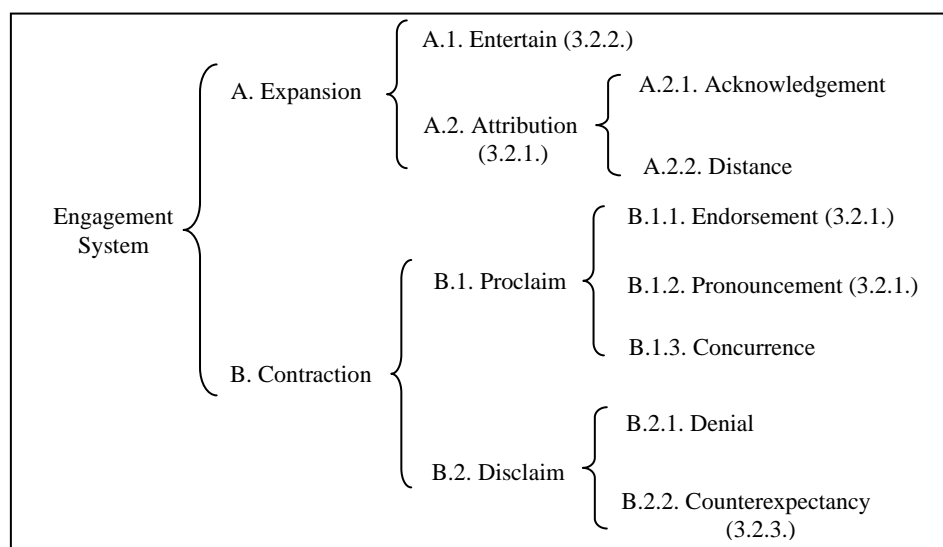


Figure 2. Engagement System.

## Corpus and Methodology

The corpus under study has been taken from 113 Research Articles on Systemic Functional Linguistics, made up of the 43 articles published after the 34th ISFC (International Systemic Functional Congresses) held in Odense (Nørgaard, 2008) and the 35th ISFC held in Sydney (Wu, Matthiessen, & Herke, 2008). All instances of overt *however* in the corpus were selected together with their previous and subsequent sentence(s) and later analyzed according to their grammatical category, their position within the clause, their position within the article, and the intended meaning of the writer(s) as the author understood it. This led the author to a classification of *however* in the Research Articles that the author presents in the next section.

First, the author has analyzed the frequency of *however* according to its position within the Research Article. In order to do so, the author has—quite arbitrarily—divided the Research Articles into four sections, namely, abstract, introduction, body, and conclusion. While the abstract is clearly separated from the rest, the author must acknowledge that the other three sections have offered a number of problems, since the writers of the Research Articles have quite often chosen different headings for the sections of their papers, and in a couple of cases, they have not divided them at all. In these cases, the author has made the separation from the author's interpretation of the contents of the Research Article.

## Findings and Discussion

### Grammatical Category of *However* in Research Articles

*However* is considered one of the 2,000 most common words in spoken English and one of the 1,000 most

common in written English (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 2003 [1978]). In the author's corpus, the author has found 441 tokens of *however*, seven of which have been discarded for representing lexical variables, as shown in Examples 7-9.

Example (7) The textual Themes are expressed by connectors such as *y* ("and"), *pero* ("but"), *sin embargo* ("however"), etc. (07.19)

Example (8) Martin and Rose (2003) include two sets of resources for tracking and adjusting readers'/listeners' expectations: one set are concessive conjunctions like *but*, *even if*, *however*, *although*, *in fact*, *indeed*, *instead of*, etc; and the other set are continuatives, which occur inside the clause, including words like *finally*, *still*, *only*, *just*, *even*, etc. (07.25)

Example (9) Additionally (and of more relevance for this analysis) is the logico-semantic phenomenon of conjunction and the ways in which relations between propositions can be signalled: in particular conjunctive Adjuncts (e.g. *neither*, *however*, *consequently*), hypotactic conjunctives (e.g. *because*, *although*, *after*), and paratactic conjunctives (e.g. *thus*, *but*, *and*). (07.38)

Of the remaining 434 instances of *however*, 7 are adverbs of degree (see Examples 10-11) and 427 are conjunctions (see Examples 12-13). Therefore, while less than 2% are adverbs, over 98% of *however* are conjunctions.

Example (10) The final criterion was tied to the second, in that words being brought into English during the 19th century were more likely to be part—however peripherally—of the nation-building project taking place at that time, and thus a number of writers would be consciously deploying the words in order to build up the context of culture around Confederation. (290)

Example (11) Casual conversations like the one we overheard in a teahouse about gender are easily found in our everyday life. However simple they appear, they are ideologically laden. Surrounding us there are also images that are less explicit but not less ideological. (322)

Examples 10-11 above show adverbs of degree, the former modifying the adverb *peripherally*, and the latter modifying the adjective *simple*. Examples 12-13 below show instances of conjunctions, the former conjoining two sentences, and the latter, two clauses.

Example (12) Some nouns that have important values in the text (such as *liberty*, which is used 13 times in the text) and some other words could not emerge from the analysis. However, they might need to be included in future work in this area. (340)

Example (13) Some studies have tried to explore the features of academic writing in different social-cultural context, however, most of them borrowed a genre model originally set for analysis of other kinds of text or writing for certain professional purposes, while a systematic framework is still lacking for the formation of academic writing. (390)

### **Position of *However* Within the Clause**

As regards the position within the clause, *however* can be placed in either initial, medial, or final position, as Examples 14-16 below respectively show.

Example (14) Verbs are more vivid than nouns. Some (Jerz, 2006, Unsworth, 2002) think that nominalizations should be avoided for the sake of brevity and precision of expression.

Structures with the agent as the subject should be encouraged. However, as we find in daily verbal communication, technical and scientific language uses more nominalized structures, because the language of science involves abstraction and generalization. (379)

Example (15) Their congruent lexicogrammatical realizations are respectively clause complex, clause and element of clause structure: group/phrase. In ideational metaphor, however, they are metaphorically realized respectively by clause, element of clause structure: group/phrase, and element of the clause structure: thing. (401)

Example (16) The manifestation of the voice phenomenon in Òkó may not be unconnected with the non-realization of tense in the language (see Akerejola, 2005). This is an issue whose work is still in progress, however. (197)

Table 1 shows the distribution of *however* within the clause in the corpus. It can be seen that clause-initial *however* is 50% more frequent than clause-medial *however*. Besides, *however* occurs in final position only once in the author's corpus.

Table 1

*Position of However Within the Clause*

Position	Occurrences	Percentages
Initial	262	60.4
Medial	171	39.4
Final	1	0.2
Total	434	100

These results, and the ones presented in the previous subsection, are in line with those found in a much bigger corpus made up of 278 Research Articles (1,601,382 words) on Linguistics and Discourse Analysis. In this other corpus, the author has found 1,856 tokens of *however*, 57% of which were found in initial position, 43% in medial position and less than 1% in final position within the clause<sup>4</sup>.

**Position of *However* in Research Articles**

Table 2

*However Per 1,000 Words in Research Article Sections*

Section	<i>However</i>	N° words	<i>However</i> /1,000 words
Abstract	21	19,859	1.06
Introduction	46	40,335	1.14
Body	317	285,780	1.11
Conclusion	53	35,488	1.49
Total	437	381,462	1.15

<sup>4</sup> However, these findings show the reverse of those arrived at using the Corpus of Contemporary American English (Davies, Mark. 2008. The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA): 385 million words, 1990-present. Available online at <http://www.americancorpus.org/>). The corpus consists of 76.2 million words of academic articles. The results in this corpus are: 26,805 (38%) initial-clause, 42,649 (60%) medial-clause, and 1,324 (2%) final-clause. The raw frequency of *however* found in this corpus is 70,778 tokens.

246<sup>5</sup> tokens of *however* were found in the 43 Research Articles edited by Nørgaard (almost 6 tokens per article) and 188 tokens in the 70 Research Articles edited by Wu, Matthiessen, and Herke (2.7 tokens per article). This difference is due to the fact that the last 70 articles were much more restricted in their length (up to 6 pages per article). Table 2 shows the frequency of *however* in each of the sections, alongside the number of words per section and the range of *however* per 1,000 words in each section.

It can be seen that while the body is the most productive section in the occurrence of *however*, taking into account the relative number of words per section, the conclusion is 40% more prolific. This difference is more remarkable in the case of the shorter 70 articles in Wu et al., amounting to conclusions 76% more concessive than the respective bodies, as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

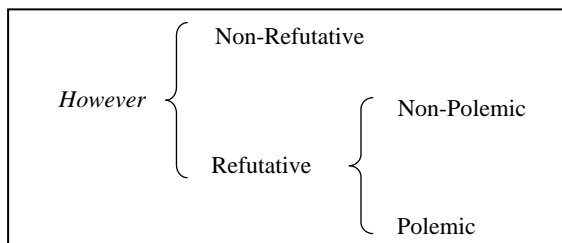
*However Per 1,000 Words in Shorter Research Articles*

Section	<i>However</i>	N° words	<i>However</i> /1,000 words
Abstract	13	11,966	1.09
Introduction	32	22,571	1.42
Body	112	112,188	1.00
Conclusion	31	17,655	1.76
Total	188	164,380	1.14

Hence, it can be said that the conclusion is the most heteroglossic section in Research Articles and that the shorter the article, the more heteroglossic its conclusion is in comparison with the remaining sections of the article.

### Classification of *However* in Research Articles

*However* has traditionally been classified as a concessive conjunct (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, pp. 259-260), and within Systemic Functional Linguistics as a conjunctive adjunct expressing adversative extension or concessive enhancement (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, pp. 542-543). Within Appraisal Theory, *however* is seen as a contractive connective which introduces a proposition that “replac[es] or supplant[s], and thereby ‘counter[s]’, a proposition which would have been expected in its place” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 120). Yet, in the following analysis, we will attempt to demonstrate that *however* displays a higher degree of complexity and polysemy in its functions. In this paper, *however* has been classified into two functional categories, namely, Non-Refutative and Refutative. This last category has been further subdivided into Non-Polemic and Polemic. This is shown in Figure 3, which illustrates its polysemic dynamism.

Figure 3. Classification of *however*.

<sup>5</sup> In actual fact, there were 253, but 7 of them were discarded since they were mentioned as lexical variables, that is to say they were used in enumerations of lexical items rather than applied within clauses.

The author has called Non-Refutative *however* the category characterized by its purely concessive use. In this case, the second constituent of the chain linked with *however* does not contradict the first constituent in any way. Let us consider Example 17.

Example (17) The students are also capable of, to varying degrees, expanding information at the clause level through the use of complex nouns. However, it remains unclear why some students are able to construct texts with greater noun density than others. (43)

In this example, the first part of the chain, “the students are also capable of [...] expanding information [...] through [...] complex nouns”, does not necessarily entail that it is *clear* “why some students are able to construct texts with greater noun density than others”. Rather, it is the addition of the second part of the chain linked through a *however*-binding that precludes this possible interpretation. Hence, it is not the case that the reverse of the second part of the chain is logically deduced from the first part. Rather, it is the addition of the second part of the chain linked to the first part with *however* that rules out one of the many possible interpretations of such first part. Let us see some further examples (see Examples 18-20).

Example (18) To sum up, we could characterize the QA text style in our corpus as rather simple, impersonal, almost colloquial. However, our corpus is small, so more research is needed in order to draw more convincing conclusions about different genres in the students’ academic writing. (79)

Example (19) Since only twenty years have passed since Nesbitt and Plum collected their corpus, it seems to me that the former is a more plausible explanation. However, further and larger studies applied to different registers would be needed in order to offer more insights into the correlation of the systems of taxis and projection. (113)

Example (20) In the Voice system of languages such as English there are two terms: passive and active. However, the number of terms in the system varies from one language to another. A Wikipedia source puts the maximum number at up to twelve voices. (197)

In Example 18, the characterization of “the QA text style in our corpus as rather simple, impersonal, almost colloquial” does not have as a logical consequence that the corpus mentioned is large enough so that the author’s findings can be generalised to “different genres in the students’ academic writing”. Similarly, in Example 19, the writer is offering a plausible explanation for the difference between his findings and those of Nesbitt and Plum. Yet, this does not entail that the correlation between the systems of taxis and projection can be interpreted with the same explanation in all possible registers. In Example 20, the dual system of voice for English does not entail that all other languages also have a system of voice consisting of two terms.

Thus, if we represent the *however*-binding as Example 21.

Example (21) A *however* B,

The Non-Refutative (or purely concessive) category of *however* is that in which the reverse of B does not necessarily follow from A. The addition of *however* B is due to the writer’s (or speaker’s) choice of attaching a further clause to A so that the possible interpretation of the opposite of B (-B) is ruled out once A has been stated. This Non-Refutative use of *however* can be said to be prospective in the sense that it advances the prior proposition by disclaiming a possible ensuing interpretation, expectation, or inference.

Conversely, the Refutative use of *however* can be said to be retrospective in the sense that it does counter a prior proposition or an expectation that logically follows from it (see Example 22).



Example (22) Considering that students are interpreting from English to their mother tongue (Chinese), one might expect they can speak smoothly and clearly. However, their delivery is not as good as expected. This might be traced to a number of factors. (280)

In Example 22, the writer is referring to native speakers of Chinese and in particular to their performance when interpreting from English. The proposition placed before the *however*-binding clearly states that the natural expectation is that “they can speak smoothly and clearly”. The immediate clause, introduced by *however*, posits that this is not the case: “their delivery is not as good as expected”. Therefore, the second part of the *however*-binding overtly rejects a proposition already mentioned. A further example will serve to clarify this point (see Example 23).

Example (23) In this story [*The Quarrel of Apophis and Seqenenre*] the foreigner Apophis’ belligerence conforms to the “foreign ruler behaviour” expected of this genre [the King’s Novel], which has encouraged many scholars to reconstruct the ending using historical events. This would mean that Apophis’ demands led to Seqenenre’s fight for northern Egypt. Other postulated endings involve a “cosmic clash” between the gods Amun and Seth and a “battle of wits” between the two rulers. However, a Systemic Functional analysis suggests that the text is a parody of a King’s Novel, which makes none of these “endings” likely. (342)

In this example, the writer is discussing characterization in the ancient Egyptian tale and in particular scholars’ reconstruction of the ending of *The Quarrel* [...] as that of a historical genre, namely, the King’s Novel. The last sentence in the example, introduced by *however*, counters the previous proposition by stating that *The Quarrel* [...] is *not* a King’s Novel, but a *parody* of a King’s Novel, which overtly rejects the deconstruction of the ending as stated in the previous proposition. Therefore, as the author has already stated the Refutative use of *however* has a retrospective reading.

The author has further subdivided the Refutative use of *however* into two categories: Non-Polemic and Polemic. The author has called the Non-Polemic use that in which the writer counters a previous proposition of his/her own, and the Polemic use that in which the author opposes a proposition posited by a third party. Examples 24-26 below show instances of Non-Polemic uses, whereas Examples 27-29 display occurrences of Polemic uses.

Example (24) Additionally, the range of advertised nondestinations appears to be skewed in a way that gives more space to luxury products, celebrities, high-profile events, and venues of consumption. However, there are other voices also present, particularly in the texts where authors linguistically highlight the wordings that link with ideas of sustainable and fair development, education and creativity, simple life, etc. (309)

In Example 24, its author has discussed the systematic choice of “‘voices’—ideological discourses that readers engage with”, in in-flight publications in the travel and tourism industry. In the sentences prior to the *however*-binding, he has developed the writers’ bias towards certain destinations favoured by the luxury and materialistic intent. The second part of the *however*-binding displaces the emphasis of the proposition to other voices present in the publications that favour the simple-life and idealistic choices. This Refutative use of *however* is clearly retrospective, since it counters the author’s previous choice of “luxury products, celebrities, high-profile events, and venues of consumption” with the writer’s posterior choice of “ideas of sustainable and fair development, education and creativity, simple life, etc.”. Let us turn to a further example (see Example 25).

Example (25) It is essential that the presentation and training issues in global conferencing are taken seriously. Yet today, we still seem to need to ask: are there enough trained teachers? Are the materials, courses linguistically and multisemiotically sophisticated enough? are there proper facilities for such training (computers, videos, video projectors, cameras, power point, videoconferencing equipment, etc....). At universities, humanities-oriented departments frequently seem to get the innovative equipment, etc. last, when technological changes in the society take place. There is however, a very positive aspect to the developments of the past decade or so—Although there still is a long way to go, we are definitely in a better position to identify the key issues and problems of linguistic and multisemiotic research in the field of *conferencing*. So there is also hope for the future. (335)

In Example 25, the author is closing her paper on the “Multisemiotics of Conferencing” with a number of rhetorical questions whose answers are “not”, or at least “not yet”. This is reinforced with the ensuing sentence, wherein the author states that “At universities, humanities-oriented departments frequently seem to get the innovative equipment, etc. last [...]. Thus, the part of the chain that precedes the *however*-binding presents a negative evaluation of the current situation, which is later countered by a positive view of the development of research in the “past decade or so”, which arouses “hope for the future”. Similarly, Example 26 presents an additional instance of the Non-Polemic use of *however*.

Example (26) The corpus evidence, then, seems to provide further explanation for why clauses 1-9 seem to construe animals as conscious and intentional as well as agentive: in “everyday” English, when “develop” occurs in an [effective] clause, its colligations and collocations include multiple construals of consciousness and intention, so that this is part of the meaning of “develop” that is not necessarily apparent from its meaning as an isolated lemma in the dictionary. However, the final clause from Table 1, which has not yet been discussed, clause 13, seems to run counter to the explanation provided by this corpus evidence, and brings to light problems in the analysis of the apparently [effective] clauses in Table 1. This clause and the problems it raises with respect to the system of AGENCY will be discussed in the next (and final) section. (423)

In Example 26, the writer has discussed evidence that favours an underlying meaning of “develop” in effective clauses and summarises her point in the first sentence of the previous example. This sentence is conjoined with a following concessive sentence headed by *however*, which presents counterevidence to the previous statement. Thus, again the Refutative use of *however* has a retrospective interpretation. Still, in all the instances of the Refutative use of *however* presented so far, the writer has refuted his/her own words, without arguing with a third party. This is why the author has called such instances Non-Polemic. The author will turn now to the last category of the uses of *however*, namely, the Refutative Polemic. In this final category, the writer chooses to overtly argue with a voice different from that of his/her own, as can be seen in Examples 27-29.

Example (27) Those studies taking the cognitive and psychological stance tend to exclusively focus on the role of images in reading comprehension, such as the eye movement in reading texts with or without illustrations (e.g. Shen & Tao 2001). However, the functions of images in textbooks mean more than cognitive processes and psychological effects. (310)

In Example 27, for example, the writer explicitly confronts the claim by Shen and Tao that the cognitive and psychological standpoints are central to the understanding of the role of images in reading comprehension. In Example 28 below, the writer opposes the view of Jerz and Unsworth, who disregard the use of nominalizations on the grounds that they are not brief and precise enough. While these writers posit that “structures with the agent as the subject should be encouraged”, instead of resorting to nominalizations, the second part of the chain in the *however*-binding justifies the use of nominalisations both “in daily verbal communication” and in “technical and scientific language”, because it “involves abstraction and generalization”.

Example (28) To Jerz (2006), nominalized sentences may be grammatically and factually correct, but vague. Verbs are more vivid than nouns. Some (Jerz, 2006, Unsworth, 2002) think that nominalizations should be avoided for the sake of brevity and precision of expression. Structures with the agent as the subject should be encouraged. However, as we find in daily verbal communication, technical and scientific language uses more nominalized structures, because the language of science involves abstraction and generalization. (379)

Example 29 provides an interesting case of the Polemic use of *however*, since it seems to confront the voices of others different from that of the writer of the article from which the example has been taken.

Example (29) To Kies (2002), nominalization can make the text look formal and contains more information. However, it is difficult for the reader to understand (Salem, 2006). (379)

In this example, the writer appears to counter the position expressed by Kies with that of Salem. At first sight, the second part of the chain in the *however*-binding, which conveys the reader’s difficulty to understand nominalizations runs counter to the first part of the chain, which indicates the possibility for nominalizations both to add to the formality of texts and to package more information. Otherwise, the writer would have probably chosen a different sentence conjunct different from *however*. Nevertheless, if we explore the source cited, we find that Kies (1995) explicitly posits that the package of information that nominalizations allow makes texts difficult to read and understand<sup>6</sup>, which is in line with Salem’s view. Therefore, it can be said that Example 29 presents a case of the Polemic use of *however* considering the writer’s choice of connector.

### Concluding Remarks

From the abovementioned analysis, it can be concluded that *however* is a heteroglossic device frequently used in research academic articles. The author has found that it is much more widely used as a conjunction (over 98% of the times) than as an adverb of degree (less than 2% of the tokens). As regards the position of *however* within the clause, the initial position is preferred to the medial position (60% and 40% of the occurrences, respectively), while the final position of *however* in the clause is highly infrequent. As for the position within the Research Articles, the author’s findings reveal that the body is the most prolific section considering the raw frequencies of *however*. Nevertheless, when taking into account the relative number of words per section, the conclusion is found to outnumber the body in percentage figures. Besides, the shorter the length of the Research Article, the more remarkable this difference is.

Finally, *however* has proved to display a high degree of polysemy, which has led to a classification of

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<sup>6</sup> “Nominalized sentences pack much of their information into the subject position, and that makes them more difficult to read easily and to understand quickly” (Kies, D. 1995).

*however* according to its uses into Non-Refutative and Refutative. The Non-Refutative use of *however* is that also characterised as concessive, wherein the writer prospectively conjoins two clauses, the second of which rules out one of the many possible readings that the first clause may entail. The Refutative use of *however* is that which retrospectively conjoins two clauses, the second of which refers back to a previous statement. It is precisely the function of the addition of this second clause to counter what has already been posited in the first clause of the *however*-binding. The author has also subdivided the Refutative use of *however* into two categories: Non-Polemic and Polemic. While the former introduces a clause that counters the writer's own words, the latter introduces a clause that confronts the words of a third party.

As a final remark, the author would like to close this paper by referring back to the Protean mind already mentioned in the quotation by Macken-Horarik, which the author used as epigraph to this paper. In Greek mythology, Proteus was a sea-god endowed with the ability of both foretelling the future and changing his shape for the sake of adapting it to the forthcoming challenges. Such versatility of the Protean mind is that which the author has attempted in this paper by applying a multiperspectival analysis.

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# Some Phono-Stylistic Concerns in Albanian and English

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The whole spectrum of the sounding characteristic features of a language is infinite and it offers possibilities for combinations and choices of expression which are not fully studied and analyzed today. The writers or speakers of a language tend to underestimate phonetic results and put the emphasis on other morphological, syntactical, or semantical issues. It is the purpose of this paper, therefore, to go through some forms of phonetic procreations encountered in Albanian and English language to show that the language users employ a variety of means, even phonetic ones, to express their subjectivity. The author's concern is not to compare the Albanian phonetic constructions to the English ones, but to show that the possibilities a language can offer are infinite and it is the choice of the speaker or the writer that makes the difference.

*Keywords:* phono-stylistics, intonation, pronunciation, phonetic organizations, sound-meaning associations

## Introduction

The whole spectrum of the sounding characteristic features of a language is infinite, and it offers possibilities for combinations and choices of expression which are not fully studied and analyzed today. The frequency and the allocations of these sounds are boundless and imply a variety of possible expressive values. Professor Xhevat Lloshi (2005) suggested that "Without going much into details we can acknowledge three types of procreations: the ones which are based on the sound variations, followed by procreations suggested by phonetic organizations and finally those which are derived from sound—form allocations" (p. 55).

It is the purpose of this paper to go through some forms of such procreations encountered in Albanian and English language to show that the language users employ a variety of means, even phonetic ones, to express their subjectivity. The author's concern is not to compare the Albanian phonetic constructions to the English ones, but to show that the possibilities a language can offer are infinite and it is the choice of the speaker or the writer that makes the difference.

## Phonetic Variations

It implies the distinctions deriving from dialects, from different social strata, or encountered in the informal discourses, in archaisms, as well as in the individual deviations of any speaker or writer. On the other side, some sounds undergo changes due to the emotional and expressive purposes entailed by the language user.

Consequently, pronunciation becomes one of the key elements denoting the distinctions between speeches either formal or informal. It has been accepted the standard pronunciation which is formal, emotionless, and suggestive particularly for the formal speech. The counterpart is followed by regional, social, and cultural coloring which are applied in theater, film, oratory, or for humorous purposes. Therefore, it is clearly suggested the tone and mood created when the word "orchestra" is pronounced "orqestra", or instead of "vdiqa" it is used

“vduqa”. The same effect is produced even in the cases: “U lapose, buçko! (U palose)”, or “Më shkau gau (Më shkau goja)”. In Albanian, the word “burrë” (man) is written with “rr”, but if there is a need to reinforce the “r” sound so as to suggest virility, it is pronounced as “burrërrë”. Another instance of varieties in pronunciation refers to the use of irony. Thus, if the daughter-in-law calls her mother-in-law “vjuhërrrr”, that is done simply to suggest her relation and “affection” towards the later.

The stress is another issue that suggests variety. In Albanian, just as in other languages, there is the standard form accepted generally for the stressing of the words and opposite to it there stand the variations that propose coloring and subjectivity.

Meanwhile, today scholars present some problems raised from stress varieties. The *Albanian Spelling Dictionary* (1973) has wrongly accepted different stress variations for oriental borrowed words. For example, the standard stress form of the word “teneqe” is in the last syllable (teneqé) but for the word “tenxhere” the stress falls onto the last but one syllable (tenxhére). The argument moves ahead with the words “pashë” and “pasha” considering them as two different words. If such is the case then there should be accepted as two different words “ágë” and “agá”<sup>1</sup>. For the word “kafe”, there are accepted as standard both “káfe” and “kafé”. Many writers have made use of such variations. Fan S. Noli is the poet who has made effective use of the stress variations for the word “flamur” (flag). When the tone implied is quiet and smooth it goes “flamúr”, and when the tone is more solemn and reinforcing he uses “flámur”.

O Flámur gjak, o Flámur shkabë,  
Flamúr i kuq, Flamúr i zi! (Noli, 1987, p. 67)

In speech, the stress can shift to the beginning of the word being accompanied even by a doubling of the vowel as in: póósi, móóre. A shift in stress is seen in the sports chronicles shown in TV, or particularly in popular folk literature, e.g., “Come On” [k^m o:n].

The rhythm and speed of pronunciation might vary as well, depending on the tone and mood intended. In speech, a raising pitch of the voice might indicate intimacy just as the opposite might reflect anxiety or nervousness.

### Phonetic Organizations

The characteristic features and the peculiarities of the sound system emerge by combining words or different parts of speech. The reason for such a combination is obvious—to increase either the expressiveness or the musicality of the linguistic devices used.

Paronomasia is one of the phonetic organization which implies a close pronunciation of different parts of speech<sup>2</sup>. The effect produced in this case is humour and ambiguity, e.g., “Champagne for my real friends and real pain for my sham friends. Or I used to be a tap dancer until I fell in the sink”.

Them t'i them zotit Themí... (Albanian)<sup>3</sup>

Rhyme and its types, assonance, and consonance unfold features of these developments. The tendency in modern poetry is towards the internal rhymes, the phonetic echoes and the alliteration, becoming, therefore, a constituent part of the phonetic organizations.

<sup>1</sup> They are just one word, denoting one thing, but with two stress variations.

<sup>2</sup> Free-online Dictionary, “the use of a word in different senses or the use of words similar in sound for effect, as humor or ambiguity”.

<sup>3</sup> This is the case of an Albanian sentence translated in English as: “Let me tell Mr. Themí”.

Now, Jenny and me were engaged, you see  
 On the eve of a fancy ball  
 So a kiss or two is nothing to you  
 Or anyone else at all.  
 Now we had arranged, through notes exchanged  
 Early that afternoon  
 At number four to dance no more,  
 But to sit in the dusk, and spoon. (R. Kipling, Pink Dominoes)

Such stylistic features are called prosodemes. Here the parts are connected through various means like: stress, tone, alliteration, and semantics. Onomatopoeia can be used here for the same purposes imitating the sounds of natural phenomena or that of the animals to convey certain individual effects.

The rhythm of the utterance can be used to impose certain effects or to achieve certain intentions. Thus an abrupt outburst of feeling can be revealed through a rapid performance of the utterance, a rhythm which sometimes can lead to ellipsis. This fast rhythm can be used to show happiness, anticipation, or anger. On the other side, deep feelings, the solemn tone, important implications, fear, embarrassment, despair, or weakness, require smoothness in the rhythm produced. Variety in the sentence rhythm makes the speech or the writing more effective. Rhythm is combined with other syntactical elements to produce the desired outcome. The syntactical structures are regular, symmetrical, and parallel. Segmenting the speech with a rhythmical pattern can affect semantically the utterance. The rhythm in a sentence can be established by the length and the punctuation. Long languid sentences convey a different mood than short choppy ones. A short sentence that comes after several longer ones draws attention to itself—such sentences are often used as *cappers* to the preceding material, capping off the passage before going on to something new:

I was just about to lock in the auto-pilot when the navigation screen flashed every color in the rainbow for three and a half seconds, turned fuzzy gray for a second after that, then went completely blank. Naturally, I hit the *DIAGNOSTICS* button. Nothing happened—for all I knew, the diagnostic suite might be happily running through the nav system circuits, but the screen didn't show me a thing. I spun my chair to face the command console, but its screen had gone blank too. So had the screens for the engines, communications, and life support. I stared stupidly at all those empty screens until it dawned on me that things had gone awfully quiet behind my back: the usual noise of machinery, air ventilators, and cooling fans had fallen silent.

Then the lights went out. Shit.

Meanwhile, the rhythm in dialogue often contrasts with the rhythm in the surrounding text.

“Susan? Susan. Oh no. Susan!”

He ran across the room to where she lay bleeding on the immaculate white carpet...

The rhythm in the dialogue line shows extreme emotion. After the choppy dialogue sentences, the text that follows is smoother, conveying some of the speed with which the woman runs to the body.

Single words can be important to rhythm too. A long word has a different effect than a short one.

A fast rhythm is characteristic and a dominant feature of tongue-twisters and riddles.

*How much wood would a wood-chuck chuck, if a wood-chuck would chuck wood?*

What is broken every time it's spoken?

Kupa me kapak kupa pa kapak. (Alb.)<sup>4</sup>

### Phonetic Symbolism

If the sounds are analyzed in isolation, we can determine that they do not bear any meaning at all.

<sup>4</sup> This is a very common Albanian tongue-twister.



Nevertheless, there are seen cases when, due to certain secondary reasons, the individual sounds do take a meaning of their own (Rolan, 1987, p. 13).

Hence, onomatopoeic sounds possess their own meaning. For example, in the last lines of Sir Alfred Tennyson's poem "Come Down, O Maid"<sup>5</sup>, *m* and *n* sounds produce an atmosphere of *murmuring* insects: "... the moan of doves in immemorial elms, And murmuring of innumerable bees".

In the Prioress' Tale, one of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, Chaucer has purposely attracted the attention of the reader on the *s* sound to build atmosphere in the serpent's tempting:

Our first foe, the serpent Satanas,  
That hath in Jews' heart his wasps nest,  
Up swelled, and said: "O Hebraic people, alas!  
Is this to you a thing that is honest,  
That such a boy shall walken as him lest  
In your despite, and sing of such sentence,  
Which is against your law's reverence? (Chaucer, retrieved from <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2383>)

Edgar Alan Poe in his *Raven* has made use of the *s*, *l*, *r* sounds to produce the rustling of the curtains.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain...  
(Retrieved from <http://www.heise.de/ix/raven/Literature/Lore/TheRaven.html>)

In the translated version of Poe's *Raven* by Fan S. Noli, the Albanian translator has preserved the same effect produced by different sounds: *f*, *sh*, *t*.

*Frynte era që përjashta, tundte perdet e mëndafshta.* (Noli, 1987, p. 261)

The association of sounds and meaning is a free one, depending on the individual choice of the poet. Anyway, the poets nowadays tend to relate certain sounds to certain meanings. Thus, to them, the *i* and *e* sounds create the impression of happiness, ease, and clarity; *o*—width, space, and altitude; *a* is connected to weight and substance, whereas *u* reflects depth, darkness, and sometimes fear itself.

To sum it up, the phonetic elements can contribute either in group or individually to produce the effects desired by the language user. It is the responsibility of the speaker or writer to make his/her outmost in using effectively the whole bulk provided. The language can provide, therefore, infinite possibilities to express oneself as utterly and creatively as possible. It is our duty to do our best in making our speech as varied as possible. To put in S. Johnson's words: "The beauty of life is variety" (2000, p. 13).

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<sup>5</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/come-down-o-maid/>.

# Revisiting Rhetorical Situation: An Analysis of an Ethos Dilemma in American College Students' Business Memos

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This paper analyzes two major problems (inappropriate tone and infeasible solutions) exhibited in the author's American technical writing students' business memo assignment from the lenses of rhetorical situation and of the rhetorical appeal of ethos. The author argues that the students' failure to fully understand their audiences' needs and expectations and to offer workable solutions to the problem leads to reduced ethos, thus making the argument in the memos less persuasive and leaving the purpose of their memos unfulfilled. The author proposes that teachers of technical/business writing should endeavor to draw students' attention to understanding the nuance of rhetorical situation focusing on audience, purposes, and the constraints of each workplace genre and provide the students with more learning opportunities for workplace literacy. Thus, as technical/business communication teachers, we might be able to better prepare our technical/business writing students for real world workplace written communication.

*Keywords:* rhetorical situation, business memo, workplace writing

## Introduction

One of the most important goals of college technical or business writing courses is to prepare students for real-world writing situations. To fulfill this aim, many technical textbooks and instructors have focused their attention on teaching students the formats and styles of the workplace genres, which has certainly contributed to preparing students for the real world writing tasks. There is, however, not enough effort made to help students go beyond the formats of and style of workplace genres. As Katz (1998) suggested, new workers are frequently found unprepared for what their employers require from them in writing situations, but "there is little research that helps us understand why educated professionals, many of whom take writing courses as part of their education... have so many problems with their writing they are asked to do in the workplace" (p. 107). So, in order to prepare our students to become effective workplace writers, it is imperative for us technical/business communication teachers to adjust our pedagogical approach and emphasize teaching students the nuances of rhetorical situation (such as audience, purpose, and constraints), in which not only each specific workplace genre or document would be created accordingly, but also the effectiveness of the document depends on the writer's proper understanding of and responses to a specific complex rhetorical situation.

In an attempt to explore the importance and the necessity of incorporating more instructions on rhetorical situation into technical/business writing classrooms, this paper will focus on analyzing an ethos dilemma exhibited in the student business memo assignment from the author's college introductory technical writing

classes in the United States, through the lenses of rhetorical situation and of the rhetorical appeal of ethos. The paper will also discuss how we can overcome the barriers and improve the situation.

### Understanding Rhetorical Situation

Bitzer (1968) first brought up the concept of rhetorical situation to scholars' attention. Bitzer wrote, "When I ask, What is a rhetorical situation?, I want to know the nature of those contexts in which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse..." (p. 1). As Bitzer (1968) demonstrated, discourse is contingent upon a rhetorical situation that "calls the discourse into existence" (p. 2). Killoran (2009) summarized Bitzer's concept of rhetorical situation and maintained that it includes three dimensions: (1) an exigence, which is a problem that can be solved, or at least alleviated by human intervention; (2) an audience, "capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change" (p. 8); and (3) constraint, which can be conceived of as the "challenge" inhibiting an easy solution to the exigence, a challenge arising from "belief, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives and the like" (p. 8) (p. 267).

According to Wood (2009), however, Bitzer's rhetorical situation also includes author and text (genre) in addition to the above three dimensions. Wood (2009) stated that the author writes or develops an argument to convince a particular audience so that audience will take action on the problem, and that the writer's argument is influenced by his/her education, motives, values, degree of expertise, and life experience. Wood (2009) then further explained that the text is the argument, and whether it is written, visual, or spoken, the text will have characteristics one can analyze such as its types (letter, essay, image, or recording...), its content (what is it about?), and its format, organization, language, and persuasive strategies employed by the writer. Baake (2003) argued that Bitzer's contention is that:

Discourse does not stand alone, but discourse must be considered in light of the political, social, and historical conditions that surround it. This metaphor of a 'surrounding condition' presents rhetorical context as inescapable, but the metaphor also implies that context is a passive backdrop to the real drama that unfolds among the writer, audience, and message. (p. 389)

The suggested insight from Baake's view is that the traditional rhetorical triangle from Aristotelian rhetoric (see Figure 1) still plays the key role in the dynamics of rhetorical situation because, after all, it is the message created by the writer or speaker that motivates the audiences to respond to a specific rhetorical situation or context for some specific purposes.

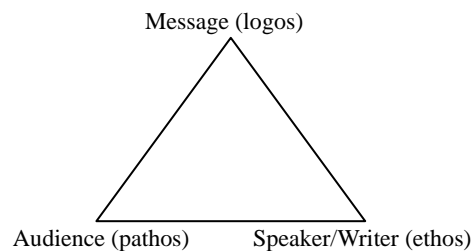


Figure 1. Illustration of Aristotelian rhetorical triangle.

Now, we can see the rhetorical purpose comes into the rhetorical scene as an integral part of the rhetorical situation. In fact, Bitzer embedded the rhetorical purpose in the concept of "exigence", which is described as a problematic situation providing a compelling reason to write and one that can be solved, or at least alleviated, by human intervention (Wood, 2009; Killoran, 2009). We can conclude that to understand the rhetorical

situation for the production of any discourse means to understand the dynamics of the rhetorical contexts of exigence, text, audience, writer, purpose, and constraints.

The significance of understanding the rhetorical situation for technical/business communication can demonstrate itself in two ways. Broadly speaking, we, as technical/business communication teachers, need to teach our students that they should be aware that a rhetorical situation exists every time they write or read. They, thus, need to adapt their writing according to the exigence, audience, purpose, text, and constraints. Specifically, understanding the different roles of some specific elements of the rhetorical situation such as writer, audience, purpose (exigence), and constraints are extremely important for both technical/business writing teachers and students due to the nature of technical/business communication. Many scholars in the field of technical communication have highlighted the crucial role that the readers/audiences can play in constraining the writers to create the effective technical documents. For example, Johnson-Sheehan (2010) stated that “Technical communication is reader centered... It concentrates on what the readers ‘need to know’ to take action, not only on what you, as the writer, want to tell them” (p. 8). Markel (2012) also claimed that “[a]lmost every technical document has six characteristics: it addresses particular readers, help readers solve problems...” (p. 6). As Palmini (1996) further explained, technical or professional writing is audience-focused writing, and audience awareness is crucial, because a writer will write for many different audiences, so the writer has to be careful as to how to shape ideas, rhetorical patterns, and word choices to ensure persuasive communication with a particular audience. Like Jonson-Sheehan and Markel, Palmini (1996) also maintained that technical/professional writing is action-oriented; therefore, it is important to understand that writers need to shape their messages (the technical documents) to help audiences such as managers, coworkers, or regulators to cope with the decision-making problems.

While understanding audience-awareness in technical/business writing is essential, we also need to pay attention to another important element of the rhetorical situation, the purpose of the writing, especially the purposes of specific technical/business documents. To identify the writing purposes usually encountered in a technical or business writing environment, Dorn (1999) introduced a typical taxonomy of purposes for writing memos and letters in broad and generic terms (see Table 1) to us.

Table 1

*A Typical List of Purposes for Writing Memos and Letters (as cited in Plung, 2006, p. 30)*

Memos		Letters	
Purpose	%	Purpose	%
Inform of events	4	Communicate arrangements	5
Summarize approach or problems	8	Request information	5
Report status	4	Respond to issues	5
Describe materials sent	4	Summarize information	5
Request action	7	Clarify terms of agreement	10
Summarize a call	14	Document research	10
Describe a procedure	14	Share information	10
Inform of changes	20	Inform	15
Share information	21	Describe service or products	35

Although some scholars such as Blyler (1993) advocated that we should teach the complexity of purposes and avoid viewing them simplistically, Dorn’s taxonomy of purposes is useful in that it gives an overview of

purposes we usually observe in teaching business memos and letters. Only when we are clear about the basic purposes of writing each memo or letter, can we, as technical/business communication teachers, draw our students' attention to the nuances of purposes in specific rhetorical situations involved in each document.

### Understanding Rhetorical Ethos

Aristotle (1991) introduced the concept of ethos in the *Rhetoric* as he discussed the art of persuasion. Aristotle defined rhetoric as, "an ability in each [particular] case to see the available means of persuasion in a given case" (p. 36). As St. Amant (2006) explained, "[r]hetoric, thus, focuses on understanding and applying a particular type of knowledge—that which is known to persuade an audience" (p. 48). In order for a rhetor to achieve such persuasiveness, Aristotle stated that the rhetor needs to work for three powers: "(1) his power of evincing a personal character that will make his speech credible (ethos); (2) his power of stirring the emotions of his hearers (pathos); and (3) his power of proving a truth or an apparent truth by means of persuasive argument (logos)" (White, 2006, p. 67). In essence, as Corbett (1977) further elaborated, ethos or ethical appeal depends ultimately and crucially on what is said and how it is said in the discourse, and that a speaker or writer will be able to establish his credibility with the audience—his persuasiveness, if he projects an image of himself as being a man of good sense, good moral character, and good will.

From the perspective of technical communication, persuasion is often related to the credibility of a specific document created by a technical communicator. St. Amant (2006) claimed that one key job of the technical communicator is to persuade his/her audience that a document is "credible", or worth reading and using (to consider the document as having "ethos"), because a credible document gets used while a non-credible document gets overlooked. Thus, St. Amant (2006) argued that technical communicators must always take steps to persuade audiences that documents are credible or worth using; the focus then becomes identifying the special knowledge one must have and use to establish such credibility—the ethos of both the document and of the writer. With a specific example of technical written instructions for a can of charcoal-lighter fluid, Stoddard (1985) actually elaborated for us that how the perceived ethos of the document may influence the readers to behave in certain ways:

The instructions must persuade the reader that for her well-being she must follow them exactly. If she fails to follow them, she may be severely injured. In this case of persuasion, logos and pathos (fear) may prove stronger than ethos. But if for any reason, the reader is led to doubt the credibility (ethos) of the instructions, she will not follow them [...]. If they are too technical, garbled, or even so simple as to be insulting, she may ignore them. If they are full of misspellings or use an unreadable format, she may ignore them. (p. 235)

As Martin and King (2010) further explained, ethos is often used interchangeably with credibility and operates in various spheres of business communication. For instance, they stated that Williams (2008) found that most corporate mission statements included expressions of positive values such as integrity, excellence, innovation, citizenship, and safety in attempts to develop a desirable corporate identity and influence stakeholder perceptions on the organization's credibility, the ethos.

While discussing how phishing e-mails could claim victims through manipulating rhetorical appeals, especially the rhetorical ethos, Ross (2009) stated:

One simple lesson is to look through letters for the construction of ethos. As we look through the letters, we discuss how the writer's title (doctor, lawyer, barrister, Mr. Mrs., Widow, etc.) affects perception of content. Then we examine the letter for continuity, looking to see if the style, tone, and format of the letter supports the statement of the title. We then can move on to discuss how construction of ethos is vital in any sort of modern-day technical communication. (p. 36)

One insight from Ross' discussion is that ethos is contextually situated and works even for "something as morally bankrupt as a phishing e-mail" (Ross, 2009, p. 37), simply because the writers of scam e-mails apply rhetorical strategies that establish their credibility by associating with an institute, reference to religious figures, or use of titles to remove the readers' caution and win the readers' trust. Ross (2009) maintained that:

[A]s technical communicators, we are uniquely suited to analyze these moral and ethical perversions for how they affected audiences. Future research on PSEs [personal solicitation e-mails] in particular may yield a deeper and more complex understanding of how rhetoric plays out in our everyday lives. (p. 36)

### **An Analysis of Rhetorical Situation for the Memo Assignment**

This section describes how the memo assignment in the author's technical writing classes can be analyzed from the perspective of rhetorical situation advocated by Bitzer (1968) and Wood (2009).

#### **Exigence**

It refers to the problematic writing situation that provides a compelling reason to write: The exigence in the memo assignment comes from the following scenario (devised by the author) in the assignment description:

Margaret Smith is angry. As Personnel Manager, she has tried repeatedly to get the employees at Koller Construction Company to refrain from using the photocopier machine for personal copies, yet the copy budget, which she is in charge of monitoring, is consistently over budget by several hundred dollars. You, the assistant manager in the company, are required to write a memo to inform your co-workers of the company's budget crisis caused by employees' personal over-use of the company's copy machines. And you are also asked to propose a solution to solve the problem of the budget crisis.

#### **Text**

It refers to the argument or genre: In this assignment, since the communication between the readers and the writer would be internal or within the organization, the appropriate genre to use is a business memo (as it was assigned in the above assignment description). So the students need to have the knowledge of writing a memo such as its format and its style.

#### **Reader/Audience**

It refers to the identified reader(s)/audience(s) who both cares and needs to read the text: In this assignment, there should be three kinds of audiences: the coworkers of the company, the manager of the company (Margaret Smith), and the instructor who assigned the students' assignment.

#### **Writer**

It refers to the person who writes or develops an argument/document to convince a particular audience: In this assignment, the writer is each student playing the role of the assistant manager of the company. The writer is required to help the company to resolve the budget crisis by informing the coworkers of the problem and offering a workable solution to the problem.

#### **Purpose**

It refers to the specific reasons for writing: The purpose of this memo assignment is actually embedded in the "exigence", and so, using Dorn (1999)'s general descriptions on the purposes of memos, the purposes of this assignment would be "share information, summarize approach or problems, inform of changes, and request action" (p. 49). To be more specific, each student writer needs to inform the coworkers that the company is experiencing a budget crisis caused by employees' personal over-use of the company's copy machines, to communicate Margaret Smith's frustration with the situation, to propose a workable solution to resolve the budget crisis, and to request that coworkers observe the proposed solution.

**Constraints**

They refer to the people, events, circumstances, and traditions that are part of a situation, which may limit both a target audience and a writer and may cause them to analyze and react to the situation in a particular way. The constraints also include the beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, interests, and habits that may influence the audiences' perceptions of the situation: In this assignment, the constraints are mainly reflected in the writers' potential use of inappropriate tone and in their possibly offering impractical or unworkable solutions to the problem.

It is clear that in order for the students to do a good job in this memo assignment, they need to fully understand the above described specific rhetorical situation, especially the identified audiences, purposes, and constraints. Otherwise, they may fail to fulfill the purposes of this memo assignment.

**A Rhetorical Analysis of Ethos Problems in the Memo Assignment**

This section analyzes problems exhibited in students' memos that reduced the credibility of the writer, and thus, led to an ethos dilemma in the memo documents. The two major problems that weakened the ethos in students' memos were: (1) inappropriate use of word choices that resulted in inappropriate tone; and (2) impractical or unworkable solutions to the problem.

**Inappropriate Use of Tone Resulting From Word Choices**

The tone of a text refers to a writer's attitude toward the subject and the audience; a writer's tone can be contemplative, intense, humorous, aloof, friendly, furious or merely annoyed, playful or grimly serious—as many kinds of written tone as there are tones of voice (X. J. Kennedy, D. M. Kennedy, & Muth, 2011; Penfield, 2002). The tone reflected in the text strongly influences not only audiences' response to or perception of the text, but also their desire to engage with the content (Thayer, Evans, McBride, Queen, & Spyridakis, 2010). Just as Kennedy et al. (2011) demonstrated, “Taking a humorous approach to a disease such as cancer or AIDS might create an inappropriate tone that ignores a reader's feelings and thus meets with rejection” (p. 850). Similarly, Thayer et al. (2010) explained that writers of technical manuals often apply an informal, friendly style to engage readers; in contrast, writers of government reports often adopt a comparatively formal and serious tone so as to promote an image of trustworthiness and obtain a sense of power distance. The suggested insight here is that the tone of the text can provide the ethical appeal or credibility—the rhetorical ethos—for a writer when he or she accurately assesses the tone, formality, and word choices expected in a rhetorical situation, not the other way around. In fact, it is crucial for a technical communicator to be very sensitive and cautious about the use of tone in his or her documents. Goodwill (*eunoia*), the third indicator of Aristotelian ethos, refers to the rhetor's attitude or manner towards the audience; that is, audiences will make inferences about a speaker's credibility based on how they see a rhetor perceiving them (Martin & King, 2010). As Griffin (2009) explained, “[t]he speaker can cultivate the audience's perceptions of his goodwill, says Aristotle, if he is able to convince the listeners that he wishes good things for them, preferably appearing to have no benefit for the speaker” (p. 65).

The inappropriate tone displayed in the memo assignment, however, indicates that the writer seems to intend no goodwill for his/her audience, the coworkers. The followings are some typical examples of inappropriate tone from the students' memo assignment. One student wrote, “Ms. Smith has *warned* you many times on not using our company's copy machine for personal profits, but you all *turned a deaf ear* to what she had to say...”. Another said, “[S]ome of you have been *accused of* using other's ID number to access the

copier...”. One more student also wrote, “[T]he *abuse of* this privilege has caused the company to go over budget of several hundred dollars...”. Still another student wrote, “[Y]ou need to stop *exploiting* the company for your own profits...”.

It is evident that in the above memo examples, one common problematic feature is that each student writer used certain words (“warn”, “turn a deaf ear to”, “accused of”, “abuse”, and “exploiting”) that can engender a rude and hostile attitude toward the writer’s coworkers, because the word choices projected an insulting, bossy, and arrogant tone. This type of tone is the least desirable and should have been avoided in the rhetorical situation of the memo assignment. This is due to the fact that the writer, the assumed assistant manager, needs his/her audience, the coworkers’ understanding and cooperation in solving the budget crisis, but the hostile or insulting tone could elicit a resisting or defensive attitude from the coworkers, who would expect the writer to show proper respect for them and be friendly with them in the first place if the writer wants them to cooperate in the case. So the actual effect of the inappropriate tone here would have made the readers believe that the writer had no “good will” for them.

As for the secondary audience, the supervisor, Ms. Smith, the writer needs to show her that he/she, as the assistant manager, the representative of the company, is capable of working with the coworkers professionally and efficiently and is able to solve the problem. However, the inappropriate tone would certainly have disappointed Ms. Smiths, because at least it would project an unprofessional image of the writer.

Finally, the writer should also be aware of the third audience, the instructor, who would grade the memo assignment. As Britton (1965) envisioned, who believed that the teacher is the only audience of the students, though, “... He [the student] writes to a professor who already know more than he does about the matter and who evaluates the papers not in terms of what he has derived, but in terms of what he thinks the writer knows” (p. 116). This observation makes sense in that the author, the instructor, did expect the author’s students to put what they learned about writing effective memo in class into practice in the assignment.

There are, however, apparent gaps between what the audiences’ needs or expectations are and how much the student writers can understand and meet those needs or expectations. Since the student writers failed to build a bridge between the gaps, each of them could not establish his/her ethos, the credibility as a good coworker, a competent assistant manager, and an effective technical or business communicator with the different audiences. Consequently, the persuasiveness of the memo, the ethos, was lost, and the writer’s purpose of call for co-workers to cooperate in resolving the budget crisis was not fulfilled.

### **The Impractical or Unworkable Solutions to the Problem**

Harmer (2009) in his article used one of his personal teaching experiences with his business class to illustrate how students’ inexperience of organizational reality, especially inexperience of its human dimension, could affect solutions appropriate to real organizations. Harmer (2009) stated that, when he asked his students “how they would deal with resistance to change in an organization, 16 of the 22 fourth-year undergraduate students taking a class in management, voted to fire those who resisted change” (p. 42). The similar unworkable solutions also appeared in the authors’ students’ memo assignment. The followings are some typical examples of unworkable solutions to the problem in the students’ memos:

... Koller Construction Company is installing a device in which each Koller employee must enter his or her social security number before making copies. The device will be located above and to the right of the copy machine in the copy room. Before making a copy, each employee must enter their social security number into the keypad. The copier will not make a copy until a code has been entered... (Sample 1)



As her personal assistant, I have come up with a solution. The solution is for employees to bring their own copy paper to use for personal copies... If that doesn't work, then Mrs. Smith along with some of the employees helping will go and buy another copy for employees to use for personal reasons and only personal reasons. (Sample 2)

To eliminate the personal copies, we will now deduct the cost of copies that you make from your paycheck. When you enter your employee ID number to make a copy with the machine, the photocopy machine records how many copies you make. We will use this record to know how much pay to deduct from you. The number of copies an employee makes will be printed from the machine to document all activity made on the machine during a pay-period. If your pay is deducted for making personal copies, we can provide you with documentation that shows any usage made during the pay-period. (Sample 3)

These impractical solutions to the problem would hurt the writers' ethos (trustworthiness), and consequently, the persuasiveness of the memo would suffer just as the inappropriate use of tone would. First, each solution above could indicate that the writer was *insensible*; for example, how would buying a second copier be possible if the first copier already tightened the company's budget?. Also, deducting from an employee's paycheck failed to explain how the company would separate the personal use from usage for the company. It could also show that the writer was *inconsiderate and irresponsible*. In the case of using one's Social Security number as an identifier, who would be at ease when required to use his/her Social Security number as a frequent access code at work and risk identity theft?

Miller (1974) noted that Aristotle relates good sense to prudence (phronesis) and explains that it requires a "settled disposition of the mind determining the choice of actions and emotions" (p. 312). In other words, the first indicator of ethos, "good sense", is an audience judgment about whether a rhetor makes appropriate decisions about the best course of action in relation to the specific conventions surrounding a speech or writing event (Martin & King, 2010). Apparently, impractical solutions to the problem here, however, could make readers judge that the writer lacked this "good sense", and then the writer would lose his/her credibility, the ethos.

Harmer (2009), when explaining the causes of his students' failure in offering workable solutions for dealing with the issue of workers resisting change, pointed out that the students' solution of firing those who disagreed considered neither the potential loss of institutional knowledge such as labor law and equity issues, nor the likely breakdown of goodwill between management and workforce. Harmer (2009) maintained that the inconsideration of his students was caused by the fact that many of them neither had been employed, nor spent any time in real organizations. This lack of real life experience, especially performing the role of a decision maker in an organization, as one cause of offering impractical solutions, was also applicable to my technical writing students in this memo assignment. For example, many students only had worked as servers in fast-food restaurants and as shop assistants in stores. This kind of working experience is valuable but could also limit the students to have some real workplace writing opportunities, because their job duties would provide them with fewer writing experience in analyzing the rhetorical situation (namely, audience, purposes, and constraints) in a real life context. Understandably, in addition to the students' not being fully aware of the audiences' expectations, the lacking real life working and writing experience also attributed to the problems of infeasible solutions and thus resulted in the weakened ethos of the writers and made the memo less persuasive.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The above discussion has demonstrated the two major barriers affecting technical writing students in composing persuasive business memos: lack of comprehensive understanding on rhetorical situation and lack of adequate real world working and writing experience. In order to prepare our students for producing effective

real-life workplace writing, what can we do to help our students overcome the difficulties that can prevent them from achieving their goals in a specific technical/business document? Apparently, to think that we can find the easy answer to the question is to underestimate the complexity of the problems, but we can nevertheless make an endeavor to improve the situation. The author recommends that we apply the following two teaching techniques to approach the above problems in our technical/business writing classrooms. First, we need to teach the concept of rhetorical situation in a more situated context. When we teach a new assignment, we might want to predict the specific possible problems the students may encounter before introducing it to students and then design class activities that will help them deal with the possible barriers. Taking the author's business memo assignment as an example, in addition to organizing the guided peer reviews for the assignment, the author, as the instructor, could also have helped the author's technical writing students analyze the specific three types of audiences, the three different purposes, and possible constraints involved in that specific memo assignment through conducting some small group work before asking them to start to do the assignment individually. Thus, the author might have been able to help more students understand what they needed to pay special attention to in the memo such as the possible constraints that would affect their ethos and their solutions to the problem.

According to Williams and Reid (2010), from a cognitive science perspective, problem solving involves a multiphase process that requires understanding the problem and its context. So, "Teaching problem solving that encourage students to use relevant contexts while conversely help students link real problems to concept learned in school is necessary" (Williams & Reid, 2010, p. 323). The insight we can draw from this cognitive perspective indicates that embedding teaching the rhetorical situation within more specific technical/business genre such as within a specific assignment would be a worthwhile effort in that it may provide opportunities for putting the learned theoretical concepts into specific writing practices to improve their problem solving skills since the major task of technical communication is to "... help readers solve problems" (Markel, 2012, p. 6).

The other teaching method we might want to try is to provide technical and business writing students with more exposures to real-life workplace narratives that tell both the successes and the failures of an organization. Harmer (2009) used "war stories" to refer to the workplace narratives that tell how things can go wrong in an organization, explaining that "war stories" are of nothing more than anecdotes told either by the teacher or a guest lecturer but can be used to indicate how organizations can be dysfunctional and thus let students learn lessons from such stories. Meanwhile, the successful workplace stories will always foster a positive image of business world in students' minds. But both types of narratives, the author thinks, are useful in that it opens another window for students to see the complexity of workplace communication and may help to compensate students' lack of workplace experiences. Just as Rosenbaum (2011) informed us:

[B]ecause people enter readily into a story and because stories stir the emotions in a persuasive manner, sharing stories that every student can relate to in some way can be an extraordinary educational tool and has a very appropriate place in our university courses—in particular, university communication courses. (para. 5)

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# Patterns of Developing an English for Communication in Promoting the RMUTSV Undergraduates' Learning Competency Towards ASEAN Labour Market

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The purposes of this research were to develop the patterns of English communication and to study the outcome of students' learning competency by using the developed English learning pattern. Four steps included studying, drafting of learning patterns on English for communication towards ASEAN (Association of South East Asia Nations) labor market called "*Home Economic English for ASEAN*", trying it out with group of 30 Home Economics students with their mixed English ability, at Faculty of Liberal Arts, RMUTSV (Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya) Songkhla; and evaluating the learning patterns through CIPP model (context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation, and product evaluation). The findings revealed that the efficiency and learning competency were higher than standard criterion; the learning process and the ability in performing through the learning patterns were significantly at the 0.05 level with higher than the criterion; the English learning competency of the experimental group were significantly different at the 0.05 level; the ability in performing Home Economics English project of the experimental group by using the learning patterns were non-significantly different from the criterion; the patterns of developing an English for communication in promoting students' learning competency towards ASEAN labor market was developed through CIPP model.

*Keywords:* English for communication, patterns of English for communication, learning competency

## Introduction

Based on the Second National Education Act, the curriculum was duly adjusted for harmonization with the objectives of the National Education Act 1999 and amendments made in 2002. These laws have the main focus on decentralization of educational authority to local communities and schools, which play more significant roles and actively participate in preparing curriculums suitable to actual situations and serving their real needs (Office of the National Education Commission, 1999). In addition, the recognition by the Thai Ministry of Education that students need to learn about their global surrounding is a major step towards preparing for 21st century workforce. Undoubtedly, ASEAN (Association of South East Asia Nations) labour market is priority zone where Thai students have to raise their awareness of accumulating and fulfilling their competency to join it.

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One key component of the success of high-achieving nations with the students' capacities for competitiveness and creative cooperation will strengthen Thailand's international competitive position. Teaching-learning activities, therefore, organised for all Thai students at higher education level, are aimed at development of students in acquiring knowledge and understanding basic skills essential to their lives. Students will thus be alert to changes and able to utilise their knowledge about living, occupations, and technology to their work with creativity and competitiveness in Thai society and the world community. They will be able to see prospects for their future careers, love working, and have a favourable attitude towards work, as well as bring about a happy life in society, based on the principles of sufficiency and finally empowered to seek further knowledge for continuous lifelong self-development. It could be said that the learning area of occupations and technology is urgent needed.

Moreover, the learning area of occupations and technology is aimed at learners' holistic development with a view to enabling them to acquire knowledge, capacity, and essential skills required for work (Retrieved from <http://www.act.ac.th/document/1741.pdf>). Learners will thus efficiently see the prospects of their future careers and further education. The main contents include: (1) life and family: work in daily life; ability to help themselves, their families and society under guidance of the principles of sufficiency economy; intent not to destroy the environment; emphasis on actual practice until attainment of confidence and pride in their accomplishments in order to discover their own capacities, aptitudes, and interests; (2) design and technology: creative development of human capacities by applying knowledge with technological processes to create objects, utensils and methodologies, or to increase efficiency in life; (3) ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies): process of information technologies; communication; the search for data; application of data and information; solution of problems or creation of work; value and effects of ICTs; and (4) occupations: skills essential to learners' occupations; recognition of the importance of morality, ethics, and favourable attitude towards occupations; ability to use technologies appropriately; appreciation of value of honest occupations; and ability to see prospects for future careers.

Therefore, the combination of two subjects, namely, English for Career (01-014-014) and Computer Introduction for Home Economic Program (01-121-209), is a pilot as blending course called "*Home Economic English for ASEAN*" designed for meeting the need of the National Education Act policy and development of essential skills to learners' occupations.

## **Background**

### **English for Career (01-014-014)**

English for Career (01-014-014) is a non-compulsory course provided for RMUTSV (Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya) undergraduates in every semester, the topic designed in this course consisted of *socializing, giving opinion, reading number, describing process, and presenting*. These lend themselves to make use their specialized field and basic visual aids activated by technology assisted method of teaching and learning like VDOs, CDs, DVDs, and so on and of course the social network learning modes play more a significant roles in today world learning. They were adopted in this course lesson planning. Each lesson is always designed as a power point presentation including suggested web page to further study.

**Computer Introduction for Home Economic Program (01-121-209)**

Computer Introduction for Home Economic Program (01-121-209) was generated wholly by three subject managers of English, Computer, and Home Economic staff, but it was flexibly adapted according to the students' request. As the majority of students has a low ability in computer and English recoded score by the entrance examination 2009. This course was then designed as basic computer for the students getting familiar with how they could search for their specific data, how they could communicate with their teacher and friends, and how they could create and share their products for their teachers, friends, and interested persons.

**Home Economic English for ASEAN (01-014-008)**

Home Economic English for ASEAN based subject code on English for Communication (01-014-008) was consisted of two main learning activity packages; ICLA (Inside Classroom Learning Activity) which was themed of "*International Thai Food Available in Muang Songkhla, Province*" and OCLA (Outside Classroom Learning Activity) which was oriented through "*Home Economic Computer, English and Dhamma Camps*". Furthermore, each phase aimed to: (1) enhancing English skills; (2) promoting competency through good practice; and (3) developing and distributing the results.

**Methodology****Participant**

In this study, there were three groups of participants; 10 experts in specialized fields: English, Computer, and Home Economic; five administrative staff; and last 30 Home Economic students.

**Instruments**

There were three instruments used in the research called rating scale opinion questionnaire of material evaluation for validity, reliability, and congruity, and another questionnaire included opened and ended questions for teacher and students after trying out this learning patterns. The test (dependent sample) of English and Computer was also used after the students learnt each unit. The last was observation check list was done during teaching.

**Procedures**

There were four steps in conducting this research study detailed as follows:

(1) Studying and analyzing the objectives of the National Education Act 1999 and amendments made in 2002 and the Liberal Arts Faculty's undergraduates' desirable competencies. After that, the primary source for improving the Home Economic students' desirable competency was identified by the researchers and Home Economic lecturing staff.

(2) Designing and pre-evaluating the developed pattern of "Home Economic English for ASEAN" which had two series: ICLA which was themed of "*International Thai Food Available in Muang Songkhla, Province*" and OCLA which was oriented through "*Home Economic Computer, English and Dhamma Camp*" relevant to the need mentioned in item (1). Then, the IOC (Index of item objectives congruence) of this material was pre-evaluated by 10 experts. Next the pilot was done with the 30 Home Economic students. Finally, this material was improved for authentic use.

(3) Applying and decoding the learning pattern of "Home Economic English for ASEAN". It was trying-out the learning patterns to an experimental group of 30 Home Economics students with their mixed English ability,

at Faculty of Liberal Arts, RMUTSV Songkhla.

(4) Evaluating and improving the learning pattern of “Home Economic English for ASEAN”. It was evaluated through CIPP model which included four aspects: context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation, and product evaluation. Last, the findings were used to improve this developed learning pattern.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data based on the questionnaire were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics; content analysis was carried out to analyze the qualitative data. The dependent sample test was employed to investigate whether the significant differences among dependent variables. Other statistic like frequencies means, and percentage values were interpreted.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The findings revealed that the patterns of developing an English for Communication in promoting the RMUTSV undergraduates’ learning competency towards ASEAN labour market called “Home Economic English for ASEAN” was higher than standard criterion. These following details were described the students learning process through this learning patterns.

### **The English Competency Through ICLA and OCLA**

The overall mean score of the dependent sample of *t*-test taken after the students having learnt ICLA which was themed of “*International Thai Food Available in Muang Songkhla, Province*” and OCLA which was oriented through “*Home Economic Computer, English and Dhamma Camp*” was 70.25 compared to the standard criterion 65.5. It was obviously seen that it was higher than the standard criterion.

### **The Computer Literacy Through ICLA and OCLA**

The data displayed that the students’ ability in performing computer after having learnt ICLA which was themed of “*International Thai Food Available in Muang Songkhla, Province*” and OCLA which was oriented through “*Home Economic Computer, English and Dhamma Camp*” was higher than criterion. It was significantly at the 0.05 level.

### **The Evaluation of ICLA and OCLA Through CIPP Model**

The results of the patterns of developing an English for communication in promoting students’ learning competency towards ASEAN labor market was developed through CIPP model shown as the following details.

**Context evaluation.** Based on the objectives of the National Education Act 1999 and amendments made in 2002 and development of essential skills to learners’ occupations of the Liberal Arts Faculty’s undergraduates’ desirable competencies, it was appropriate and relevant to those needs.

**Input evaluation.** The input evaluation resulted that the priority components in designing the material called “Home Economic English for ASEAN” (ICLA which was themed of “*International Thai Food Available in Muang Songkhla, Province*” and OCLA which was oriented through “*Home Economic Computer, English and Dhamma Camp*”) were appropriate and higher efficiency than standard criterion 80/80.

**Process evaluation.** The process evaluation data collected from teacher and students opinion questionnaire, including the observation the students’ performance during studying found that the teacher could follow the lesson plan designed and indicated that this material could strongly develop the students’ learning competency

and communicative skills through ICLA and OCLA creatively and fluently. Furthermore, the students could improve their communicative skills positively.

**Product evaluation.** The production evaluation was classified by the overall mean score of the dependent sample of *t*-test taken after the students having learnt ICLA which was themed of “*International Thai Food Available in Muang Songkhla, Province*” and OCLA which was oriented through “*Home Economic Computer, English and Dhamma Camp*” was higher than the standard criterion 70.5%. It was significantly at the 0.05 level.

### Implication and Suggestion

For further study, these following suggestions could bear in mind: (1) This learning patterns should be extended in use for the other programs by increasing the number of population and mixed ability of students; (2) This learning patterns could be a model for other course designing in order to promote the learner’s learning competency; and (3) The results of the study presented that the developing the English and Computer skills should be continuously process in all education levels for lifelong learning process improvement.

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# Does English Really Matter? The Views of International Doctoral Students from Asia

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Every year numerous international doctoral students from Asia come to the U.S. to pursue their advanced degrees. English proficiency raises a thorny issue for many international students that the limitation of English proficiency possibly causes difficulties in both academic and personal lives in the U.S.. Empirical literature focuses on investigating methods to help international students improve their English, but few studies dig specifically into the wide array of their challenges and abroad experiences. The goal of this paper is, therefore, to provide classroom teachers with a better understanding of the specific needs of international students by approaching two aspects of the international students' experience. First, we aimed to elucidate the challenges posed by linguistic limitations that the current students faced while pursuing their doctoral degrees in the U.S.. Second, we explored the ways that students' attitudes about English might affect them on personal life and academic field level. Pedagogical implications for English educators are suggested.

*Keywords:* English proficiency, language instruction, student beliefs

## Introduction

International students from Asia often choose to pursue their doctoral degrees in the U.S.. Not surprisingly, each year many Asian students choose to move to the U.S. for this purpose and international students face many challenges in their personal and academic lives resulting from their lack of English proficiency. Whereas the previous research has focused on ways of helping international students adapt themselves to U.S. university culture (Constantine, Kindaichi, Okazaki, Gainor, & Banden, 2005; Gebhard, 2010; Lin & Yi, 1997; Liu, 2001), there are very few studies looking at the subjective experiences of international students who pursue post graduate studies abroad. If academics had a better sense of students' needs and experiences, they would be better equipped to conduct research that is tailored to those needs.

Considering subjective experiences are important in formulating action plans that help students make the most of their academic experiences, further research is needed in order to shed light on the ways that English language acquisition affects Asian international students at the doctoral level. This is necessary to help prepare students for studying abroad by helping them understand the role of English in their daily lives. Further, research

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into this topic could be utilized by teachers as well as academic advisors working with Asian doctoral students. Given the number of Asian doctoral students in American universities, such information is likely to help facilitate a more productive social and academic atmosphere both in the classroom and on campuses in general. This study addresses the apparent gap in the research literature by exploring the ways that Asian international doctoral students experience and describe the impact and realities of using English to complete their degrees.

### **Qualitative Research and Subjectivity**

This study addresses the experiences of Asian international students and specifically aims to elucidate the specific challenges posed by a lack of English proficiency in this subset of the student body. In order to avoid making generalizations concerning the population of interest, it is necessary to gain a deep understanding of the issues affecting their behaviors and attitudes around their English use. For this reason, qualitative research methods were better suited at addressing our research questions than quantitative ones. This is especially true given that the emotional aspects of our participants' experience as doctoral students would likely be overlooked had we chosen to present quantitative rather than qualitative data. We chose to utilize qualitative research methodology as this method is better equipped at incorporating the subtleties of the students' experiences and attitudes to do with speaking English. In addition, as the researchers of this paper have faced many of issues that we investigate in the content of the paper, we were able to brainstorm some questions pertinent to the challenges faced by our participants: (1) Why do we feel daunted by English when we engage in group discussions with both native and non-native English speakers?; (2) Why do we feel some of our professors evaluate us not by our professional knowledge but by our English skills?; and (3) Why do we often get discouraged from expressing our opinions in English, even though we believe we have a great deal of professional knowledge and expertise in our respective fields?.

The preliminary questions outlined above helped shape the direction of the research in that they emphasized the importance of investigating the role of subjective experience. In formulating our research questions, we made use of several of the subjective lenses such as the "personal lenses" and the "justice lens" as utilized by Lorrie in Glesne (2005, p. 122). We used the personal lenses by taking into account our cultural, social, historical, and political backgrounds when formulating the topic of our research. Our experiences as international doctoral students from Asia in the U.S. formed a big part of our subjective lenses. Additionally, we strived to describe the situation of the marginalized Asian international doctoral students in terms of the justice lens. In other words, if any participant has ever been provoked into feeling marginalized or underprivileged for lack of English, not of professional knowledge, it might be problematic and unfair in terms of the justice lens. While formulating the research topic and purpose of the study based on subjectivity, the following research questions emerged: (1) How do Asian international students pursuing their Ph.D. programs describe the ways that using English affects their perceptions of themselves as students, intellectuals, and future academics?; and (2) How do Asian international students describe and experience the effects of using English in each aspect of their academic lives which include participating in seminars, completing assignments, teaching, and interacting with students and professors?.

## **Method**

### **Participants and Context**

Prior to selecting participants for our study, we had decided, based on previous discussions, that we would

be using the purposeful sampling strategy (Martella, Nelson, & Marchand-Martella, 1999). We thought that our participant pool should reflect members of both genders and a variety of majors. More specifically, we reasoned that responses from participants majoring in language related subjects would differ from those of participants who majored in other, non-language related subjects. Since we wished to recruit volunteers studying a variety of subjects, we chose participants from several different departments of a large mid-western university.

Our research team collaborated in selecting participants. Each member of our team asked two participants from different departments to participate in our project. Finally, we recruited four female students and four male students to participate in our study. Three of our participants majored in language education or second language studies and the rest studied art education, biochemistry, telecommunications, and computer science. The length of our participants' sojourn in the U.S. ranged from seven months to six years. In the process of recruiting our volunteers, our team sent out invitation letters and modified informed consent form based on Malone (2003).

### **Data Collection Techniques**

We gathered data through conducting interviews and collecting field notes and artifacts. First, we interviewed our participants using four questions we had prepared in advance. The four questions were: (1) Do you like English? Why or why not?; (2) What are the roles of English in your field of study?; (3) What are your feelings while interacting with native English speakers in group discussions?; and (4) How do you use English in your field of study?. We obtained most of our information through interviews using semi-structured interview questions. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 702) said, we believed that the interviewer must perfect a style of interested listening that rewards the respondent's participation but does not evaluate these responses. The interviews took usually less than 30 minutes, and they were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

In addition, we asked the participants to show us the artifacts which represented their status as a doctoral student at the school they attended. We took pictures of the artifacts for reference. We focused on gathering personal physical documents rather than public documents as seen in Merriam (1998). One member of our research team asked the participants to draw a picture of himself or herself in a group discussion with native speakers. As nicely demonstrated in Denzin and Lincoln (2005, pp. 753-758), we assumed that visual images are capable of exposing the subliminal consciousness of the participant.

### **Data Analysis and Findings**

After gathering all the data, we compared them and delineated emerging themes through discussion referring to open coding in Strauss and Corbin (1990). Interestingly, we realized that the emerging themes were all inter-related. As we expected, the responses of students majoring in language related studies differed from the rest of the participants. Additionally, we found that other factors including confidence and language proficiency affected the responses of the participants.

### **The Preference for English**

We collected the data mostly through interviews with eight participants. We examined how the English language impacts the subjects' attitudes towards English. Of the eight participants, two participants answered that they "like" English. Four participants felt "neutral" toward English. And two participants showed a strong "dislike" for the English language. The participants who preferred English were also highly proficient in English. One participant said in his interview, "I started to use English in sixth grade. I learned everything in

English. In America, I'm confident in English and like English". A strong motivation for using English and interest in the English language was clearly derived from proficiency in the language. One participant mentioned that her high school English teacher motivated her to pursue learning English and to eventually major in the subject at university.

On the other hand, a majority of the participants see English as "ok" or have a neutral feeling regarding it. One of our participants said, "I mean, hmmm, I'm not that interested in learning the language. I mean English is ok". Most participants see English as necessary for communication and as an important learning tool for their doctoral studies. One participant pointed out, "Actually English is just for me a tool. I have no idea whether I like it or I don't". They see English as a separate area of knowledge separate from their own studies.

The barriers that communicating in English posed were a major reason why some participants disliked English. One of our participants revealed this in an interview by saying that, "Because English is very hard for me, sometimes it is very hard for me to understand other people. Although I have been in the US for three years, it is hard for me to speak English. I don't like English". The lack of English communication skills causes some participants to feel isolated.

The data shows that participants' regard for English also influences their desire to use English. Some of the participants do not see English as a specific "knowledge area" but rather consider the language as a "tool for communication". They do not show any interest in learning the language itself choosing to regard it simply as a tool that helps them study their majors. This was true of all the participants except for those studying language related fields. In addition, some participants do not think their personal limitations in English would influence their success in their doctoral studies.

### **English, Tool or Content?**

Our second question for the interviewees was about the role of English in their areas of study. All of the participants said that English is very important and indispensable not only in their area of study but also in everyday life. More specifically, since they lived in an English speaking environment, they could not avoid using English. In daily life, English was seen as a tool for communication. In addition, all of the interviewees said English is very important for academic purposes. The students had to hand in papers written in English, communicate with peers and professors in English, and use such technology such as computers operating in English.

One interesting finding that emerged out of the interview data was that the level of importance that the participants assigned to learning English varied depending on their majors. We found that there is a tendency among non-language major interviewees to regard English as a communication tool rather than an area of study in and of itself. On the other hand, language major interviewees all indicated that English is not only a communication tool but also an important area of study. To illustrate, non-language-major interviewees responded that English is mostly a tool that enables them to communicate and study their respective subject areas. However, they do not seem to indicate that mastering English as a language was an important goal for them to achieve. For these students, English plays a very important supportive role as a communication tool but is not seen as an essential and separate subject to master.

Students majoring in language related studies seemed to place more importance on learning English as a content area and consequently felt that they ought to master English. One language major participant said that English is the medium through which she studied. The other participant who majored in language related

studies indicated that English is her main area of study and for this reason it appeared essential for both communicative and academic purposes. In particular, one of the participants felt a great deal of pressure in achieving Native like fluency due to her profession as an English teacher. She reported feeling that she needed to be a “walking dictionary” in order to excel at her job.

In short, the responses to the question concerning the role of English in the participants’ areas of study differed according to each participant’s perception of the function of English in their academic and personal lives. While all of the participants agreed that English is an important communication tool, the degree to which students perceived learning English as essential differed according to their choice of major. Student majoring in language related fields, unlike students majoring in other subjects, felt that it was important to master English as a separate subject and not merely as a means to an end. Student majoring in fields unrelated to languages seemed to prize English acquisition only in as far as it enabled them to pursue other areas of study.

Interestingly, however, despite these apparent differences in their approach to English, all of the participants conceded that the English language carries as great deal of weight in their lives. One participant said:

... Everything is based on English... and because in this technology area most advanced country is America. Most conferences, articles, journals, papers, everything... top area is from America. English is a primary language in my area. So English is the most important language... (personal communication, March 20, 2008)

### **Feelings While Engaging in Group Discussions**

When our participants tried to describe their attitudes and feelings while interacting with native English speakers, they used the words like “difficult”, “frustrated”, “nervous”, “dumb”, “depressed”, and “isolated”. Few of them stated that “sometimes it’s ok” and “I don’t feel anything”. Most pictures they draw themselves in group discussion confirmed their negative attitudes in group discussions in English with native English speakers. After we inquired about our participants’ feelings in their group discussions with native English speakers, we asked further questions which required the participants to speculate on the reasons for their feelings.

We found that there are three main factors causing our participants’ negative feelings during group discussions. First, participants have difficulties in understanding their group members’ accents, vocabulary, and some topics unique in Western culture. Participants mentioned that it is hard for them to understand certain vocabulary choices and words usages which they have never heard or been exposed to before. Thus, in this respect, there are certain pragmatic limitations that cause our participants’ lack of understanding which leads to negative feelings in interacting with native students of English.

Second, time constraints and pressure also contribute to our participants’ lack of comfort with expressing themselves verbally. Participants said that in group discussions, compared to native speakers, it takes them more time to select the appropriate words in order to express their opinions clearly. This period of time was regarded as “wait time”, and our participants felt depressed and pressured when they required their classmates to wait for their responses.

The third and main difficulty our participants faced was the desire to express their thoughts accurately and precisely. Most participants admitted that their poor confidence in their oral communication skills stemmed from comparing themselves to native speakers of English. Many reported that feeling worried about making a mistake while speaking prevented them from speaking up in class. Some felt that they may appear “dumb” or “get embarrassed” should they make a mistake while speaking in front of their peers. One student said that “I felt that my academic prowess would be called into question if I made a mistake while speaking”. Largely due to this,

many of our volunteers chose to participate in their classes as listeners, not as speakers, in group discussions.

Another aspect that contributed to the participants' willingness to speak up in class was their perceptions of native speakers. As students' English proficiency increases and their understanding of Western culture increases, they often build closer relationships with native speakers and consequently feel less pressure when speaking in class. This is the case of the student who spent seven years in his doctoral program. He reported:

I seldom talk with native student of English when I was the first year in my graduate program. I usually interacted with other international students. I was afraid of being making mistakes in front of native students of English. However, as I got involved in group projects and needed to interact with native students of English and as I realized that students are not shamed or ridiculed when they make mistakes while speaking in the US, I became to have much more relaxed attitude about speaking in groups in general. (personal communication, April 2, 2008)

### **Comparison Between the Use of Spoken and Written English**

Rather than looking at the English language holistically, our participants tended to regard English as two different systems: written and spoken English. While pursuing their doctoral studies, students tended to contrast the two language systems, favoring the written over the oral. This was the case for several reasons. First, written English allows more time for students to build up and express their ideas than spoken English. For example, when writing papers, students are given ample time to revise their ideas as well as to correct any errors. These kinds of revisions and corrections are much harder to carry out when communicating orally. One participant emphasizes:

I think it's different and I like written English because I can always double check and I don't need to show it to everyone. In the classroom, I don't have time to talk. When speaking English, I need to worry about not only the content but also the language of my English. (personal communication, April 15, 2008)

Another reason why students tend to prefer communicating in written English is due to the affective benefit ascribed to this mode of communication. Due to the fact that most international students tend to have relatively high confidence in their writing skills compared to their oral skills, they seemed to have a greater sense of subjective well being while writing in English but not while speaking English. To the contrary, speaking in English was often associated with negative feelings such as shame and embarrassment.

The relationship between the students' affective responses and their language use can be explained in several ways. As previously mentioned, the lack of rigid time constraints while writing promotes a sense of comfort in that they feel empowered to edit and revise their thoughts in ways that are more difficult to do when speaking. On the other hand, they might feel stressed and worried about making errors during presentations, because they tend to believe that errors in spoken English, even if instantly corrected, can downplay their academic ability. The other way to explain the difference in affective response to written and spoken English is to take social interactions into account. That is, whereas spoken English contains a social dimension in that it is used while interacting with others, written English is largely a solitary act. Therefore, when it comes to spoken English, the existence of others, especially native speakers, could make the students feel nervous, less confident, or even embarrassed when errors have been made. One participant stated:

In the spoken... Two months ago, I gave a talk... You know sometimes it makes embarrassing... You know... many people looked at me... Sometime you lost what you have to say... it's kind of embarrassing. If you were a native speaker, they can change the topic, make a joke... But for international students, such skills are really, really difficult... to acquire? (personal communication, April 21, 2008)

Finally, the students were inclined to believe that they were on an equal playing field with native speakers when it came to academic writing but that native speakers had a definite advantage in oral communication. With respect to written English, they feel that the two groups are similarly advantaged due to the fact that both groups would need to acquire knowledge of specific formats and jargon used in academic writing over the course of their doctoral studies.

### **Implications of the Study**

Our study mainly explores how international doctoral students from Asia related to the use of English in their personal and academic lives. Without a doubt, our research revealed that international doctoral students face many challenges and are often left with negative feeling regarding their use of spoken English. We believe that these findings merit attention both from educators involved in instructing international students. This study attempts to elucidate the issues affecting students in the classroom as well as to shed light on students' views on English and its role in their lives. We found that students had differing evaluations of English depending on the role that English played with regards to their majors. While some students felt that English was merely a tool, others felt that mastering English was a goal in and of itself. Further, the way that students used English also colored their perceptions of the language. This was shown in that students were more comfortable expressing their professional knowledge in a written format rather than in an oral one. We feel that educators should be made aware of the views and experiences of international students. This study also revealed that students who have a lower proficiency in English often do not feel like they can build relationships with native speakers of English and so avoid socializing with them which leads to a lower opportunity of speaking up in group discussion. We believed that building relationships and getting involved in Western culture could ease some of the students stress regarding speaking English in class.

Given the data gathered in this study, we also feel that students would be better served by teachers who give them ample opportunity to express their ideas in written and spoken English. As many students site having negative feeling about speaking up in class due to feeling pressured to respond in a short amount of time, teachers should facilitate a learning environment where students are given sufficient time to put their ideas together.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Due to the fact that our study included a small number of participants, the finding presented in our research may not generalize to other populations. We feel that further research which incorporates a larger number of participants is necessary to confirm the finding presented here. Future researchers may wish to make use of a variety of research methods in order to investigate the issues presented in this paper. Longitudinal studies as well as case studies may add to the validity of our study and also provide us with a deeper and more nuanced understanding of our results as case studies are refine theory "suggesting the complexities for future investigation as well as helping establish the limits of generalizability" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 460).

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# The Impossibility of Translating the Titles and Abstracts of the Theses by Machine\*

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Based on the authors' experience of supervising English majors' B.A. thesis writing and situation of the thesis writing nowadays in China, the present paper makes a comparative analysis of the translation of the titles and an abstract between people and machine. Machine translation in this paper refers to the translation with the help of online translation software. The paper proves that because of the imperfect of translation online software, it is unsatisfactory and even impossible to translate theses faithfully from Chinese to English by machine. The paper suggests that instead of totally depending on it to write theses, we can only regard it as an assistant.

*Keywords:* machine translation, thesis, impossibility

## Introduction

Machine translation refers to the translation between two languages by machine. Since its creation in 1950s, a great deal of progress has been made. And with the population of computer and coming of translation software, machine translation has helped people to do a lot of things (HE, 2007, p. 51). Machine translation in this paper refers to the translation with the help of online translation software. The commonly used online translation software are Google, Baidu, Jinshan, and Jinqiao etc.. Without doubt, it is very convenient to write a paper with the help of those translation software for English majors when they cannot find suitable reference materials in English. However, the versions are not satisfactory or even disappointed most of the time, especially when it is a long passage. With the using of those software, nothing can block a student, yet nothing can a teacher understand what he/she has written. So somebody satirized the machine translation as "mad translation" since both of their abbreviation is MT (LIANG, 2005, p. 78). What she said is quite right according to the authors' experience.

## The Impossibility of Translating the Titles by Machine

The title of a paper is regarded as the "eye" of a thesis, because it points out the theme of the paper (TAN, 2001, p. 109). So the translation of the titles of the theses is of vital importance, and some of the students turned to computers for help.

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## Example (1) 论《还乡》中哈代的宿命论

Google Online: “Home coming” Hardy’s Fatalism

Jinshan Online: By “Returns home” Hardy’s Fatalism

Suggested Version: On Hardy’s Fatalism in *The Return of the Native*

## Example (2) 浅析英语插入语的功能

Google Online: On the English Parenthesis of Function

Jinshan Online: Analyses the Function of English Parenthesis

Suggested Version: A Brief Analysis of the Function in English Parentheses

## Example (3) 奈达的翻译观初探

Jinqiao Online: The Beginning of Taoist Temple Visits Naida’s Translator

Google Online: Nida of the Concept of Translation

Suggested Version: Discussions on E.A. Nida’s Concept of Translation

## Example (4) 浅析如何提高高中生高考的写作技巧

Google Online: Analysis of How to Improve Writing Skills of the Seniors’

Baidu Online: Analysis on How to Improve High School Students’ Writing Skills in College Entrance Examination

Suggested Version: General Views on How to Improve High School Students’ Writing Techniques for Their University Entrance Examinations

Examples 1-2 are the most common titles among students’ papers, and “On” is often used to translate “论” in Chinese. However, the machine translation versions in both Examples 1 and 2 neglected that, and they are ungrammatical. In Example 2, the online translation versions cannot distinguish the single form of “parenthesis” and plural form of “parentheses”. Even worse, Example 1 made mistakes in translating the name of Hardy’s famous novel. In Example 3, “初探” in Chinese is a modest way of saying “elementary exploration”. The machine could not understand the true meaning of the title and made silly mistakes such as “The beginning of”, “temple visits”, and “tray talks about”. The suggested version used “discussions” which better expressed the meaning of the title. In Example 4, Google Online did not express the meaning of “college entrance examination” as in Baidu’s version, but because the preposition “in”, Baidu’s version indicated “during the entrance examination”, while by using “General views...” and “for” etc., the suggested version expressed the original meaning better.

Inevitably, machine translation could not even faithfully turn those short titles into English as students had expected, and some of them is even unreadable and full of mistakes.

### The Impossibility of Translating the Abstract by Machine

If a title is the “eye” of a thesis, an abstract can be the “soul” of a thesis. The writing of an abstract is the most important part of a paper, because it points out the main idea of the whole article. Generally speaking, there must be 200 to 300 words in it and has to be written both in Chinese and in English. Because of that, some of the students found it is not easy to write, so they depend on machine to translate the abstracts.

Example (5) 本文作者通过阅读大量相关文献资料，指出高中英语写作教学中存在的主要问题，并进一步讨论了英语写作教学的重要性及其方法。根据高考英语作文评分标准和高中生英语写作现状，本文试图找到解决问题的办法。

Google Online: The author read a lot of literature, *pointed out* that the main problems in the teaching of high school English Writing, and further *discussion of English writing teaching the importance of the method*. According to the Matriculation English essay *scoring standards* and high school students in English writing status quo, this paper *tried* to find a solution to the problem.

Baidu Online: In this paper the author by reading a large number of relevant documents, points out *that English Writing Teaching in high schools the main problems, and further discussed* the importance of writing in English and its method. According to the college entrance examination English composition standards *of grading* and the current situation of English writing *of senior high school students*, this paper attempts to find a solution to the problem.

Suggested Version: Documentary studies are adopted into the study. This paper aims at indicating major problems in high school English writing and further discusses the importance and methods of the teaching of English writing. According to University Entrance Examination score standards and the present situation of high school students' writing ability, this paper tries to find out methods to solve and avert these problems.

Example 5 is one of the simplest and clearest abstract in Chinese, which involves no special terms and no complicated sentences, so that it is not difficult for people to turn it into English. Yet, the authors have tried online translation of Google, Baidu, iCIBA, and Youdao, the results are not satisfactory. The translation versions of Baidu and iCIBA are readable, while the rest two are really unreadable. The followings are the comparative analysis of Google and Baidu.

First of all, the unberable shortcoming of all the onlinetranslation is that they do not make any changes in sentence orders so that it can meet the demands of English language, instead they just put it into English in the same order as Chinese, no matter how long and how complicated the sentences are. For instance, despite of the suggested version, we can also turn the first sentence into an English complex sentence like this: "The author of the present paper, based on the large amount of the relevant literature she has read, points out that...." And the object of "points out" should be "main problem". Yet Baidu's version mistook what should be the adverbial for object, and produced the ungrammatical sentence. The mistakes of "scoring" and "of grading" are also the result of word for word translation.

As WU Bin (2006) said: "Machine translation system can not analyze, understand and create natural language perfectly. And a lot of problems in language can not be solved by machine yet" (p. 55). We all know that translation is an extremely complicated process which involves in not only words and grammar but also coherence, context, and even cognition. It seems that machine translation has not developed to that level.

Secondly, machine translation often makes mistakes in English tences. According to the requiem of thesis writing, present tences should be used, and passive voice is encouraged, so that the thesis seems to be practical. Yet the machine translation cannot notice this. For example, Google's version used past tence for those important verbs like "point, try", while Baidu's version used "discussed". Furthermore, we cannot find any passive voice in the two versions. Whereas, in the suggested version, the first sentence is in the passive form of "adopt", which seems to indicate the methods that the present study employed.

Thirdly, machine translation seems poor at distinguish the slight difference between some words or at choosing the suitable words. For example, both of the online translation used the phrase “point out”, while the suggested version chose “indicate”, which means that a particular situation exists, or that something is likely to be true. Surely using “indicate” is more suitable than “point out” in this content. “Aim at” is another well-chosen phrase, which expresses the purpose of the paper. It is well-known that one of the charm of a language lies in its variety, especially English, in which the repetition of the same words in one sentences should be avoided. Yet, in the second sentence of Baidu online translation, “of” has been used for three times. Of course we can change the third “of” into “in”.

Because of the imperfect of machine translation, there are other kinds of grammatical mistakes in the underline sentences of the above versions. In the first sentence of Google’s version, there is no subject, and “discussion” is ungrammatical. “Machine translation often made mistakes in English Article, pronoun, preposition, countable and uncountable nouns etc., while people seldom do” (HE, 2004, p. 18).

### Conclusions

Based on the comparative study between the translation of the titles and an abstract by people and by machine, the authors analyze the shortcomings and impossibility of the machine translation. Although no example of the bodies of thesis are quoted, yet it is not necessary to prove. The results of translating the short titles and abstract are so depressing let alone the long bodies of the thesis. In fact, each language has its own characteristics and regulation, so it is extremely difficult to translate them faithfully from one language to another. “Most of the time, machine translation is unsatisfactory and even impossible, despite of the few easy and short sentences” (SHI, 2012, p. 1059). To conclude, the authors suggest that we can only regard machine translation as an assistant. Meanwhile, different online translation versions should be compared and selected. Those who completely rely on the machine to translate a thesis from Chinese to English should perish that thought.

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# Overtranslation: Ancestry in the Translation of Chinese Surnames

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This paper discusses the overtranslation of Chinese surnames, which bear genealogical information of the Chinese people in Malaysia. A total of 2,547 surnames collected from USM (Universiti Sains Malaysia) and UTAR (Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman) were used as research data. A semantic analysis was conducted to identify cultural meanings expressed in the translated version of the Chinese surnames, while a semantic comparison was made between the original version and the translated version. Surnames, which occupy the foremost position in the characters of Chinese names, contain cultural meanings—i.e., a person's lineage. However, this cultural meaning is not detected directly or as much in its original Chinese version. On the contrary, by studying its translation in the Malay language, a person's dialectal ancestry can clearly be identified. Therefore, it is proposed that transliteration of Chinese surnames based on dialect pronunciations must be maintained, and not a transliteration based on the Mandarin pronunciation, as practiced in China.

*Keywords:* Chinese surnames, overtranslation, transliteration, Chinese genealogy, dialect

## Preface

Surnames of Chinese people originate from a certain province or place in China long ago. There are also surnames that were created after the names of forefathers. Thus, the chances of individuals with the same surname originating from the same place or descending from the same family are high. Hence, marriage between couples that bear the same surname is forbidden.

In the collection of *Hundred Family Surnames* (百家姓 *Bai Jia Xing*), compiled during the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), there are as many as 504 surnames. Out of the total, 444 surnames are family names represented by one character, while 60 surnames are made up of two characters. Normally, surnames that are made up of combined characters were created based on official ranks, or names of kings and nobilities. Examples of such surnames include 司马 (Si Ma), 上官 (Shang Guan), 欧阳 (Ou Yang), 东方 (Dong Fang), and 司徒 (Si Tu). Therefore, through a surname, details regarding the origins and ancestral history of a person can be determined.

The name of an individual is very important and emphasised in the Chinese community. Thus, there exists a field of study that focuses on names as a specialized discipline. It is believed that the total number of strokes in all the characters of a name, pronunciation and meaning of each character coupled with the time and date of birth of an individual will influence the fate and fortune of that person.

Chinese surnames are placed at the foremost position in a person's name. This is due to the practice in Chinese culture of placing something more majestic, paramount, or supreme at the front. The foremost position in the name of a person shows that the Chinese put greater importance on ancestry than a person's given name. This clearly indicates that the Chinese are a community that values and honours their ancestors.

Overtranslation is a type of translation introduced by Newmark (1988). According to Newmark, overtranslation is a translation whereby the total number of semantic features is more than the semantic features found within the source text.

Through the analysis conducted, it is found that the Malay translation of Chinese surnames in Malaysia carry more semantic features than its Chinese version. Based on that discovery, this paper will discuss the occurrence of overtranslation in the translation of Chinese surnames in Malaysia.

### Methodology

A total of 2,547 Chinese surnames were collected for analysis. Respondents were made up of 1,265 students from USM (Universiti Sains Malaysia) and 1,282 students from UTAR (Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman). Respondents were requested to provide details regarding their surnames in Chinese characters and in Malay, their dialect lineage as well as their state of birth. Out of the 2,547 surnames collected, 128 were different surnames, and from this total, 124 of them were single-character surnames while the other four were double-character surnames, i.e., 令狐 (Ling Hu), 司徒 (Si Tu), 慕容 (Mu Rong), and 欧阳 (Ou Yang). All these surnames in Chinese and Malay were then analyzed and their semantic features compared according to the componential analysis of meaning technique by Nida (1975) to determine the similarities and differences in meaning between both versions.

### Discussion of Findings

Based on the analysis conducted, it is clear that overtranslation occurred in the translation of Chinese surnames. Apart from the territorial origins and ancestral history, the dialect lineage was also detected from the Chinese surnames translation.

Chinese surnames were translated into the Malay language using the transliteration method. Dialect pronunciations became the principle of transliterating Chinese surnames into Malay. Through this dialect transliteration, a person's dialect lineage can therefore be determined.

In the case of the surname 吴 (Wu), Hakka and Cantonese descendents were inclined to use the translation "Ng", whereas descendents of the Hokkien, Hock Chew, and Teochew dialects commonly use the "Goh" version. For those of the Henghua descent, "Ngo" is more often used as the translation of the 吴 (Wu) family name.

There are three translation versions of the surname 林 (Lin). They are "Lim" by the Hainanese, Hakka, Hokkien, and Teochew people, "Ling" by the Hock Chew descendents, and "Lam" by the Cantonese.

As for the surname 陈 (Chen), the translation "Tan" refers to those of the Hokkien, Teochew, and Hainanese descent. Versions such as "Chan" and "Chin" are more often used by the Hainanese, Hakka, and Cantonese people. The Hock Chewpeople, however, tend to translate this surname as "Ding" or "Ting".

The surname 何 (He) is mostly translated as "Ho", "Hor", and "Hoh" by the Hakka people. The Cantonese on the other hand use the translation "Ho" and "Hoh", while the Teochew people prefer to use "Ho".

There are seven translation versions used for the surname 刘 (Liu). The Hakka people use "Liew", while

the Cantonese use “Liew”, “Leow”, “Lu”, “Lau”, and “Law”, whereas the Hokkien people are more inclined to use “Low” or “Liu”.

The surname 叶 (Ye) is often translated as “Yap” by the Hainanese. The Hakka people, however, use “Yip” or “Yap”. Those of the Hokkien and Cantonese descent use “Yap” or “Yeap” or “Yip” instead.

The translation of the surname 周 (Zhou) into Malay seems to be more consistent for each dialect lineage. “Chew” is used by both the Hainanese and Hokkien people.

As for the surname 张 (Zhang), the translations used are “Tong” and “Chong” by the Hakka people, while “Teoh”, “Chong”, and “Tiong” are used by those of Hokkien descent.

With regards to the surnames 曾 (Ceng) and 李 (Li), it is noted that the translation of 曾 (Ceng) is more varied compared to the translation of 李 (Li). The surname 曾 (Ceng) tends to be translated as “Chan” by the Hakka people, “Cin”, “Chen”, and “Chin” by the Teochew people, and “Chang” by the Hokkien as well as the Cantonese people. The surname 李 (Li), on the other hand, is translated according to the Hakka and Hokkien people as “Lee” and according to the Teochew people as “Li” instead.

Most individuals that have surnames with combined characters appear to be of Teochew descent. The surname 慕容 (Mu Rong) is translated into “Mo Rong” in the Teochew community, while 令狐 (Ling Hu) is translated as “Ling Wu” for individuals who use the Teochew dialect. However, for Hakka people, the surname 令狐 (Ling Hu) is matched to the Hakka pronunciation “Lin Hu”. As for the surname 司徒 (Si Tu), the Teochew people tend to use the translation “Si To” and “Sze To”, whereas the Cantonese prefer to use the translation “Si Tho” following the Cantonese pronunciation. In the case of the surname 欧阳 (Ou Yang), the translation “Au Yong” indicates that the individual has Hakka or Hokkien dialect origins; “Ou Yong” on the other hand indicates that the individual descended from the Cantonese dialect lineage.

It is proven, from the analyzed data, that the translation of Chinese surnames into Malay carries information regarding the dialect lineage of an individual. This dialect lineage detail is not detected through its original version in the Chinese language. Nonetheless, confusion may arise due to inconsistent translation equivalents being used by each dialect lineage. For instance, the surname 刘 (Liu) has been translated as “Liew”, “Low”, and “Liu” by the Hokkien people. This situation may have occurred because of differences among clans in the Hokkien community itself. Under the Hokkien dialect category, there are other subdialects such as Hui An, Nan An, Yong Chun, and many more. Each subdialect has its own respective pronunciation that is quite distinctive. Thus, if a surname is transliterated according to the subdialect pronunciation, the translation results will differ.

Furthermore, there are also spelling differences in the Malay translation even though the surname is used by people of the same dialect. As an example, the surname 何 (He) is translated as “Ho”, “Hor”, and “Hoh” for the Cantonese. Data analysis shows that the translation “Ho” is more commonly used in the state of Johor, whereas “Hoh” is highly preferred in Perak, and “Hor” is more often used in the city of Kuala Lumpur instead. This variance in spelling, although representing a similar dialect lineage, might be caused by the officers who transliterated the surname when the owner of the name pronounced his/her surname. These officers transliterated the Chinese surnames according to pronunciations that are understandable by them. Hence, an officer will transliterate differently from another. At the same time, the fact that similar surnames of the same dialect lineage have been transliterated into translations with various equivalents and spellings according to states also indicates that there may be a trend in terms of the translation usage in each state for each surname translation based on dialects.

Meanwhile, there are also examples of people belonging to the same dialect lineage but with entirely different surname translations, be it in pronunciation or spelling. For instance, the surname 张 (Zhang) is matched with “Teoh” by the Hokkien community in Johor, “Chong” by the Hokkien people in Sabah, and “Tiong” by those of Hokkien descent in Sarawak. This is probably due to the different subdialects in each of these states.

There are a small number of Chinese surnames that have been translated according to the dialect pronunciation used by the majority of Chinese people in the area of registration, and not following one’s own dialect. For example, the surname 陈 (Chen) for the Hokkien and Teochew community in Perak were given the translation equivalents “Chan” and “Chin”. Both of these equivalents resemble more like the pronunciation of the Cantonese dialect. This possibly occurs due to the majority of the Chinese people in Perak are of Cantonese descent, especially those around Ipoh. As a result, the influence of Cantonese is more dominant among the local community. Therefore, the Hokkien people adopted the Cantonese pronunciation during registration of their names.

### Conclusions

The translation of Chinese surnames in Malaysia, which is an overtranslation, should be preserved. The transliteration method following the dialect pronunciation of one’s name is beneficial in terms of transferring the socio-cultural message implied in a Chinese surname into the Malay language. The diversity of dialect lineages that exists among the Chinese community in Malaysia has produced a variety of Malay translations for a surname that is of the same character in the Chinese language. The uniqueness of this translation should definitely be maintained. Thus, the translation of Chinese surnames in Malaysia does not have to particularly follow the transliteration method of using the standard Mandarin pronunciation like in China nor the Cantonese pronunciation like in Hong Kong.

Nevertheless, a standardisation of surname translations according to dialect pronunciations should be implemented, either centrally or according to states, to avoid any confusion. A list of Chinese surnames and their equivalents in Malay is also essential as a guide for the authorities when performing the name registration procedure. This guide will also be very useful to Chinese associations or organisations for the purpose of standardizing the usage of Chinese surnames in Malay.

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# Jacob: A Deceiver Deceived\*

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As one of the most important interpretive works of the *Bible*, Robert Alter's *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (1981) turned our attention to the artfulness of the *Bible* in generating meaning and effect. The story of Judah and Tamar is analyzed in detail by Alter and defined as a typology of "deceiver deceived". Based on that typology, this paper attempts to analyze Jacob, one of the patriarchal figure in Genesis, as a deceiver deceived, demonstrating how Jacob, as a deceiver, seized the first birthright of his brother and the death blessing from his father; and how he was deceived into marrying the false woman and cheated of seven years of service because of the privileged right enjoyed by the firstborn.

*Keywords:* deceiver deceived, Jacob, right of the firstborn

## Introduction

For nonbelievers, the *Bible* may appear dull and a patchwork. However, with some guiding reference books and attentive reading, the *Bible* ceases to be merely didactic but becomes a literary work pregnant with meanings. In *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (1981), Robert Alter elaborately analyzed the story of Judah and Tamar: Judah, who used a kid to deceive his father was ultimately deceived by Tamar, using a kid as well. Thus Judah, according to Alter (1981), has become the representative of a typology, namely, "a deceiver deceived" (p. 10). This "deceiver deceived" typology not only illustrates "the pleasures of reading the *Bible* in [Alter's] way" (Weitzman, 2007, p. 199), but also inspires the following interpretation of part of the story of Jacob, by far the most carefully and subtly delineated character of all the patriarchal figures. This paper will focus on Jacob as a deceiver deceived: How he deceived his brother and father to gain the right of the firstborn, and how he was deceived because of the privileged right enjoyed by the firstborn.

## Jacob: The Deceiver

### Seizure of the First Birthright

When Jacob's mother Rebekah conceived, the text says, "the two children struggled together within her" (Gen. 25: 22).<sup>1</sup> When Esau came out first, his younger brother Jacob "took hold on Esau's heel" (Gen. 25: 26). These instances indicate that even in their mother's womb, the two brothers were fighting over the primogeniture.

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, if not otherwise indicated, all the quotations of the *Bible* are from *The Authorized (King James) Version*. Nashville: The Gideons International, 1978.

As a result, the later hunter physically defeated the later shepherd, and struggled to be the firstborn.

Then we are told that Esau grew into a “cunning hunter”, while Jacob a “plain man” (Gen. 25: 27). As Marcus (1986) rightfully argued that “the only weapon of the weak against the strong is to resort to a stratagem” (p. 163), Jacob started to plot the purchase of his elder brother’s birthright. Since Esau was a hunter, if he took no prey, probably he would go hungry. That must have been the situation when he was confronted with Jacob who was preparing a meal. The weary and hungry hunter could not help asking his brother for something to eat, which seems a quite natural thing to us today. However, to Jacob, that was a perfect opportunity to seize the first birthright. Thus Jacob answered his brother’s request, “Sell me this day thy birthright” (Gen. 25: 27).

It seems that Esau has long been wrongfully accused of considering his birthright as nothing important. There is a 16th-century interlude called *Jacob and Esau*, in which “Esau is portrayed as a hunter who cares for nothing but the hunt, an evil man who is oblivious of the rights of others”, but Esau of Genesis, indeed, “was a man of the fields, a hunter, but not evil” (Thomas, 1969, p. 200). The defense for him can be easily made; for it is imaginable that if a hunter has taken nothing for days and in turn has been starving for days, he is about to lose all his strength and mindfulness. Under such circumstances Esau responded to Jacob’s request in this way, “Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright to me” (Gen. 25: 32)? Obviously Esau did not give up his birthright at once; instead he first compared the respective importance of his life and his birthright. If he starved to death, certainly nothing would his birthright bring to him. That being the situation, still he uttered a question or a complaint, but not an agreement, indicating that there might be a struggle within him.

However, Jacob would not let the opportunity go and insisted on an oath. Clearly Jacob knew that even an agreement could be rescinded, not to say a question; while an oath could only be followed, but never taken back. Esau, who was about to starve to faint at this point, gave his oath for the sale of his birthright, not willingly, but reluctantly.

That is how Jacob, using bread and pottage of lentils, deceived his brother. He seemed to have known Esau’s fruitless hunting and purposefully prepared a tasty meal to set before his brother. Nevertheless, he would feed his brother only in exchange of his brother’s birthright. His refusal to give food to a starving brother certainly leaves some reader wondering his “lack not only of brotherly love but even of common humanity” (Graves & Raphael, 1963, p. 194). To some degree, what Jacob prepared was not food, but temptation instead. And it was within Jacob’s knowledge that the temptation was irresistible; for if Esau refused the deal, he was likely to starve to death. In that way, Jacob succeeded in deceiving his elder brother into selling his birthright to him, while Esau ate up his meal, went away with a full belly, but lost his birthright forever.

### **Seizure of the Blessing**

After the sale and the purchase of the birthright, nothing was told of the twins rivaling with each other, until one day, when the old and blind Isaac was about to give his blessing. Isaac’s blessing was, indeed, Esau’s final opportunity to triumph over Jacob, because it is he who had his father’s favor and Isaac did plan to give Esau his death blessing. However, with Rebekah’s help, Jacob managed to succeed in deceiving his father and grabbed the blessing from his brother.

Although it was Rebekah who first made the proposal to fool Isaac into giving his death blessing to Jacob, it was actually Jacob who put forward the further suggestion:

And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man": "My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing". (Gen. 27: 11, 12)

It is here that Jacob's careful and cunning character emerged in its full scale. He did not immediately say whether he agreed to the proposal or not. At the first sight of his words, Bruce Vawter (1977) commented, "Jacob is worried only by the prospect that the plan may run foul and leave him with a frightful heritage in place of none at all" (p. 299). Reading between his lines, however, it is reasonable to say that here instead of uttering his worries, Jacob actually proposed a shrewder planning. What he said was meant to ask his mother how they could solve the problem that his brother was hairy, while he was smooth; and his blind father was very likely to distinguish them by touching. In addition, Jacob raised the problem that frightened him most: The deception of his father would bring him a curse instead of blessing. The difference between the two brothers' skins was at first not in the consideration of Rebekah, so what Jacob said was a real reminder. Now she would laboriously help to solve this problem. Jacob's fear of bringing a curse to him was too relieved by his mother, for she said onto him, "Upon me be thy curse" (Gen. 27: 13). At that moment, the conspiracy evolved to be flawless to Jacob, because whether it succeeded or not, it would do no harm to him at all. Then Rebekah cooked the tasty meat; "took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon her younger son" (Gen. 27: 15); and she "put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck" (Gen. 27: 16). Now with the animals' skins, Jacob felt as hairy as Esau. He went to his father.

"And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son?" (Gen. 27: 18). Since Isaac was blind, it was natural for him to ask which son came to him. Jacob apparently lied when he said "I am Esau thy firstborn" (Gen. 27: 19). Although Isaac was old and seemed to be mindless, he did realize the importance of the death blessing, so he uttered his suspicion, "How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son?" (Gen. 27: 20). Jacob explained that "Because the Lord thy God brought it to me" (Gen. 27: 20). That statement was probably partly true, for it might be with God's help that Rebekah overheard what Isaac had instructed Esau to do and then she could inform Jacob of that. Yet it was Jacob himself who settled down the remaining parts, namely, the disguise and the leeway prepared in case the plot was exposed.

The old and blind father proved incredulous. Just as what Jacob had foreseen, he asked Jacob to "Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not" (Gen. 27: 21). Jacob went near his father to be touched. That must have been the most critical moment for Jacob, for all he cared was neither fraternal nor parental love, but the privileged right of the firstborn. His preparation proved to be ample enough, for Jacob failed to recognize him: He ate the venison, drank the wine, and gave his death blessing to Jacob. Hence Jacob, who strived passionately after God's gift, now enjoyed all that Esau should have enjoyed by nature. The order was reversed, and the dignity of Esau the firstborn was transferred to Jacob who outwitted him.

One point worth mentioning is the reason why Rebekah named her younger son Jacob. She called him "Jacob, which is translated 'supplanting', as Esau, too, said after the blessing bestowed on him by his father, in his lament, 'Rightly was he named Jacob: now he has supplanted me a second time, taking my blessing after taking my birthright' (Chrysostom, 1992, p. 57). There is no denying that Esau did cherish his birthright and the blessing from his father. He came to his father with carefully prepared savory meat but was confronted with a question, "Who art you?" (Gen. 27: 32). At that moment, "Esau must have been thunderstruck" (Vawter, 1977, p. 305). However, he

managed to say, “I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau” (Gen. 27: 32). Despite the usually vigorous economy of biblical narrative, here Esau repeated his message twice, and added the word “firstborn” to emphasize, vividly conveying his pain and bitterness. Yet the blessed is blessed. Therefore, Esau “cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father” (Gen. 27: 34). However, nothing, including this loud and bitter cry can change the situation, under which Esau raised his murderous designs.

### **Jacob: The Deceived**

#### **Love with the Secondborn**

Again it was Rebekah who told Jacob Esau’s malicious designs and managed to persuade Isaac to send Jacob away to escape the possible disaster, for obviously Jacob could not rival with Esau physically. Therefore, Jacob was asked by his parents to leave for Pa’dan-a’ram to get a wife.

Jacob went away and it took pains for him to get to his destination. There from the shepherds, first he knew that Laban’s daughter, Rachel was coming; next, he knew that the heavy stone on the well’s mouth prevented them from watering their stocks. Then happened the following:

And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother’s brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother’s brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well’s mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother’s brother. (Gen. 29: 10)

In such a short paragraph, the phrase “Laban his mother’s brother” appears three times. The relationship between Jacob and Laban is definitely stressed and it becomes predictable that there will be some meaningful interactions between the two kinsmen. As Jacob had deceived his brother and father to seize the firstborn right, then what will Jacob’s uncle do unto him? In addition, the emphasis on Jacob’s rolling the massive stone from the well only at Rachel’s coming also arouses the doubt whether Jacob would help move the stone if Rachel, Laban’s daughter did not come.

After the wearisome watering process, “And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father’s brother, and that he was Rebekah’s son: and she ran and told her his father” (Gen. 29: 11, 12).

There is no clear explanation of why Jacob wept. Yet still much can be understood from it. Probably he was weeping, because he thought of how many attempts he had made to achieve the birthright and his father’s blessing, and in turn he had to leave his home as a result of his brother’s malicious design. There is another possibility, which says “he wept because many years before, Eliezer had brought rich gifts from Abraham to this very spot, when proposing Rebekah’s marriage with Isaac; but he, their son, now stood here destitute” (Graves & Raphael, 1963, p. 210). What can be sure is that Jacob was full of bitterness. He must have hoped that his uncle would give him a warm home and they together would make a moving family story. It was under such a circumstance that Rachel ran away to announce Jacob’s arrival to Laban, her father. That was the second time for Laban to make his appearance in Genesis. Before the examination of Laban’s response to Jacob’s coming, it is necessary to talk about what kind of person Laban was.

Savina J. Teubal (1984) believed that “Laban, the sisters’ father, is depicted in Genesis as a tyrannical and altogether unpleasant character where his daughters and son-in-law are concerned” (p. 46). It is true that Laban’s

glittering eyes are so unforgettable “when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister’s hands” (Gen. 24: 30). The golden earring and bracelets lighted the eyes of Laban, so he offered his solicitous hospitality: “And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the lord” (Gen. 24: 31). Alter (1981) thus put it: Laban’s “canny, grasping nature will be important when a generation later Jacob comes back to Aram-Naharim to find his bride at a nearby rural well” (p. 53).

With such background information about Laban, his reception of Jacob becomes meaningful: “And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob, his sister’s son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house” (Gen. 29: 13).

At Jacob’s wish, he enjoyed an extremely warm reception, as indicated by Laban’s rapid actions with a series of verbs: He ran to meet him, embraced him, kissed him, and brought him to his house. For a cunning man as Laban, such warm reception must have been purposeful. Yet the purpose is hard to decide, for this time there was neither golden earring nor bracelets, why did Laban again show his hospitality? It is very likely that the most important reason for Laban to do so is that Jacob was the son of Isaac and Rachel. As has been mentioned before, Isaac was rich and under the protection of God. Therefore, Laban promptly assumed that their son, Jacob, must be rich as well, as Graves and Raphael (1963) ironically suggested:

Rachel went home to announce Jacob’s arrival, and soon Laban hurried to the well, embraced him, and invited him to the house. Laban hoped for even more valuable gifts than those brought by Elizer and, though Jacob had come on foot without even a bundle, suspected that he kept gold in a belt beneath his garment. While they embraced, Laban searched but found no belt; then kissed him on his mouth to see whether it contains pearls. (p. 210)

There might be another reason involved. When Rachel ran back home to inform Laban of Jacob’s arrival, she would probably start by telling how they had met with each other, and above all, what Jacob had done for her and the shepherds. The fact that Jacob was able to roll aside singlehandedly the stone, which was the heavy burden for several sturdy men, suggested that Jacob was a man with superhuman strength. That meant he would make an excellent worker.

For those reasons, Laban welcomed his nephew warmly. With time going by, the first reason that he thought Jacob was rich would be soon refuted by facts. Yet the second reason that he believed Jacob would make an excellent worker proved exactly true after Jacob’s one month’s stay in Laban’s house. Therefore, Laban said to Jacob, “Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? Tell me, what shall thy wages be?” (Gen. 29: 15).

At that time, Jacob was very likely in love with Rachel, so he “was content simply to receive board and lodging and return [Laban] sincere thanks for it” (Chrysostom, 1992, p. 110). Thus Jacob willingly offered a high price—seven years of service—for the girl he loved. That must have pleased Laban a lot, for he agreed to that proposal without hesitation: “It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me” (Gen. 29: 19).

Then Jacob began his long years of service. His sincere love for Rachel reduced both the labor and the period of time, so those seven years “seemed onto him but a few days” (Gen. 29: 20). Here the *Bible* seems to be telling a moving love story. Yet Jacob, who refused to give food to a starving man, conspired with his mother to rob his brother, and deceived his blind father, was going to be deceived by his uncle. Harshness awaited him, for he had to undergo “his trials and tribulations in order to marry Rachel” (Mulcahy, 1993, p. 74).

### **Marriage with the Firstborn**

The climactic moment comes when the bride Rachel was replaced by Leah at the night of the wedding, and that is the moment when the deceiver was deceived. Jacob, the deceiver, deceived his father by putting some goatskins to make him hairy. When Isaac asked him who he was, he assumed the voice of his brother and lied that he was Esau. When he at last succeeded in cheating, Esau uttered his bitter cry.

Here Jacob, the deceiver, was deceived. He traded seven years of service for Rachel, but got Leah instead. The prevailing wedding customs of that time may explain how the deceit was carried out:

The deceit which Laban practices upon Jacob—and his own daughter Rachel would have been made possible by the prevailing social customs. The bride would have been veiled from her husband until she was brought to him in the darkness of the nuptial chamber. (Vawter, 1977, p. 321)

With the heavy veil over the bride's face and the darkness of the nuptial chamber, Jacob was virtually blind, just as Isaac. It is imaginable that at his very wedding night, although Jacob could not see the face of the bride, he must have talked something with Leah, whom he thought to be Rachel. It was very likely that he called Rachel's name when he and his bride were left alone in the room. Then it was almost sure that Leah gave him responses pretending she was Rachel, for otherwise Jacob would not "[go] in onto her" (Gen. 29: 23). It is also imaginable that in the morning, when Jacob realized the woman he had married was Leah instead of Rachel, he uttered the same bitter cry as Esau did.

Jacob had longed Rachel for so long a time. When suddenly he found that an unchangeable bond had formed between him and Leah, it was quite natural for him to wail aloud. He scolded Laban for his shameless plot: "What is this thou hast done to me? Did not I serve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?" (Gen. 29: 25). The way Laban answered him must have disturbed Jacob's heart a lot. "And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn" (Gen. 29: 26). The word "firstborn" again appeared before Jacob, for which he once had struggled hard for a long time. Jacob, the deceiver, "who had before flaunted and circumvented the rule of the firstborn is now caught by the same rule without any effective appeal from it" (Vawter, 1977, p. 320).

The *Bible* does not reveal clearly why Laban deceived Jacob and whether there was such a convention not to marry the younger daughter before the firstborn. Probably, there was no such convention at all, for as shrewd as Jacob, he would have asked about that custom before the marriage agreement with Laban was reached. Laban was probably shocked at the surprisingly high price Jacob offered for Rachel, and that was the time when he perceived Jacob' passion for his second daughter. As time went on, Laban gradually realized that he would accumulate wealth with the help of Jacob, who had superhuman strength and above all, protection from God. Therefore, Laban deliberately detained Rachel in order to seize possession of Jacob's another seven years' labor.

### **Conclusions**

Jacob the deceiver was punished by being deceived in almost the same manner. He used goats' skins to deceive his blind father, and in return, he was deceived by a heavy veil and a dark chamber which combined made him as blind as Isaac. He ruthlessly grabbed the firstborn right from his brother, and in return, the right of the firstborn daughter grabbed his first chance of marrying Rachel, the younger daughter. Again, Graves and Raphael

(1963) offered their wonderful imagination:

At the first light of dawn, Jacob reproached Leah angrily with: "Deceiver, daughter of a deceiver!" Leah smiled and said: "No teacher without his pupil: having heard from your lips how my blind uncle Isaac called you 'Esau', and how you replied in Esau's voice, I bore your lesson in mind". (p. 212)

Thus the *Bible* describes, other than Judah, another character Jacob, who is himself a deceiver while at last is deceived in the same manner. It also offers the vivid personalities of Jacob and Laban. It will leave us forever imagining Laban's glittering eyes on the golden earring and bracelets and how Jacob was dumbstruck when he heard from Laban the word "firstborn". Although the story between Jacob and Laban will go on, which tells that Jacob in the end gained a considerable amount of property, yet stopping here will not prevent it from being an implicating one. Also, the story of Jacob and Laban reinforces our recognition of the literary integrity of the *Bible*.

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## Subversions of Colonialism and Patriarchal Values in *By the Light of My Father's Smile*

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Alice Walker often writes about the difficult themes of racial injustices and the oppressing of women. In *By the Light of My Father's Smile* (1998), however, Walker mostly celebrates and revels in the happy subject of sex. In this paper, the novel *By the Light of My Father's Smile* will be deconstructed by post-colonial feminist criticism. The rebellion against patriarchal values should be combined with the rebellions against colonialism and imperialism. The novel, *By the Light of My Father's Smile*, is a manifesto of this post-colonial feminist criticism. It demands the liberation of women from all forms of oppression which would deny them access to the knowledge and power of the body and the erotic.

*Keywords:* post-colonial feminist criticism, patriarchal society, colonialism

### Introduction

The novel *By the Light of My Father's Smile* (1998) is the latest offering of Alice Walker, “one of the best American writers of today” (*The Washington Post*). The sexual theme of this novel has been greatly discussed: “Alice Walker sings a psalm to the pleasure of the flesh. *By the Light of My Father's Smile* addresses the less radical but nonetheless damaging ways in which our puritanical culture suppresses women's sexuality” (Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>). Karen Schechner thinks that:

Alice Walker, most widely recognized for her Pulitzer Prize winning novel *The Color Purple*, often writes about the difficult themes of racial injustices and the oppressing of women. In *By the Light of My Father's Smile*, however, Walker mostly celebrates and revels in the happy subject of sex.

In this paper, the novel *By the Light of My Father's Smile* will be deconstructed by post-colonial feminist criticism.

Alice Walker is a wonderful storyteller. In *By the Light of My Father's Smile*, the narrators and time shift continuously, but it is still attractive and of great lucidity. It opens significantly with a chapter entitled “Angels”, which is also the title of the first of three sections of this novel. The angel, we soon discover, called Senor Robinson is the father of Susannah and Magdalena. In life he is an anthropologist. In order to get funding for his anthropological research for an African/Mexican Indian tribe Mundo, he accepts the Christian missionary. Robinson takes up residence in Mexico with his wife Langely, also an anthropologist, and his two daughters.

In the remote village in Mexico, the father “sucked into the black cloth” gradually becomes intolerant and



puritanical. The two daughters, Susannah and Magdalena, grew up, possessing strikingly different characters. Susannah, who is strong notwithstanding the illusion of vulnerability, and Magdalena, also called Mad Dog, who is vulnerable notwithstanding the illusion of strength (Byrd, 1999). Then an incident which has profoundly affected each of them happened. One day, the father Robinson finds out 14-year-old Magdalena's affair with a young Mundo boy Manuelito. He beats her with his belt. Suannah is outside the bedroom door when the father is punishing Magdalena. After that, Suannah's and Magdalena's lives diverge sharply.

Magdalena falls into a downward spiral of self-destruction. She becomes sullen and obese. Later, she bumps into her Mundo lover Manuelito on an airplane. He now is an alcoholic, crippled, and impotent Vietnam vet. The short reunion redeems Magdalena though too late to stop her slide toward to suicide. Susannah is forced to take sides to blame her father. Susannah goes to Greece with her husband and encounters a fortune-telling dwarf, Irene. Then, Susannah leaves her husband and enters into a loving lesbian relationship. With the help of Irene, she eventually steps out the shadow.

It is in the spirit realm that the deeper reconciliation between father and daughters happens. *By the Light of My Father's Smile*—with its voluptuous sex scenes, spying angels, and a sage dwarf—reads, at times, like a gleeful and erotic fairy tale but with insight and pathos (Schechner, 1998).

### **The Violence of Patriarchal Society**

The novel, *By the Light of My Father's Smile*, recounts the interwoven experiences of several women to show the violence of patriarchal society. In patriarchy society, when a woman lost her charity willingly or unwillingly, she and her daughter would be considered as devil. Irene and Irene's mother are the typical examples. When Irene's mother was raped, her father and brother's chose not to believe this. She was beaten. No one ever again spoke to her. When Irene was born, her mother died. Even after death, her mother was ill-treated. They had bound her mother's hands and feet. She was all in black. They had placed a black shroud over her head. And she was buried in an isolated empty place. Irene was given at a very young age, as a servant, to the church. She was a dwarf and this is considered as God's punishment for her mother's sin. And men such as Susannah's husband Petros are indifferent to Irene's suffering and ignore her existence.

One of the main characters, Robinson also pays no attention to women's suffering. Once his wife, Langley visited the Nuer people, in the unmapped wilds of southwest Ethiopia and brings back photographs. Women there are forced to wear disks the size of dinner plates in their bottom lips in the presence of the men. He does not feel sad as his wife and daughters. And in his life, he makes his own daughters suffer a lot. Although he himself enjoys the pleasure in sex, he cruelly whipped his daughter Magdalena for exploring her affair with Manuelito. The whipping breaks Magdalena's spirit and heart, and this sadly leads to her suicidal death.

Robinson sucked into the black cloth, accepts all taboos, and orthodoxies of Christianity which would preclude a father's acknowledgment and affirmation of his daughter's sexuality. Magdalena "pierces her labia from which she dangles a crucifix—presumably to show that her sexuality and female sexuality in general, is mangled and demonized by the church" (Schechner, 1998). In the novel, Alice Walker gives subversions of the *Bible* to break the foundation of patriarchal values.

In the *Bible*, it is the woman Eve who committed the original sin. God himself made for Adam and Eve their beautiful garden-home. Adam and Eve lived happily there. They knew nothing about evil and wrong-doing. To

test their love for him, God planted in the garden a tree of knowledge of good and evil. God told them not to eat the fruit of this tree, otherwise, they will die. One day, Eve was tempted to have the fruit by a serpent and she gave some to Adam. At once they knew that they had disobeyed God. They were dispelled out of the garden-home and punished by God. In the novel, Alice Walker (1998) portrayed it as a lie that unravels the world:

There was a saying among the Mundo: It takes only one lie to unravel the world. ... They had never understood how woman could be considered evil, since they considered her the mother of corn. When hearing of her original sin of eating the forbidden fruit, they scratched their chins again and said, even more gravely, perhaps this is the one biggest lie that has unraveled your world. (p. 81)

And the almighty God was deconstructed as one of the dead:

When you used to tell us in church that God saw everything, we of course thought of him as one of the dead. The recently dead are known among my people as the ones who return to spy on the confusion they have left. (Walker, 1998, p. 149)

Most people are taught that St. Paul was all about charity and love. In Walker's eyes, he is the man who through the church caused extensive oppression of women. "The one who hated women so much he demanded their silence in the church and obedience to their husbands forever" (Walker, 1998, p. 177).

Besides, Walker sharply criticizes the hypocrisy of patriarchal values.

Do you know why there is this concept of "ladies first?" asked Irene. It is because, in the early days, if we were permitted to walk behind the man, we could run away. If we were kept in front, they could keep an eye on us. Later on, as we became more tame, they hated to think a woman they desired would only think of running away, and so they invented chivalry. (Walker, 1998, pp. 62-63)

After those subversions of patriarchal values, Walker advocates the subversion of Phallicentric sex order. Traditionally in the West, the pleasure of sex has been reduced to a male privilege as Susannah remarks in the novel, "Orgasmic freedom has been a male right, with any woman they've wanted to fuck, since the beginning of patriarchy" (Walker, 1998, p. 132). Women all over the world have been brainwashed to think sex is not meant to be pleasurable to them, only to men fucking them (Walker, 1998, p. 130). Thus, in the novel there are some depictions of the homosexuality as a subversion of Phallicentric sex. Pauline is the example of pursuing independent self with the help of sexual subjectivity.

Pauline was born in a poor family. Her father worked in a meatpacking plant. There are ten children in the family. Pauline acts as a mother to the younger children. Then she becomes interested in school. Her family, in order to keep her in house, tries to marry her off. Later, she encounters her lover, Gena who helps her grow up spiritually and gain her sexual subjectivity. As Pauline says:

This was a revelation. That I, lowly me, somehow had this precious thing. I knew instantly what it meant. It meant I was not forgotten by Creation; it meant that I was passionately, immeasurably loved. I started right away to plan my escape. (Walker, 1998, p. 133)

She becomes successful after running away.

As Alice Walker puts it in an interview:

Sexuality is the place where life has definitely fallen into the pit for women. The only way we'll ever change that is by affirming, celebrating, and acknowledging sexuality in our daily lives. ... So it's important for women to be alert to the spiritual growth and self-discovery they can attain by paying close attention to their sexuality. (White, 1999)

### **The Violence of Colonialism**

Not only the violence of patriarchal values is concerned, but the violence of colonialism is also a major theme. The colonists are self-centered. They regard themselves as superior, good, civilized, and rational, while the colonized are inferior, evil, savage, and sensual. In the novel, Alice Walker subverts all these notions.

According to Walker, colonists are jealous of the colonized native rather than feeling superior:

The near nakedness of the Kalimasans drove the sexually repressed Europeans to heights of cruelty as they vainly sought to deny their lust. So much beauty in a world indifferent to their ways, a green and gentle and supple world that was actually repelled by the mountainous thickness of the pale male body in its farty woolen underwear, black cloak, and ugly hat. (Walker, 1998, p. 8)

Walker ironically points out that outsiders would come to the village and say the Mundo were unsophisticated as children. "Just because they didn't lie" (Walker, 1998, p. 81). Actually, she describes the Mundo culture as a more superior one than Western culture.

In Mundo culture, men and women are totally equal, while in Western culture, women are always considered as sexual tool. In Mundo culture, "Pregnancy was considered thoroughly shared, so much so that during labor the father-to-be took his bed with labor pains and all his buddies gathered around him to offer support. Sometimes the father's cries drowned out the mother's" (Walker, 1998, p. 81). In Western culture, moon (woman) is inferior to sun (man). However, in Mundo culture, moon instead of sun is praised highly. "Anyone can see that the earth is grandchild of the moon and the moon is mother of the night sky" (Walker, 1998, p. 95).

Colonists regard themselves as mature, rational, and scientific thus superior. In Mundo's eyes, people in the Western world put too much emphasis on the mind. They could even say they have become mind only. In Mundo culture, the mad dog is considered wise, because it has lost its mind, which is one of the most difficult things in the world to do. Mundo people take herbs once a year to lose their minds all together, at once. Instead of thoughts, they have visions, and that is how they guide themselves. In contrast to the ignorance of flesh in western culture, sex becomes a part of nature to Mundo.

It is understood that spirituality resides in the groin, in the sexual organs. Not in the mind, and not in the heart. It is while fucking that you normally feel closer to God. The other time you fell close to the Creator, of course, is when you create something. (Walker, 1998, p. 111)

The colonists are actually gazed back by the colonized people. As Manuelito narrates:

We have studied our killers very hard, since the beginning. We believe we are destined, some remnant of us, to outlive them. Do you know that the Mundo have always sent spies out to live among the conquerors? That this was always our highest form of sacrifice? The Mundo have always needed someone to sit among the killers and to come back and tell us how little mercy to expect. Your culture is very tricky, though, Senor. Sometimes our people have not come back. Sometimes they have become who they watched. With the widespread use of television, we faced a crisis of major proportion. (Walker, 1998, pp. 113-114)

### **Conclusions**

The post-colonial feminist criticism which combines the gender and racial issues develops quickly after 1980. It becomes an important part of the post-colonial criticism, and has a great impact to Western white feminism. According to post-colonial feminist criticism, patriarchy is not the only factor for the oppression of

women. Factors such as country, nation, geography, imperialism, capitalistic transnational company, colonialism and colonized should also be included in gender issues. Colonialism and the political and economic oppression are on the basis of patriarchal values. The rebellion against patriarchal values should be combined with the rebellions against colonialism and imperialism. The novel *By the Light of My Father's Smile* is a manifesto of this post-colonial feminist criticism. It demands the liberation of women from all forms of oppression which would deny them access to the knowledge and power of the body and the erotic.

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