

# ETiC

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在华英语教学

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RESEARCH • REFLECTIONS • REVIEWS

A peer-reviewed journal for teaching professionals

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### WELCOME TO ISSUE 8 OF ENGLISH TEACHING IN CHINA (ETiC)!

Since the last issue, the most noticeable change on the ETiC staff is the departure of Co-Editor, Samantha Ng. Samantha had been involved with ETiC from the publication's earliest days, bringing her acuity and wit to the full array of roles: Peer Reviewer, Copy Editor, Section Editor, and, inevitably, Co-Editor. She is missed.

Stepping into the Co-Editor shoes is Michelle Ives. And she has hit the ground running! Working around a punishing 'normal job', as do all ETiC staffers, Michelle has already made great strides in ensuring that ETiC 9 will follow close on the heels of the current issue.

But first, back to ETiC 8. This issue sees a number of authors challenge received wisdom. In 'Are Chinese students autonomous?' Jacob Huckle confronts the lazy stereotype that Chinese high school students are not independent learners. Stephen Waller, in 'Why I should, and why I should not, expect my students to be good at critical thinking' identifies language difficulties as a major factor in Chinese students' perceived lack of critical thinking skills. Gareth Morris' article 'Employment Goals, L2 Motivation and Curriculum Design' recommends rethinking and updating how Chinese university students' L2 motivation is conceived.

In 'Large groups, language support, and mobile learning: How an undergraduate Business module is responding to recent global trends in higher education', Eoin Jordan, Tao Bai, and Gareth Morris share their experience of responding to potentially disruptive developments in higher education.

Two books are reviewed, both handbooks. Lee McCallum provides a short but invaluable orientation to the 755-page The Cambridge Handbook of Learner Corpus Research, while Stephen McAleer casts a critical eye over the equally gargantuan The Routledge Handbook of English for Academic Purposes focusing on those chapters most relevant to a Chinese context.

Regular ETiC features, 'Upcoming Conferences' by Seth Hartigan and 'Insites' by Jackie Hemingway and Sarah Butler appear once again, the latter this time highlighting writing and study skills resources.

In addition to these old favourites, we have introduced a new feature, 'Key Concepts'. This aims to be a short informative article providing an overview / introduction to a relevant field. The inaugural piece by Minghao (Rainie) Zhang lifts the lid on a concept which is superficially simple, but, on closer inspection, absorbingly complex: fossilization.

In the next issue, we hope to roll out another new feature, 'Reader's Response', where readers of the journal can respond to anything they have read in this, or older, issues. This could take several forms: challenging an argument expounded in the journal; showing how a teaching approach featured within these pages was applied successfully or otherwise; spotlighting resources which might help other readers investigate a topic further. Really, any constructive response you might have would be welcomed.

So, with that in mind, enjoy ETiC 8!

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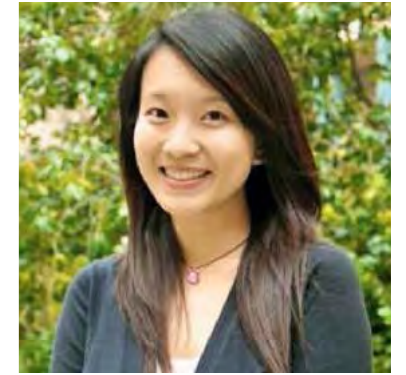
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# ARE CHINESE STUDENTS AUTONOMOUS?

Jacob Huckle

## ABSTRACT

It is often claimed that Chinese learners lack autonomy, or are even incapable of it, when it comes to learning English as a second language. This article argues that such claims could be misguided and are possibly rooted in stereotypical misconceptions of Chinese learners and narrow definitions of learner autonomy. By exploring research about Chinese students, and alternative understandings of learner autonomy, it will be argued that Chinese students are not only capable of autonomous learning, but they show evidence of autonomous learning behaviours. A reflection on the autonomous learning behaviours demonstrated by learners in a Chinese international high school is included in this discussion.

## INTRODUCTION

As a teacher in a Chinese high school, I often hear reports from colleagues of students who lack autonomy, who “can only do what they are told” and whose motivation is solely dependent on teacher direction. However, my experience is the opposite; it is instead one of students who in various ways demonstrate autonomy in their English language learning. This article will argue against the notion that Chinese students cannot be autonomous learners and suggest that this could be based on inaccurate stereotypes of Chinese learners and narrow definitions of learner autonomy.

## WHAT IS LEARNER AUTONOMY?

As with most concepts in education, the meaning of learner autonomy is contested and the definitions are various. One of the most influential definitions is from Holec (1981, p.3), who defined learner autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning...to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of his learning”. Dickinson (1987, p.11) similarly defined the autonomous learner as one who “is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his [or her] learning and the implementation of those decisions”. For Holec and Dickinson, autonomous learners are those who set their own learning objectives, decide themselves which resources to use and how to learn. This could be characterised as strong learner autonomy, in which the learner is seen as having sole or total responsibility for all learning decisions.

However, Little (1991, p.3) viewed these strong definitions as misunderstandings because they seem to conceive learner autonomy as “synonymous with self-instruction” and treat it as “a single, easily described behaviour” which requires the teacher to relinquish all initiative and control.

Other definitions, however, which could be characterised as weak learner autonomy, do not perceive autonomy so narrowly. Dam (1995, p.1), for instance, defined learner autonomy as “a readiness to take charge of one’s own learning in the service of one’s needs and purposes. This entails a capacity and willingness to act independently and in co-operation with others”. A similar understanding of autonomy is demonstrated in Littlewood’s (1999) concept of reactive autonomy, as opposed to proactive autonomy:

“The kind of autonomy which does not create its own directions but, once a direction has been initiated, enables learners to organize their resources autonomously in order to reach their goal. It is a form of autonomy that stimulates learners to learn vocabulary without being pushed, to do past examination papers on their own initiative, or to organize themselves into groups in order to cover the reading for an assignment.” (p.75)

This kind of autonomy is developed with the support of others, most likely teachers, rather than separate from it, and there is some evidence to suggest that developing this kind of autonomy positively impacts students’ learning. Reeve (2016, p.133), for example, investigated teaching that provides “autonomy support” in which the teacher purposefully works with students to develop their autonomy, rather than leaving them alone to learn, and found that students receiving such support were more motivated, more engaged and learned more effectively than those who did not receive this support. There is clearly a value to weaker forms of autonomy as well their stronger counterparts.

## LEARNER AUTONOMY AND CULTURAL APPROPRIATENESS

Much has been written of the cultural inappropriateness of various TESOL theories and approaches. Critics, for example, have highlighted an “implicit

Western bias” in teaching materials and instructors (Alsayed, 2003, p.24). Hu (2002; 2004) has similarly questioned the appropriateness of Communicative Language Teaching in a Chinese context. Thinkers frequently reject imports of theories developed in the West to non-Western contexts and seek what has variously been called “culturally sensitive pedagogy” (Gu, 2005, p.5) or “culturally appropriate pedagogy” (Nguyen et al., 2006). In these efforts to seek such approaches, several theorists have questioned the relevance of learner autonomy to non-Western (including Chinese) contexts.

Jones (1995, p.228), reflecting on creating a self-access centre in Cambodia, argued that learner autonomy is “laden with cultural values, especially those of the West”. Jones claimed that “to make autonomy an undiluted educational objective in a culture where it has no traditional place is to be guilty at least of cultural insensitivity” and supposed that Cambodian students “have no aptitude or desire for independence”, unlike in the United States where, he claimed, independence has “iconic status”. Ho and Crookall (1995) reported that various Chinese cultural traits are “an obstacle to the promotion of learner autonomy” (p.235), citing the importance of “face”, “relational hierarchy” and “respect for authority” (p.237). Li (2005, p.88) similarly claimed that Chinese students have “very limited language skills and little confidence...[and] struggle to understand the learning process”, so they find that “foreign EFL/ESL teachers’ pedagogy designed to give students autonomy becomes a pedagogical imposition, and an imposition of the teacher’s own cultural values and beliefs”. Rao (2001) suggested that previous studies made similar generalisations in stating that Asian students “are less autonomous” because they are “more dependent on authority figures, and more obedient and conforming to rules and ▶

deadlines”. Pierson (1996, p.52) even demonstrated how statements from authorities such as the Toronto Board of Education suggest that Chinese students “do not readily value the freedom that Canadian education promotes” because they are assumed “to want to be told what to do [and] show little initiative...[thus] have difficulty in dealing with autonomy”.

Such claims have contributed to a view that various supposed elements of Chinese culture make Chinese students unsuited to autonomous learning, or have created, in Wang’s (2011, p.408) words, “the saying that learner autonomy is not suitable to the Chinese context”. As Pierson (1996, p.52) stated, the “general picture” is of a Chinese learner “who is conditioned by a pattern of cultural forces that are not harmonious to learner autonomy”. However, as will be argued, there are numerous reasons for doubting the validity of such portrayals.

### DESCRIBING CULTURES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE “CHINESE LEARNER”

It is important to be wary of descriptions such as “Asian” or “Chinese” learners, for these categories presuppose a cultural homogeneity that is not actually present. Social anthropologists argue that “the idea that humanity can be parcelled up into a multitude of discrete cultural capsules...has been laid to rest” (Ingold, 1994, p.330). When it comes to culture, “what we do not find are neatly bounded and mutually exclusive bodies of thought and custom, perfectly shared by all who subscribe to them” (Ingold, 1994, p.330). As Geertz (1973, p.209) explained, the empirical truth of what a culture is like differs greatly from the oversimplified ideological descriptions that rely on caricature.

Though it might be expected that the internationally-minded domain of TESOL would be free from such oversimplified

descriptions of cultures, cultural stereotyping does occur, as Kumaravadivelu (2003, p.709) showed. Indeed, descriptions of Chinese students in TESOL literature are often stereotypical and overgeneralised. As will be shown, such descriptions often contradict reality.

Yuan and Qun (2013, p.21) referred to “a predominant misunderstanding of Chinese learners in the literature about international students”, citing discourses that construct “Chinese learners as a stereotyped group who are obedient to teachers’ authority, passive in class, lacking in critical thinking and adopt inadequate learning strategies”. An example of this is Flowerdew (1998, p.323), who stereotyped two groups of students in the first sentence of her article: “Why is it that when one poses a question to a group of Arab students, the whole class is clamouring to answer, while a question addressed to a class of Chinese learners may elicit no response, followed by a stony silence...?” In his review of literature, Grimshaw (2007, p.300) discovered similar stereotypes, which “include: relative lack of learner autonomy; lack of critical thinking; reticence in class; preference for a reproductive approach to learning; and reliance on a limited range of learning strategies, especially rote memorization”.

Despite the portrayals detailed above, a number of studies reveal a more fuzzy, nuanced and complex truth. Grimshaw’s (2007, p.304) ethnographic studies of students in Chinese universities found students who are not passive or powerless as the stereotype suggests, but students who are “able to take collaborative action to protect their interests”, and students who are not unmotivated and uninterested in learning, but consciously remain silent as a “form of protest” against bad teaching. Grimshaw (2007) reported observing a “considerable degree of autonomy” on campus, describing an everyday scene:

“Before the first class of the morning students find a space on campus and set about reciting their texts. Many of them are reciting from language course books. Some are listening to language tapes on personal stereos. A few are listening to Voice of America on transistor radios and mouthing phrases. Many students stand or sit around the lawn. They face inwards, towards the lawn, turning their backs on the path, where there is a constant stream of people passing by, hurrying to class. Shutting out the rest of the world, they concentrate on their texts. The students are spaced out evenly, with a distance of perhaps three metres between each person.” (p.306)

The scene described here seems to raise questions about the prevailing image of a passive, unmotivated student who can only learn under the direction of a teacher.

Furthermore, Gieve and Clark (2005, p.261) surveyed and interviewed Chinese and European undergraduate students studying an English language course at a British university and found that Chinese students appreciated the benefits of autonomy equally as much as European students, and similarly took advantage of autonomous learning opportunities.

In a number of studies, Littlewood (2000) found few differences between Chinese and European students’ attitudes towards various learning factors, and in some cases stereotypical assumptions were overturned. For instance, on average, the level of agreement with the statement “I see the teacher as somebody whose authority should not be questioned” was higher amongst Spanish students than Chinese students, and likewise agreement with the statement “knowledge is something that the teacher should pass on to me rather than something I should discover myself” was higher amongst German students than Chinese

(p.32).

Most of these studies, though, investigated Chinese learners studying as international students in British and European universities and, as such, some limitations must be acknowledged; students in such a situation might have been required by their academic context to become more autonomous.

Shi’s (2006) research provides insight into autonomous learning amongst a different group of Chinese learners: middle school students in China. His large-scale questionnaire of 300 middle school students similarly showed that Chinese students “show little difference from their Western counterparts by being active learners and preferring a more interactive relationship with their teachers” (p.122).

It is clear that the Chinese learner is not as simple a construct as the stereotypes suggest, and that the vision of Chinese students as passive, dependent and lacking in autonomy has been challenged by a number of studies as overly simplistic. It is necessary to avoid generalisation and seek “alternative and multiple explanations of this phenomenon, rather than to opt for simpler, if seductive, explanations” (Morrison, 2006, p.2)

There are several reasons why the simpler stereotypes of the Chinese learner are seductive. Said (1997, p.38), in his theory of Orientalism, argued that the West often portrays the Orient as a “series of crude ... caricatures”. He spoke mainly of Arab Muslims, but his points apply in China, as well. He demonstrated the tendency to conceptualise the Orient as the Other to the West. This projection of everything perceived as opposite to the West was an attempt to “control, contain and otherwise govern” the Orient (Said, 1978, p.48). This tendency, perhaps, influences stereotypical representations of Chinese students.

As was discussed above, in seeking to understand or control or contain students from China, Western students are portrayed as active, motivated, and independent, whereas Chinese learners are presented as passive, unmotivated and dependent. Ryan and Louis (2007) explored this in their essay False Dichotomy, in which they warned against conceptualising Western and Asian education as a series of binaries, such as deep and surface, or independent and dependent. They argued that these simplified descriptions are used uncritically and “do not take account of the complexities and diversities” (p.404).

### CHINESE STUDENTS’ AUTONOMY

It seems that the prevalence of such stereotypes has given rise to the view that Chinese students are less capable of autonomy. However, as is clear from a number of studies outlined above, Chinese students value learner autonomy and demonstrate their autonomy in a variety of ways.

Pearson (2004, p.4) studied Chinese students in New Zealand’s out-of-class language learning and found high levels of participation in various language learning activities which could be considered autonomous, such as watching television or radio news and independent library study. The Chinese students researched by Gan et al. (2004, p.234) reported participation in autonomous learning activities, such as choosing to read business English articles, listening to Voice of America (VOA) every evening, or attending English corners. Gao (2008, p.66) likewise reported on the success of an English corner in China, arguing that a “collectivist culture of learning can be used as a resource to facilitate the development of mutually supportive communities for learners’ autonomous and strategic learning”.

As was mentioned above, Grimshaw (2007, p.306) observed a number of learning activities

amongst his Chinese students that demonstrate a “considerable degree of autonomy”. Grimshaw took on the role of teacher-researcher, using a method that Lankshear and Knobel (2004, p.35) would term “observation” (“emphasizes collecting data in real life, everyday contexts...[using] fieldnotes...”). He observed autonomous learning such as students listening to VOA recordings and reciting texts outside of class. Inspired by Grimshaw’s approach, over the course of a month, I recorded in a notebook any examples of students’ learning that appeared to be autonomous. I focussed on one class of 26 students, in the first year of the high school, and during four weeks I informally recorded student behaviours inside and outside of the classroom that suggested autonomous learning. Such behaviour was evident through informal observation of students during regular interactions with students, such as e-mail communication from students, or short discussions during lessons. The students referred to are Chinese nationals aged between 14 and 16 years old, and are studying in a private, international high school programme in Jiangsu province that follows the British curriculum. All students are preparing to enter higher education overseas.

As these observations were made during regular interactions with students, rather than a focussed research study, they should be seen as only a snapshot of possible student behaviour. Given the possibility of observer bias and the fact that these observations do not constitute a systematic study, only limited conclusions can be drawn. As such, these observations should be viewed as a starting point that provides indications of autonomous behaviour that might warrant more formal investigation in the future.

The following is a list of learning activities observed that seem to demonstrate autonomy. It should be noted that all of the activities ▶

were done of the students' own free will, without any explicit instruction from their teachers (although the influence of parents or guardians is unclear).

- Emailing their English teacher to ask questions about the topics that had been taught earlier that day.
- Approaching their English teacher to ask how their current grades could be improved.
- Working together in informal study groups before and after the school day, helping each other with their English homework and reviewing English lessons.
- Using electronic dictionaries during lessons to find the meanings of unknown words, and annotating the texts with these definitions.
- Spending time outside of class learning lists of words required for IELTS and TOEFL examinations.
- Spending time reading the articles in their English textbooks before and after class.
- Requesting copies of past examination papers and completing these papers (some individually and some in groups, some asking for a teacher's feedback).
- Practising their listening skills by watching English TV shows and listening to BBC news clips online.
- Attending additional English classes (outside of school) on Saturdays, aimed at helping them prepare for IELTS and TOEFL examinations.
- Organising and running a session of their extra-curricular debating club in the absence of their supervising teacher.
- Asking the school librarian and English teachers for recommendations of books to help them improve their English, and borrowing graded readers from the library.

Such learning activities seem to challenge the stereotype of the passive and unmotivated Chinese English learner, but the extent to which they are actually evidence of autonomous learning is partly

dependent on our definition of the concept. If learner autonomy is only understood to require total or sole responsibility for language learning, the strong autonomy or proactive autonomy discussed above, these learners' behaviours are arguably not autonomous. They do not take total responsibility for their learning.

However, according to broader definitions of autonomy as reactive or weak, there seems to be evidence of autonomy amongst Chinese students. In deciding, for example, to attend additional Saturday classes and memorise lists of words for their TOEFL exams or asking their teacher for past examination papers, for example, they are showing a readiness to take charge of their learning in service of their needs. They are willing to act both independently and cooperatively in doing so.

It is important to note that proactive autonomy is not the only form of autonomy, nor is it necessarily more desirable than its weaker or more reactive forms. It may be that, as Littlewood (1999, p.71) noted, "we need to match the different aspects of autonomy with the characteristics and needs of learners in specific contexts". We should approach autonomy, much as Aoki and Smith (1996) did in a Japanese context, by seeking knowledge of students that is not based on stereotype, and then looking for autonomy appropriate for that context. In this sense, as scholars such as Nunan (1996) have recognised, autonomy is a relative concept, and, in the words of Farmer and Sweeney (1994, p.30), "the degree of autonomy may vary from one context to another".

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Given the relative nature of autonomy, teachers should seek to gain knowledge of the learners in their classrooms and their particular contexts, and consider autonomy in light of that. Whilst, as has been seen, caution should be exercised when dealing with generalisations, Littlewood's (1999,

pp.87-88) "five generalizations about autonomy in the East Asian context and how it might develop in the context of second or foreign language learning" provide a useful starting point for teachers seeking to identify autonomy that is appropriate for a Chinese context:

1. "Students will have a high level of reactive autonomy, both individually and in groups..."
2. Groups of students will develop high levels of both reactive and proactive autonomy...
3. Many students will have experienced few learning contexts which encourage them to exercise individual proactive autonomy...
4. East Asian students have the same capacity for autonomy as other learners...
5. The language classroom can provide a favourable environment for developing the capacity for autonomy."

It is clear that students are capable of autonomy, and will especially show evidence of reactive autonomy, both individually and in groups, and, given that they might have had fewer autonomous learning experiences, teachers of Chinese students have the opportunity to develop autonomy through their teaching and interactions with students. Teachers can seek to develop what Reeve (2016, p.133) termed "autonomy-supportive teaching", that is, teaching that aims to "provide students with learning activities, a classroom environment, and a student-teacher relationship that will support their daily autonomy". To do so, the following recommendations could be made:

- Teachers of Chinese students should recognize that students have the capacity for autonomy and should seek to utilise and promote that autonomy as they would students of other nationalities.
- Teachers could encourage students' reactive autonomy by supporting students' independent

learning, rather than expecting them to learn completely independently of the teacher. This could be done through teacher-supported target-setting, providing additional learning materials through self-access centres and reading lists, or encouraging students' use of reflective journal writing, for example.

- Teachers could develop teaching practices that encourage student autonomy both as individuals or in groups, for example, project-based learning, or giving students guidance while granting them limited choice and freedom in their learning activities.
- Teachers could develop structures to enable students' autonomous learning outside of the classroom, such as English corners, reading groups, or supervised self-study times.

## CONCLUSION

This article has argued that Chinese students can be autonomous. Evidence from quantitative and qualitative studies, including reflection on my observations of my own students, has suggested that some Chinese students are autonomous learners. This learner autonomy might go unnoticed by those who only hold stereotypical views of Chinese learners or narrow understandings of learner autonomy. Nevertheless, as has been shown, Chinese students are capable of being autonomous learners, and their teachers have the opportunity to develop this autonomy to benefit their learning. ○

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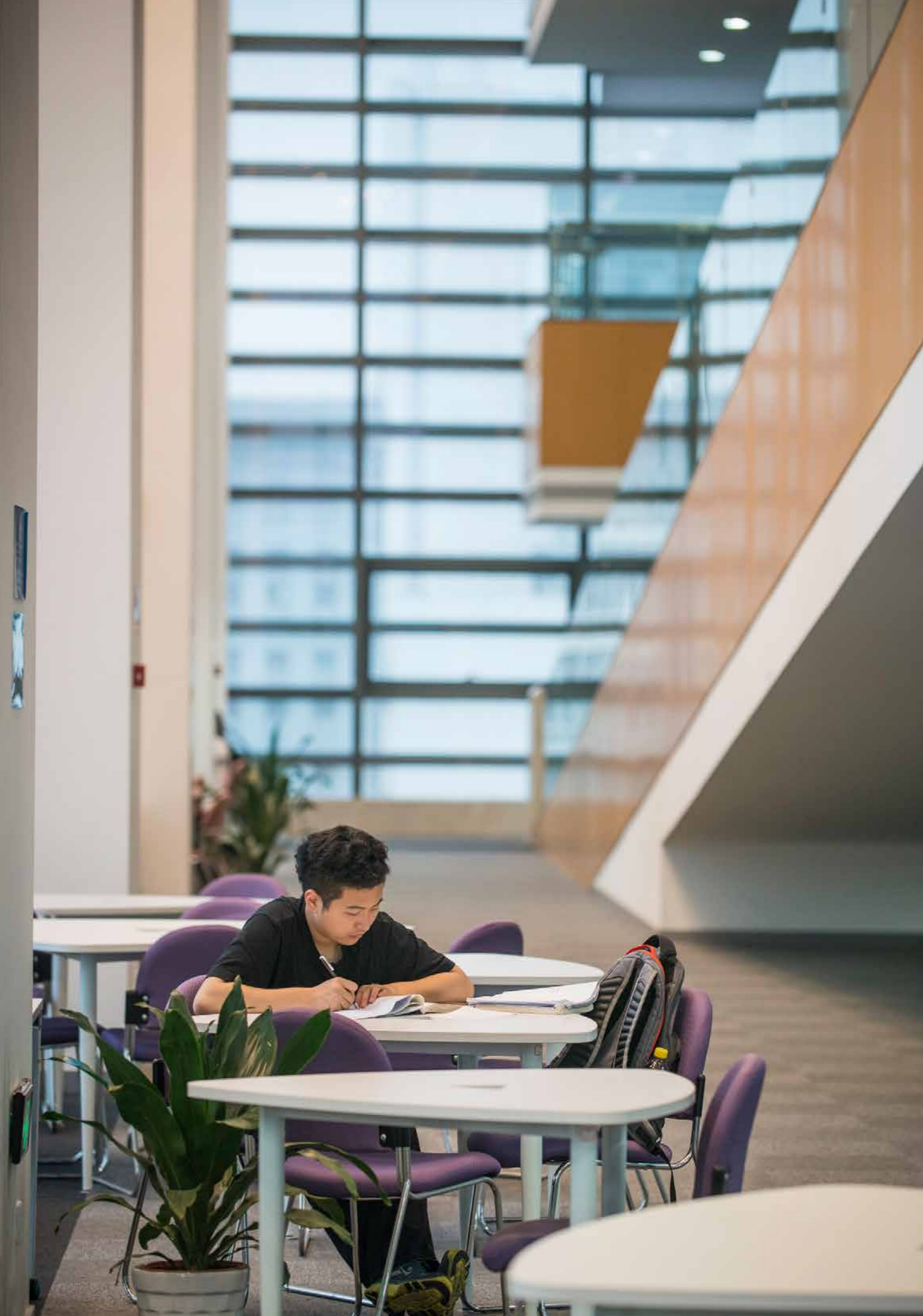
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# WHY I SHOULD, AND WHY I SHOULD NOT, EXPECT MY STUDENTS TO BE GOOD AT CRITICAL THINKING.

Stephen John Waller

## ABSTRACT

There has been a major increase in the number of Chinese students in Western English-medium Higher Education institutions. These students face many academic challenges, with one of the most significant being an expectation to demonstrate critical thinking skills. However, it has often been expressed that Chinese students fail to display this ability. Common reasons given for this include a lack of emphasis in their culture, a lack of emphasis in their previous learning experience, and difficulties in language. This article argues that Chinese students are as proficient at critical thinking as other students, and that the main reasons for the problems they encounter are language ability and the appropriate methods of expressing critical thinking in this environment.

## INTRODUCTION

Increasing numbers of Asian students are studying at Western English-medium Higher Education institutions (hereafter Western HEIs) (OECD, 2009, as cited in Lun, Fischer, & Ward, 2010), and this has included a rapid rise in the number of Mainland Chinese (hereafter Chinese) students. The term 'Western' is used here to mean countries in Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand, particularly the countries in these regions that have English as their first language. The term Western HEIs includes universities in these countries, as well as those set up in other countries by institutions from these countries, which use English as the main language of instruction. Chinese students at these institutions face many cultural and academic challenges due to different approaches to learning (Turner, 2006). One of the most significant challenges is an expectation to demonstrate a use of critical thinking (CT) skills. There has been a commonly held view amongst many academic staff at Western HEIs that Asian students, including Chinese, are not able to do this (e.g. Paton, 2005; Robertson, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000). There have been a variety of reasons given for this apparent lack of CT, including a lack of emphasis in their culture (Atkinson, 1997), a lack of emphasis in their previous learning experience (Tian & Low, 2011), and difficulties in language (Floyd, 2011).

As an academic tutor of Chinese students, I used to assume that many Chinese students lacked the ability to think critically, which affected their academic performance. However, these views have since been somewhat countered by the fact that I have taught Chinese students who have displayed good CT skills; furthermore, in previous research (Waller, 2010) I found that Chinese students can adapt to UK educational cultural norms and be successful, despite experiencing many difficulties at the beginning of their studies.

The aim of this article is to argue that there is evidence that Chinese students do have comparable CT skills to other students. However, there can be an unreasonable expectation placed on Chinese students to display these skills at the beginning of their courses (both bachelors and masters) because of language difficulties, and the expected methods of expressing CT, which they may not be familiar with because of their educational background. This can influence the aforementioned negative perception of Chinese students with regards to CT.

## WHAT IS CT?

There are many definitions of CT (e.g. Facione, 1990; Scriven & Paul, 1987). Mason (2007) summarises some well-known viewpoints, highlighting important aspects of CT, such as critical reasoning (e.g. the ability of evaluating reasons), certain dispositions (e.g. an inclination to ask questions and a moral attitude), and considerable knowledge of content. Floyd (2011, p. 291) asserts that the various definitions of CT, despite some disparities, have common themes of "reasoning, inferring, evaluating arguments and deduction". This observation can be combined with Ennis' (1998) summary of his own ideas to make a general definition of CT to be used in this article: "reasonable, reflective thinking" (Ennis, 1998, p. 17), using "reasoning, inferring, evaluation and deduction" (Floyd, 2011, p. 291), which "is focused on deciding what to believe or do" (Ennis, 1998, p. 17).

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CT IN WESTERN HEIS

CT is often identified as an important aspect of Western HEIs (e.g. Floyd, 2011). One reason for this is that students require such skills to help process the significant amounts of information they encounter (Lun et al., 2010). Furthermore, Nesi and Gardner (2006, as cited in Wingate, 2012) discovered in their study of writing assessment over twenty disciplines that a commonly regarded value of the essay is the ability to develop

an argument within curriculum contexts.

Perhaps another reason that Western universities embrace and attempt to develop this skill is that it is also recognised as being important in life. Moore (2004) states that the majority of contemporary educators believe that CT is not only crucial for good teaching, but also for being an engaged and active global citizen. According to Larson, Britt, and Kurby (2009), being able to assess arguments is an essential part of interacting socially and making decisions, as well as being important at university. Furthermore, Ten Dam and Volman (2004) state that CT is a crucial part of life in modern Western society, and, hence, is often encouraged in Western schools and promoted in Higher Education. This is because people are expected to make and understand their own choices, respect the decisions and viewpoints of others, discuss these viewpoints, and form, and make known, their own opinions (Ten Dam & Volman, 2004).

Although CT is highly valued in Western societies, this does not necessarily mean it is valued globally. However, Ennis (1996a, p. 1, as quoted in Davidson, 1998, p. 121) argues that if one does not apply CT to some extent then you are likely to "believe everything you read and hear", and it would seem highly unlikely that any person or culture does this to any great extent. This would explain why, as Egege and Kutieleh (2004) observe, Asian students have stated that after taking courses introducing them to CT, they have realised that they do this in their own country despite not knowing what it is or having any training in it.

## CHINESE STUDENTS IN WESTERN HEIS

As highlighted above, there has been widespread opinion that Chinese students lack CT skills, particularly in Western HEIs. However, there is little in the literature to explain why these opinions are so prevalent.



According to Lun et al. (2010) the argument that Asian learners think in a less critical way is principally based on interpretations by English-second-language (ESL) teaching professionals. Paton (2005) states that one reason given for stating that Asian and Chinese students lack CT skills is that they often fail to participate in discussions and an exchange of ideas. In Robertson et al.'s (2000) study, academic staff highlighted in open-ended questionnaires other problems that East Asian students sometimes have. These included having difficulty with the notion of no single correct answer, avoiding giving personal opinions, not questioning information in books or from lecturers, and using inappropriate discourse patterns in writing and speaking. Durkin (2008) also discusses the idea that East Asian students tend to avoid giving personal opinions as well as the difficulty they often experience with a Western discussion style that encourages the challenging of opinions. These are also common problems among many of my own first year Chinese university students. However, it is possible that these difficulties are not due to a lack of CT skills, and can be explained by other reasons. These reasons will be discussed in the following three sections.

### METHODS OF REASONING

A possible cultural reason for Chinese students' apparent lack of CT skills is that they have a different method of reasoning to Western students. Egege and Kutieleh (2004, p.79) highlight differences in thinking between the Western philosophic tradition and the Chinese tradition. Norenzayan, Smith, Kim, and Nisbett (2002) expand on this notion of different methods of reasoning. Based on their review of the literature, they posit that one reasoning system is analytical, based on following formal logical rules, while the other is more intuitive and experienced based. They suggest that although people in different cultures are likely to use both cognitive strategies, analytical modes of thought are

used more by Western cultural groups, whereas East Asian groups tend to prefer intuitive based reasoning. The results of their own investigation, which involved Chinese, Korean and American university students being tested on categorisation, conceptual structure, and deductive reasoning, support these notions of preferred reasoning styles. Crucially, however, an extensive review of research into differences in culture and cognitive processes used found no evidence of a lack of CT skills in Chinese students (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001, as cited in Floyd, 2011). In fact, empirical research supports the view that Chinese students openly display elements of CT. For example, Chiu (2014) discusses how students from Beijing used CT skills (evaluation, analysis, deduction, inference, and reasoning) during asynchronous English language discussions with Taiwanese students on the Internet. In part of their own empirical study, Lun et al. (2010), taking into account assessed English language and general intellectual capabilities, used the Watson–Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (WGCTA) Short Form to measure the CT skills of their participants who were New Zealand European (New Zealanders of European descent), and Asian students. The WGCTA tests “inference, recognition of assumptions, deduction (whether conclusions necessarily follow), interpretation (whether conclusions logically follow) and evaluation of arguments” (Floyd, 2011, p. 291). Lun et al. (2010) discovered that differing styles of reasoning did not appear to significantly affect the CT performance of Asian or New Zealand European students, and the differences in CT between these two groups were more related to language issues (in other words, using English as a second language) than cultural ones.

### SECOND LANGUAGE USE

Research shows that difficulty with a second language can affect thinking processes and the

capability to cope with challenging tasks. Campbell, Davis, and Adams (2007) use the concept of Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) (see Paas, Renkl, & Sweller, 2003; Paas, Tuovinen, Tabbers, & Van Gerven, 2003) to explain how students performing mathematical tasks in a second language sometimes experience cognitive overload, due to attempting to comprehend unfamiliar language, which affects their ability to complete the tasks. This theory states that there is a limited working memory where “all conscious cognitive processing occurs” (Paas, Renkl, et al., 2003, p. 2). If the combined amount of information is greater than the working memory capacity, this results in cognitive overload (Campbell, Davis, & Adams, 2007), and the processing of information is impeded. It would seem likely that CT tasks in a second language are similarly affected. Kirby, Woodhouse, and Ma (1996) suggest that learners lacking second language expertise have less ability to use higher level understanding processes, ones that are likely to be easier to use for those with a higher proficiency, and these problems are compounded in an academic (specialist) environment. This research, as well as that of Koda (2005, as cited in Floyd, 2011), suggests that using a second language can negatively influence many complex cognitive abilities. Hence, research which finds poor performance by non-native language users should acknowledge this cognitive deficiency caused by using a second language (Cook, 1993, as cited in Floyd, 2011). Floyd's own study with a group of 55 Chinese learners, also used the WGCTA Short Form. She used a split form of the WGCTA in Chinese and English with one group taking the Chinese half first and the other taking the English part first. Her findings confirm that performing a CT task in a non-native language is more difficult than performing the same task in a native language.

Therefore, problems with language can affect the ability to use CT. Students are less likely to be able

to express their CT skills in class if they do not have the necessary language skills and confidence in their language use (Lun et al., 2010). A certain amount of language proficiency is required for CT skills (e.g. verbal reasoning and argument) (Lun et al., 2010) in order to understand the ideas of others as well as express one's own ideas. For example, the misuse of vocabulary and grammar can cause a written text to lack coherence (Waller, 2015), and can seriously affect the logic of an argument. This is a problem I have often noticed with my students, and similar difficulties can also occur with spoken language.

### EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND THE EXPRESSION OF CT

Another factor which could possibly affect some Chinese students' ability to demonstrate CT in Western HEIs is their educational upbringing. Durkin (2008) considers how many East Asian students, including Chinese, find the Western seminar debating style (i.e. challenging and critiquing the viewpoints of other students and lecturers) to be confusing and intimidating. Lessons in Chinese classrooms are usually dominated by book-based, teacher-centred interaction, and student achievement is measured by standardised examinations (Liu et al., 2015). Therefore, as Wu (2015, p. 758) explains, because answers have always been provided by “authority figures”, it may seem extremely unusual to question tutors or books in class and openly expressing their own viewpoint may seem worthless. Wu adds that some students may simply worry about giving an incorrect answer. In terms of demonstrating CT in academic writing, Jin and Cortazzi (2006) explain that Chinese learners may have little experience of using the discourse patterns accepted in Western HEIs, and are usually unaware of academic conventions for writing assessments, such as expected critical responses and styles used for giving opinions. However, it should be acknowledged, that

the difficulties mentioned in this paragraph are not only experienced by Chinese and East Asian students, as I myself can testify. In addition, it would appear that many Western students have difficulty with some aspects of CT, as explained in the next section.

### CT IN WESTERN STUDENTS

When examining the literature on the CT skills of Western students, it is apparent that Western students can also have difficulties with certain aspects of CT. As Paton (2005) explains, some students of all nationalities (including native speaker students) display a lack of CT skills at the beginning of their tertiary studies. Furthermore, there have been various studies that show native English speakers lack CT skills. Larson, Britt and Larson (2004) examined 76 American university students and discovered that they only had 30 percent accuracy at identifying the important parts of an argument; furthermore, after a tutorial, students were still unable to successfully rebut arguments. Another study in the U.S., by Larson et al. (2009), which tested 57 native English-speaking students, found that without a tutorial on argumentation, these students were often unable to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable arguments. Finally, a study by Wingate (2012) into undergraduate students starting courses at a UK university showed that many had incomplete ideas about the nature of written arguments and had difficulties with the development of arguments in essays. According to Wingate, many of the problems encountered were due to lacking knowledge about what argumentative essays require.

Durkin (2008, p. 18) discusses research which has examined how Western students undergo a number of changes in their learning development after entering university, such as the transformation from believing that knowledge is absolute and that simply reproducing information in assignments is acceptable, to being

able to recognise the possibility of a variety of opinions and making conclusions based on evidence. This process is not dissimilar to that which Chinese students often need to follow in order to adapt to the same tertiary education environment. Furthermore, Court (2002, as cited in Durkin, 2008, p. 18) has discovered that some British students confront comparable challenges to those of Chinese students in the development of the CT skills necessary for tertiary education. Hence, it is clear that native English-speaking students sometimes have difficulties with elements of CT, and that these problems are not exclusively encountered by Chinese (or Asian) students. Indeed, Pennington (2003, as cited in Paton, 2005) argues that many first year students, of all backgrounds, lack some higher-level CT skills, such as reflective thinking, and therefore need training in these areas.

### THE CULTURAL 'OTHERISATION' OF CHINESE STUDENTS

It would appear that there is a danger of cultural stereotyping when it comes to Chinese learners. According to Floyd (2011), when a Chinese student shows deficiencies in CT, it may be regarded as a cultural problem, whereas the same problems in a Western student are often seen as individual. She adds that studies about CT deficiencies in Western populations are often ignored when judging Asian ones. These actions may be influenced by what Grimshaw (2007, p. 299) calls a depiction of Chinese learners as a “reduced Other”. He asserts that this occurs in much of the literature about these learners. The contrast of Chinese students with Western ones, and an inclination to view the former as a homogeneous group influenced by Confucian traditions, has caused a perception of a supposed Chinese learning culture which is completely different, or even inferior, to those from the West (Grimshaw, 2007; Shi, 2006). Clark and Gieve (2006, p. 54) name this the Chinese learners ▶

“deficit model”, with key features being silence in class, passivity, a dependence on rote memorisation strategies, and a deficiency in CT skills. Some authors have actually claimed thinking critically is incompatible with specific principles underlying Chinese cultural beliefs (e.g. Atkinson, 1997; Fox, 1994). However, Li and Wegerif (2014, p. 31) explain that the traditional Chinese approach to teaching thinking “is collective and social but relatively quiet and not always easily visible in classrooms”; however, it can still lead to deep understanding. As explained above, problems that Chinese students have using CT are much more likely to be caused by language problems and educational upbringing, and not culture in general. Indeed, Kumaravadivelu (2008) argues that there is no empirical evidence for a causal link between the cultural practices and beliefs of any Asian students and their behaviour in classrooms.

Other authors have even challenged the actual concept of a specific Chinese learning culture. Grimshaw (2007), Littlewood (2003), Shi (2006), and Stephens (1997) all provide evidence of Chinese students not seeming to fit the stereotypical notion of Chinese learners by having a variety of different learning preferences and approaches, and sometimes demonstrating similar learning characteristics to students from other nations. These include valuing aspects of CT, such as questioning teachers (e.g. Stephens, 1997) and books (Shi, 2006), as well as valuing the giving of opinions (e.g. Littlewood, 2003). Furthermore, not only does research support the viewpoint that Chinese students display features of CT, as highlighted above, but it also indicates that Chinese students can adapt to Western educational settings (e.g. Cross & Hitchcock, 2007), which includes the use of CT.

## CONCLUSION

In this article I have investigated varying contested notions regarding CT and Chinese

students. I have discussed what CT is, explaining that there are common ideas across these different definitions, and considered the importance of CT. In addition, I have demonstrated that there is evidence to suggest that Chinese students can be as proficient in CT skills as students of other backgrounds, including Western students. The reasons for Chinese students not displaying CT skills in Western HEIs, particularly when they commence courses, are more likely related to problems with language, which has been shown to affect CT. In addition, difficulties emerge for many Chinese learners with the ways they are often expected to express CT.

Although these methods of expression may conflict with previous learning experience, this does not mean these students are incapable of critical thinking or indeed adapting to these new approaches. Despite the difficulties that previous learning approaches, and a lack of experience of the new learning approaches, may cause at Western HEIs, many Chinese students can adapt over time. Academic staff need to remember that some Chinese students, and students of other backgrounds, need clear guidelines about what is expected in terms of CT and other aspects which are affected by CT, such as discussion and essay structure. Lecturers and tutors also need to be aware of the learning background of Chinese students. Moreover, they need to understand the difficulties of thinking critically in a second language.

Additionally, it has been shown above that there is a danger of cultural stereotyping when it comes to Chinese learners. Although it is beneficial to be aware of the similar problems and features that Chinese learners share, it is also important to be aware of individual characteristics of these learners, just as for Western students. In fact, just as some Western students have difficulties with CT, it should not be a great surprise that some

Chinese students also have these problems.

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# EMPLOYMENT GOALS, L2 MOTIVATION AND CURRICULUM DESIGN

Gareth Morris

## ABSTRACT

This research focuses on Chinese undergraduate English majors' employment goals and language learning motivation. It considers: whether they know what they would like to do after graduation; how prominent employment goals are as an L2 motivational drive compared to alternative motivational forces; to what extent the institution or subject sub-discipline have an effect on any evidenced prominence; and what students believe can be done, in light of their employment goals, to improve their courses. A questionnaire survey was administered to collect the data. Respondents were all students at two institutions within the same city. These institutions were a Chinese university and a Chinese college. In total, 637 participants took part. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized to analyze the data. The results suggest that: for the Chinese university and its affiliated college, the students in question do have relatively clear employment goals; as a motivational force, employment goals are the second most prominent drive and this is the case irrespective of institution or sub-discipline; students would like to see a number of changes in order to improve current course offerings.

## INTRODUCTION

English majors today enter an increasingly competitive employment market. In order to increase the likelihood of gaining preferential employment upon graduation it is not only important that students achieve good academic scores, but that they are also able to demonstrate possession of professionally desirable skills. To enhance the possibility of achieving either of these outcomes typically necessitates learners to be motivated to work hard throughout their time at university, and to possess reasonably clear goals in order to channel their efforts appropriately (Locke & Latham, 1994). This is especially important in cases where the learners' academic courses may not adequately prepare them for future employment realities. The problem, however, is that many Chinese undergraduates often have not considered their future career direction upon entering university (Ding, 2004; Partridge & Keng, 2008). This is because their parents have often decided upon their educational path (Chao, 1994). With many learners, therefore, unaccustomed to assuming personal responsibility (Mills, 2011), and others seeming to lack the motivation which will be required to succeed, especially in light of how many English courses fail to develop the skills learners require, securing initial employment can be a challenge (Morris, 2014).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

An essential feature in helping to facilitate second language (L2) learning, L2 motivation is regarded as the force behind why a language is learnt, for how long, and with what amount of effort (Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner, 2001). Early field developments have included: Gardner and Lambert's (1959, 1972) Socio-Educational Model, which highlighted the importance of the socio-cultural environment; Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self Determination Theory, which brought to the fore the notion of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; and Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998)

Process Model, which considered the importance of the temporal nature of motivation. Within the Chinese context, Gao, Zhao, Cheng and Zhou (2004), in their seminal large scale national research on Chinese undergraduates' language learning motivation, identified seven prominent motives for the student population. Spanning 30 universities and with information collected from 2278 students, the motivational drives or forces identified by the research were: an intrinsic interest in the language, immediate achievement, the learning environment, the ability for the language to act as an information medium, individual or personal development, social responsibility, and going abroad. It was also identified that an intrinsic interest in the language, followed by social responsibility, were the two most prominent motives at the time of publication in 2004. However, given socio-cultural developments, such as an increasing number of graduates who are also more language proficient, and a more competitive job market, alongside educational reforms, it is unlikely that such a rank order will remain in place today, as localised research studies by Gao and Xu (2011) and Morris (2014) have suggested.

## ENQUIRY DESIGN

This research set out to determine whether:

1. Chinese undergraduate English majors knew what they want to do after university;
2. How prominent employment goals were as an L2 motivational drive for the students in question relative to alternative motivational forces;
3. To what extent the institutional environment and subject sub-discipline impacted upon the prominence of employment goals as an L2 motivational drive;
4. In light of their employment goals, what Chinese undergraduate English majors believed should be done to improve their courses.

The participants in this study were the English major students attending a university and its affiliated college in the city of Suzhou. In all, 637 students participated in the research. This was out of 749 possible participants, a figure which includes every undergraduate English major student. It also represents a response rate of 85%. These institutions were selected as it was believed that the students in question were likely to be representative of a wider target population. Additional justification resulted from the access the researcher had to both sites. Of note and interest is the fact that the university and college contexts were quite different in terms of, amongst other things, the location, design and resource availability. The programmes of study also varied quite considerably. To gather the sought-after data a modified questionnaire of the one Gao et al. (2004) had employed was adopted. Modifications included removing questions that considered past as opposed to present motives and also adding some open-ended questions at the end of the survey (see Appendix). One of the most important modifications, however, was that this survey had an additional motivational construct added, namely that of employment goals. The fact that the updated tool reported a respectable Cronbach Alpha figure of 0.77 for the motivational component of the survey lent additional credence to the amendments. Instrument administration was conducted by either the researcher, class teacher, or both, with variation the result of practical time constraints. In all instances, however, the research's purpose, scope and ethical commitments were communicated to participants. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used when interpreting the data and this was conducted on SPSS 19.0.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

**Research Question 1: Do Chinese undergraduate English majors know what they want to do after university? ▶**

To assess whether Chinese undergraduate English majors know what they want to do after university, the responses to an open-ended question were coded. Based on the findings presented in Figure 1 it appears that a relatively high percentage of the students do have a clear idea about what they would like to do after university. The English and Education majors harbour the clearest notions in this respect. By contrast, the English and Translation majors, despite exhibiting signs as a group of wishing to attain employment in a profession naturally aligned to their major, were more divided in this respect. Like the General English majors at both institutions, almost a third of respondents were unsure, or

simply had no idea what they would like to do after graduation. That said, and teaching aspirations aside, irrespective of context the General English majors tended to give fairly uniform responses.

**Research Question 2: How prominent are employment goals as an L2 motivational drive for the students in question relative to alternative motivational forces?**

Having determined that the students in question did for the most part harbour employment designs, the mean average of each motivational construct alongside its associated standard deviation was calculated, to assess the relative prominence of generic employment goals as

a motivational force relative to alternative motivational forces. The results are presented in Figure 2 and suggest that employment goals are a strong motivational driving force for Chinese undergraduate English majors. Indeed, they rank second overall, irrespective of the institution or subject sub-discipline. The accompanying standard deviations, which are reasonably low, additionally suggest that a relatively high level of agreement exists regarding the responses being offered, which increases the likelihood that the statistics are indicative of the majority of students' responses. Interestingly, the findings also mirror quite closely those reported by Gao and Xu (2011) in Beijing who, adopting

the same research instrument as Gao et al. (2004) had employed, found that the most prominent motives in their localised study were individual development, information medium, intrinsic interest, followed then by social responsibility and the additional three motives.

**Research Question 3: To what extent do the institutional environment and subject sub-discipline impact upon the prominence of employment goals as an L2 motivational drive?**

To evaluate the impact that the institutional environment and subject sub-discipline had upon the prominence of employment goals as an L2 motivational drive for Chinese undergraduate English majors, a MANOVA was conducted. The dependent variables were the eight motivational constructs, and the independent variable the (four) institutional / subject sub-disciplines. The data indicated that the relative prominence of the four most prominent motives

(as well as the least influential) would not appear to be affected by the institution / subject sub-discipline. The implication might, therefore, be that certain learning and teaching considerations, such as the environment or programme of study, may not be as motivationally influential as they are sometimes assumed to be.

Research Question 4: In light of their employment goals, what do Chinese undergraduate English majors believe should be done to improve their courses?

Before discussion turns to what students would like to see improved about their courses, it is first worth noting that 61% of English and Education majors, 76% of English and Translation majors, 78% of university General English majors, and 59% of General English majors at the college felt that their courses helped to some extent to prepare them for their desired future employment. In addition, a further 36% of English and Education majors, 18% of

English and Translation majors, 19% of university General English majors, and 26% of college General English majors believed that their courses helped to prepare them (see Appendix, Question 39). However, this did not stop almost all, 85% of participants, offering suggestions for further ways improvements could be made. These suggestions to what was an open-ended question were coded based on the common themes which emerged and selected results can be seen in Figure 3. Indeed, the highest percentage irrespective of the sub-discipline, 25% in total, stated that they would like to see more courses being offered with greater module choice flexibility. More interactive classes were also desired, seemingly suggesting that pedagogy ought to become more student-centred. The other major finding was that 13% of students felt that they would like to receive additional employment skills training and careers advice so that they were better prepared for life post-graduation. ▶

EMPLOYMENT GOAL	UNIVERSITY EE	UNIVERSITY ET	UNIVERSITY GE	COLLEGE GE	ALL
International Company Employee	3 (2%)	15 (19%)	22 (12%)	24 (13%)	69 (11%)
(Any) Company Employee	4 (3%)	3 (4%)	17 (10%)	18 (8%)	42 (7%)
Teacher	105 (72%)	6 (7%)	21 (12%)	58 (25%)	42 (7%)
Translator	2 (1%)	23 (28%)	31 (18%)	30 (13%)	86 (13%)
Bank Employee (Inc. Accountant)	2 (1%)	1 (1%)	6 (3%)	2 (1%)	11 (2%)
Media Work (Inc. Editorials & Journalism)	1 (1%)	5 (6%)	11 (6%)	3 (1%)	20 (3%)
Government Employee	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	2 (1%)	4 (1%)
Tourism Work (Guide & Management)	0	1 (1%)	3 (2%)	7 (3%)	11 (2%)
Self-Employed	1 (1%)	0	3 (2%)	1	9 (1%)
Lawyer	0	0	2 (1%)	0	3
Postgraduate Studies	0	1 (1%)	4 (2%)	1	5 (1%)
Alternative (Writer, Artist, Psychiatrist)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	1 (1%)	5 (1%)
Unsure (between possibilities)	19 (13%)	14 (17%)	39 (22%)	33 (14%)	105 (16%)
No Idea	6 (4%)	12 (14%)	16 (9%)	43 (19%)	77 (12%)
	N = 145	N = 83	N = 177	N = 232	N = 637

▲ Table 1. Students' employment goals  
Key: EE = English and Education; ET = English and Translation; GE = General English  
Note: Data derived from responses to Question 38 (See Appendix)

MOTIVE	UNIVERSITY EE	UNIVERSITY ET	UNIVERSITY GE	COLLEGE GE	ALL
Individual Development - Mean (Std. Dev)	4.09 (0.78)	3.93 (0.81)	4.10 (0.86)	4.00 (0.87)	4.03 (0.83)
Employment Goals - Mean (Std. Dev)	3.94 (0.84)	3.75 (0.89)	3.85 (0.82)	3.87 (0.94)	3.85 (0.87)
Information Medium - Mean (Std. Dev)	3.57 (0.87)	3.68 (0.85)	3.65 (0.92)	3.60 (0.93)	3.63 (0.89)
Intrinsic Interest - Mean (Std. Dev)	3.43 (0.97)	3.49 (0.96)	3.47 (0.99)	3.46 (0.99)	3.46 (0.98)
Social Responsibility - Mean (Std. Dev)	2.95 (0.97)	2.98 (1.07)	3.06 (1.03)	3.20 (1.05)	3.05 (1.03)
Going Abroad - Mean (Std. Dev)	2.94 (1.12)	3.07 (1.05)	2.96 (1.13)	3.18 (1.09)	3.04 (1.10)
Immediate Achievement - Mean (Std. Dev)	2.95 (1.13)	2.70 (1.12)	2.81 (1.17)	3.10 (1.17)	2.89 (1.15)
Learning Situation - Mean (Std. Dev)	2.81 (1.06)	2.70 (1.12)	2.66 (1.11)	2.85 (1.13)	2.76 (1.11)
Total	3.34 (0.97)	3.29 (0.98)	3.32 (1.00)	3.40 (1.02)	3.34 (1.00)
	N = 145	N = 83	N = 177	N = 232	N = 637

▲ Table 2. Motivational prominence  
Key: EE = English and Education; ET = English and Translation; GE = General English  
Note: Data derived from responses to Items 1 to 32 (See Appendix). Scoring: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

## CONCLUSION

This research has found that Chinese undergraduate English majors harbour specific (if underdeveloped) employment designs, and that generic employment goals are a prominent motivational force. Indeed, out of the four motivational forces which were found to drive the students in their academic endeavours, employment goals ranked second. In addition, the students also had clear notions of how they would like to see their courses enhanced. On a final note, this research has also highlighted that, with the motives of Chinese undergraduate English majors having evolved

since Gao et al. (2004) conducted their seminal fieldwork more than a decade ago, the research instrument they devised, namely the questionnaire survey, appears to require updating as the information on which it was derived is arguably now dated. ○

PRINCIPAL PREFERRED CHANGE	UNIVERSITY EE	UNIVERSITY ET	UNIVERSITY GE	COLLEGE GE	ALL
None	3 (2%)	5 (6%)	6 (3.5%)	4 (2%)	18 (3%)
No Comment	9 (6%)	5 (6%)	8 (5%)	30 (13%)	52 (8%)
Unsure	3 (2%)	6 (7%)	6 (3.5%)	11 (5%)	26 (4%)
More Course Options / Flexibility	33 (23%)	23 (28%)	57 (32%)	44 (19%)	157 (25%)
More Employment Skills and Advice	18 (12%)	18 (22%)	29 (16%)	20 (9%)	85 (13%)
Additional Work Experience	25 (17%)	2 (2%)	4 (2%)	12 (5%)	43 (7%)
Improve Study Environment / Facilities	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	1	4 (1%)
More Foreign Teachers	3 (2%)	5 (6%)	7 (4%)	12 (5%)	27 (4%)
Contextualized Learning (Less Abstract)	11 (8%)	4 (5%)	16 (9%)	4 (2%)	35 (5%)
Update Pedagogy (Content / Material)	6 (4%)	2 (2%)	16 (9%)	26 (11%)	50 (8%)
More Interactive Classes	27 (19%)	3 (4%)	23 (13%)	61 (26%)	114 (18%)
More Extra Curricular Activities	6 (4%)	9 (11%)	4 (2%)	7 (3%)	26 (4%)
	N = 145	N = 83	N = 177	N = 232	N = 637

▲ Figure 3. Desired course modifications

Key: EE = English and Education; ET = English and Translation; GE = General English

Note: Data derived from responses to Question 40 (See Appendix). It is worth pointing out that the answers the participants provided are those they seemed to feel strongest about. Therefore, each respondent might well also like to see additional changes implemented. In addition, and irrespective of institution or subject sub-discipline (as well as year group and sex) it is worth noting that responses tended to suggest a somewhat vague expression of interest as opposed to anything more measured.

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### English Language Learning Questionnaire

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following questions concerning your English language learning. This is not a test so there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answers and you do not have to write your name anywhere. I am simply interested in your personal opinion. On that note, please give your answers sincerely. Thank you very much for your help.

In the following section there are going to be statements which some people agree with and some people don't. I would like to know to what extent these statements describe your own feelings or situation. After each statement you will find five boxes. Please put an 'X' in the box which best expresses how true the statement is about your feelings or situation. For example, if you like travelling very much put an 'X' in the last box:

	1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Uncertain	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
I like travelling very much.					X

There are no good or bad answers – I am just interested in your personal opinion.

	1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Uncertain	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
1. I fell in love with English at first sight, without particular reasons.					
2. I study English because my degree choice requires me to learn it.					
3. My purpose for learning English is mainly to obtain high scores in the exams.					
4. After entering university, my effort of English learning has depended to a large extent on test scores.					
5. After entering university, my effort of English learning has depended to a large extent on whether I like my English teacher or not.					
6. After entering university, my effort of English learning has depended to a large extent on the quality of the English classes.					
7. After entering university, my effort of English learning has depended to a large extent on the quality of the textbooks.					
8. After entering university, my effort of English learning has depended to a large extent on whether I like the fellow students in the English class.					
9. An important purpose for my English learning is to obtain a university degree.					
10. Being successful in English is important to me so that I can please my parents / relatives.					
11. Learning English is important for me, because English is a very useful tool in contemporary society.					
12. Learning English can give me a sense of achievement.					
13. I learn English in order to facilitate the learning of other academic subjects.					
14. Only with good English skills can I find a good job in the future.					
15. I learn English so as to keep up with developments in the world.					
16. I learn English because I am interested in English speaking peoples and their cultures.					
17. I have special interests in language learning.					
18. Out of my love of English songs / movies, I have developed a great interest in the language.					
19. I learn English just because I like this language.					
20. I learn English in order to let the world know more about China.					
21. Out of my love of English literature, I have developed a great interest in the language.					
22. Only when I have a good command of English can I contribute to China's prosperity.					
23. Only when I have a good command of English can I live up to the expectations of my parents.					
24. I learn English in order to find a better education and job opportunities abroad.					

25. I learn English so that I can go abroad and experience English-speaking cultures.					
26. The ultimate purpose of my English learning is to become an immigrant in English-speaking countries.					
27. Acquiring good English skills is a stepping-stone to one's success in life.					
28. Fluent oral English is a symbol of good education and accomplishment.					
29. I learn English to increase my chances of getting a job that I want in the future.					
30. An important reason for my English learning is to improve my career prospects.					
31. Studying English is important to me because with a good command of English I can make more money.					
32. Studying English is important to me because with a good command of English I can increase my employment and promotion chances.					

Please check that you have put an 'X' in each box. Thank you.

Finally, please complete the following few questions:

33. Underline which sex you are:

**Male**                      **Female**

34. Underline which year group you belong to:

**1<sup>st</sup> Year**                      **2<sup>nd</sup> Year**                      **3<sup>rd</sup> Year**                      **4<sup>th</sup> Year**

35. Underline which type of English Major you are:

**General English**                      **English and Education**                      **English and Translation**

36. Why did you choose to study English at university? Please be as specific as possible.

37. Underline if you are more, equally or less motivated to learn English because of **Employment Goals** than you were when you started university?

**More Motivated**                      **Equally Motivated**                      **Less Motivated**  
(by **Employment Goals**)                      (by **Employment Goals**)                      (by **Employment Goals**)

38. What job do you hope to do when you graduate? Please be as specific as possible.

39. Do you think that your university classes help to prepare you for this job?

**Yes**                      **To Some Extent**                      **No**

40. In your opinion, how could your university classes be improved to meet your **Employment Goals**?

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# LARGE GROUPS, LANGUAGE SUPPORT, AND MOBILE LEARNING: HOW AN UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS MODULE IS RESPONDING TO RECENT GLOBAL TRENDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Eoin Jordan, Tao Bai, Gareth Morris

## ABSTRACT

This article examines how an undergraduate Business module at an English-medium university in China has responded to three recent global trends in higher education: massification; growth in non-first-language English speakers engaging in English-medium study; and growth in mobile internet access. Details are given about the approaches and activities employed to respond to these trends. It is hoped that other practitioners, who are likely to be affected by the same trends, may find some of the responses described here to be applicable to their own context.

## INTRODUCTION

Three recent global trends that are likely to play a significant role in shaping the future of higher education are: the massification of (i.e. expansion in access to) higher education (Altbach, 2007); the growth in numbers of non-first-language English speakers studying in English (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009); and the growth in mobile internet access (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009). This report considers how MAN001, a Year 1 Semester 1 undergraduate Business module at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) with over 1000 enrolled students, has responded to these three trends to provide students with a future-oriented educational experience.

## BACKGROUND

XJTLU is a transnational English-medium university located in Suzhou, China. It has growing student numbers, with the annual intake of new Year 1 students now exceeding 3000. Most students are from mainland China, and enter the university based on their overall GaoKao (National Higher Education Entrance Examination) score, with no specific English language requirement. All students are expected to complete their studies in English, and are required to take English for Academic Purposes (EAP) modules in their first two years to support them in doing this. In recent years, one innovative course evolution has been the offering of joint delivery modules to provide students with additional language/study skills assistance outside of EAP provision. These modules involve the delivery of subject-specific content (delivered by the academic department) together with embedded language and study skills support (delivered by the Language Centre). One such module is a Business Essentials module (MAN001), which is taken by all Business School students at XJTLU, and as such necessitates delivery to over 1000 students. Some of the challenges faced in the delivery of MAN001 can be seen as representative of wider issues

resulting from the current global trends of: the massification of higher education (Altbach, 2007), as education becomes less elitist and more universal (Trow, 2007); difficulties in supporting a growth in numbers of non-first language English speakers studying academic content through this language (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009); and, a growth in mobile internet access (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009), which can challenge traditional modes of delivery in terms of appropriateness.

## CHALLENGE 1:

### Pressure on educational delivery from the massification of higher education

In recent years, there have been more students participating in higher education globally (International Strategy Office, 2015). However, this rapid increase in student enrolment brings in the pressure for educators to deliver massive classes, and significantly changes higher education systems (Hornsby & Osman, 2014). Considering the fact that massification of higher education is becoming a norm, it is important to understand the challenges and pressure from this massification, and more importantly how to respond to these challenges. It has been considered that the number of students in a class affects the quality of the learning environment (Cuseo, 2007). Large class learning environments tend to reinforce a didactic teaching style, which has been criticised as lacking of interactions between the lecturer and students. There were over 1000 students registered on MAN001, and this large number of students constrained options for delivery.

### Response

In order to ensure the quality of learning, we combined several strategies to respond to the challenges caused by the large number of students. Firstly, we broke down the number of students by multiple deliveries of the same lecture and seminars. We adopted 3\*2 hour sessions per

week to deliver content lectures for students. So in each lecture room, there were around 300 students. We also provided 8\*1 hour sessions per week to deliver language and study skills support seminars for students, with class sizes of 100-150 students. The seminars were delivered in a large, flat space conducive to group work, and students engaged in interactive activities in small groups of 7-8 students during these sessions.

Secondly, peer discussion and chatroom feedback were used during lectures to involve students' participation in the learning process. During MAN001 lectures, after explaining the important concepts or framework, the lecturer would give specific discussion questions, such as real business examples or theoretical debating questions, and ask students to discuss these with their peers. Students would then be encouraged to share their thoughts after their discussions. An online chatroom shown in front of the big lecture room was utilised for students to express their opinions, which allowed for the elicitation of responses to questions from the whole lecture theatre, not just a few rows at the front. Peer discussion and chatroom feedback allowed students to participate actively in the lectures, rather than just passively listening to content delivered by the lecturer.

Thirdly, extensive activities on XJTLU's Moodle-based virtual learning environment helped students communicate with peers and lecturers. We set up lecture preview videos and quizzes before each lecture to give students a general idea of what to expect. After lectures, there were also review quizzes for students to check what they had learned. In addition, there were discussion forums for each lecture where students could communicate and discuss with peers and lecturers. These activities on Moodle helped to improve interaction among students and lecturers. Around 80% of students participated in these formative activities during the ▶

first half of the semester; however, participation dropped during the second half of the semester, possibly as a result of pressure from summative assignment deadlines on other modules.

#### Future plans

We believe our combined lecture and seminar approach improved students' learning experience. Student satisfaction with the module was higher than the previous year. However, there is always room to improve. One possible approach for the future is to adopt a "flipped classroom" approach, by providing online lectures with focus on explaining basic concepts and frameworks. Then, during lecture time, we can focus more on interactive activities.

#### CHALLENGE 2:

##### Growth in numbers of non-first language English Speakers studying academic content through English

As English-medium higher education programmes have expanded, so too have the numbers of students who do not speak English as a first language studying on these programmes (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009). In the case of MAN001, most students were from mainland China, and entered the University without a specific English language entry requirement. With this in mind, an important concern was how to provide English language and study skills support to assist these students with the transition from L1-medium instruction settings to English-medium education, while simultaneously aiding the more general transition from high school to university. In the main, language and study skills support activities were delivered through the seminar sessions, and through online activities.

#### RESPONSE

##### In seminars

In the seminars, language and study support took a variety of forms. Guidance was given on note-taking by introducing

students to the Cornell method (Cornell University Learning Strategies Center, 2016). This is a note-taking system where students add self-test questions and summary paragraphs to their notes after lectures. Lecture content was also reviewed via peer comparison of notes and online quizzes; vocabulary for the next lecture was previewed (for example, through group quizzes and categorisation activities); discussion tasks were run based on the next lecture's topic; skimming and scanning tasks were devised with lecture pre-readings; and timed writing based on previous lecture topics was practiced in preparation for the final exam, with both generic tutor feedback and peer feedback provided.

##### Online

Online support, via Moodle, was also provided. Pre-lecture, this included introductory lecture videos with accompanying quizzes; engaging students in the construction of an online vocabulary glossary which built up as the semester progressed; online pre-readings, with key sections highlighted where appropriate; and downloadable note-taking sheets, tailored to the content of the next lecture. After each lecture, note-taking review activities were provided online, which encouraged peer feedback. These included students sharing self-test questions via a forum, as well as students recording review podcasts in groups and sharing these with the rest of the module. In addition, the language and study skills support tutors recorded weekly summary podcasts with volunteer students to review the material covered. These podcasts were then shared with the whole module. In terms of assessment preparation, students were tasked with creating practice exam multiple-choice questions based on lecture content, and were given short practice writing assignments. These were peer assessed online, and generic feedback was also given by the language support tutors, based on a sample of submissions.

#### FUTURE PLANS

As student feedback reported that Language Centre support was helpful, we plan to use similar activities in the next iteration of the module. It is also worth noting that students who completed more support activities online and attended more seminars performed better on module assessments, which again suggests that the activities were useful for students. The main challenge for the coming year is how to incentivise non-participating students to participate. One idea that has been discussed in this regard is linking participation in activities to grading. We are also considering reorganising online activities into essential and optional categories, to make sure that students focus their energies on the most important tasks as a priority.

#### CHALLENGE 3:

##### Growth in mobile internet access

One further global trend of importance to higher education today is the growth of mobile internet access among students (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009). Indeed, it would be difficult to find a student on campus at XJTLU who does not own an internet-enabled mobile phone, and many of these students access these mobile devices on a regular basis, including when in class. To respond to this situation, we considered how this mobile internet connectivity could be used to enhance, rather than distract from, student learning on MAN001.

#### RESPONSE

##### In lectures

As noted above, we established the practice in MAN001 lectures of posing discussion questions, and then asking students to share their responses via a Moodle chatroom that was visible at the front of the lecture theatre. Students were encouraged to contribute to the chatroom using their mobile devices. In large lectures of 300 or more students, this allowed for a greater quantity of responses than would have been possible by simply approaching individual students

with a microphone (a practice which normally only results in responses from students in the first row or two). Overall, the use of the mobile-accessible chatroom appeared to add a greater degree of interactivity to lectures than had existed previously.

##### In seminars

In the large seminar sessions on MAN001, one major way in which students were asked to use their mobile phones was to respond to lecture content review questions near the start of sessions. Multiple-choice questions were set up on Moodle, and students were required to answer them using their mobile phones, with the popularity of each answer option displaying in real time on the projector screen in the room. This activity was a quick way to gauge what content students had and had not understood, while also providing information about attendance in these large group sessions. In addition, we asked students to use their mobile phones in class to take part in quick opinion polls. These focussed on, for example, how difficult they found particular topics, or which resources they had found most helpful for their study on the module.

Another feature of students' mobile phones that we made use of was the camera. As MAN001 had a written final exam, we asked students to do short practice writing assignments in some seminar classes. The numbers of students meant that it was not possible to grade all of these, so instead we asked students to take photos of their work in class and upload them to an image gallery on Moodle to share with other students. We were then able to give general feedback on some of the photos in class. Asking students to share their work in this way gave them an audience for their writing, which would not have existed if they had only reviewed their work by themselves.

One final way that we asked

students to use their mobile phones in seminar classes was to access resources on Moodle (e.g. PDF's of lecture slides and readings) and to look up definitions of words, when this was required during class activities. This meant that students could access almost all of the resources they needed for class through their phones, which reduced the need for paper handouts. It also, therefore, avoided issues that arise when students forget to bring paper-based resources with them to a session.

##### Outside of class

Outside of lectures and seminars, we made sure that many of the activities that students were asked to complete on Moodle could be done using mobile phones, not just laptop or desktop computers. These activities included:

- Recording and listening to podcasts
- Watching introductory videos for lectures and completing quizzes about these
- Posting questions on forums
- Completing timed-writing peer assessment tasks where students wrote by hand, photographed their work, and then uploaded their photographs.

#### FUTURE PLANS

For future iterations of this module, we plan to continue making all of the Moodle activities we design as mobile-friendly as possible. We also plan to continue incorporating mobile-based activities into lecture and seminar sessions. However, we are aware of the need to address the potentially distracting influence of technology in the classroom (Junco, 2012; Ravizza, Hambrick, & Fenn, 2014; Sana, Weston, & Cepeda, 2013). To address this, one approach that we have experimented with already is "zoning" seminar classes into segments where mobile phones are or are not required. For segments where mobile phones are not required,

students are asked to place their phone somewhere out of sight, so they cannot see any flashing lights from instant messages being received. We plan to continue with this approach to examine its effectiveness over the coming year.

#### CONCLUSION

Overall, MAN001 has innovated in terms of delivery format, the use of educational technology and peer learning, and the embedding of language/study skills support to respond to the three global trends outlined at the start of this report. Feedback from students on the approach taken has been positive, as has feedback from colleagues who have observed teaching sessions. Given the global nature of the trends addressed, it seems likely that many other institutions will face similar challenges. With this on mind, we hope that this report of our experiences will be useful to higher education practitioners in other contexts. ◯

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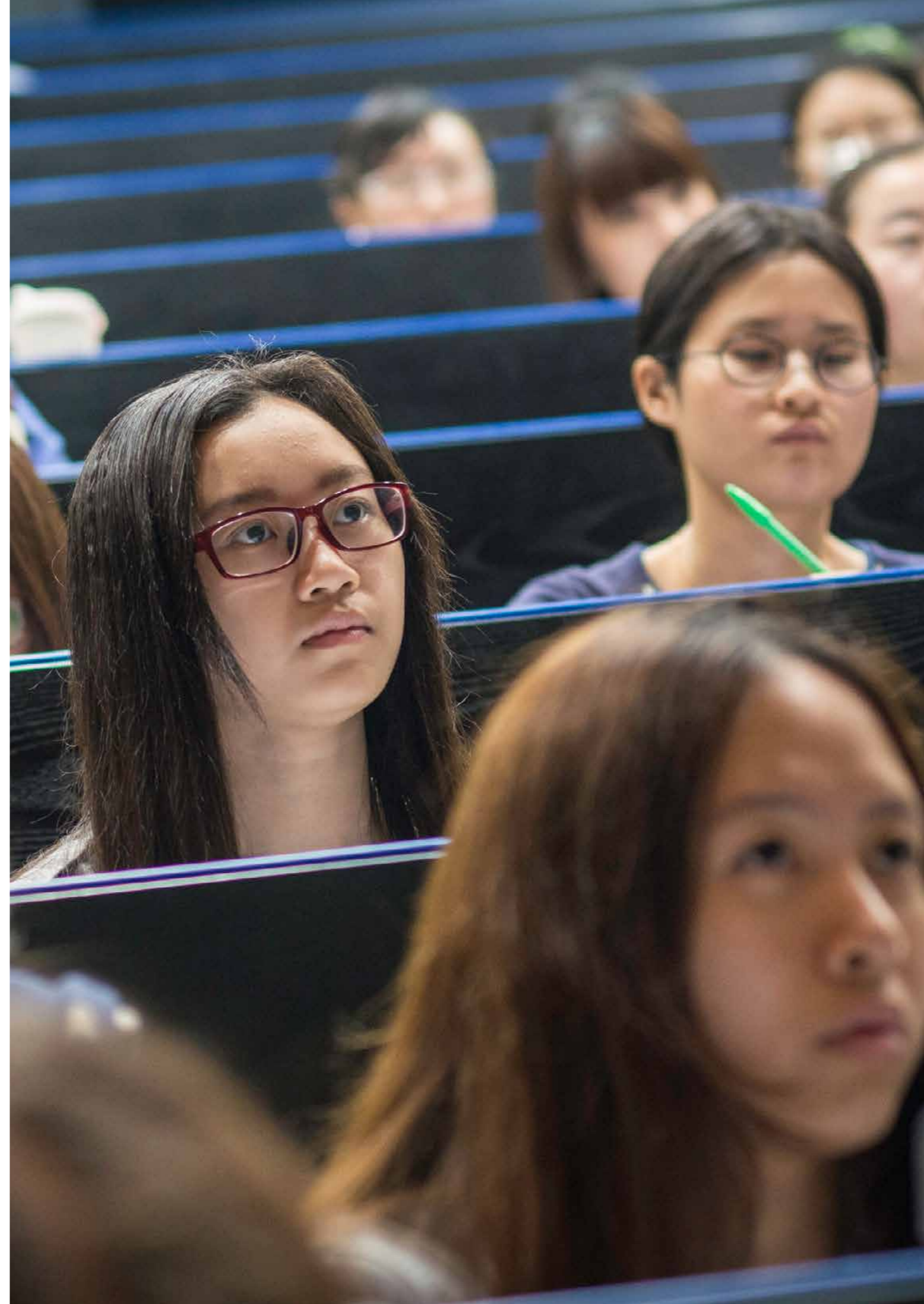
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## KEY CONCEPTS\*

# A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE FOSSILIZATION HYPOTHESIS

Minghao (Rainie) Zhang

\*This is a new regular feature which aims at providing a concise (approximately 1000 words) overview / introduction to an area relevant to English teaching in China. The inaugural piece below examines a key element of Second Language Acquisition theory using examples from Chinese; in the next issue, English for Medical Purposes, and the situation in China, will be the focus. The list of possible topics is almost endless. However, if you are interested in submitting a Key Concepts article, please bear in mind that you should show China relevance. You are advised to contact the Editors in the first instance to confirm the suitability of topic.

Fossilization, a founding concept in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), is the phenomenon that all adult learners, at some point in the process of learning a second language, stop progressing before they reach a native-like level of proficiency and syntactic accuracy, regardless of age, personal motivation, the amount of exposure to the target language, and instruction received. One of the seminal fossilization hypotheses was set up over forty years ago by Selinker (1972) where he claimed that it is inevitable for second language acquisition to fall short of complete attainment of the target language and certain deviances from the target language norms stay rather permanent in the learner's interlanguage system. He also emphasized that the main empirical domain of fossilization was limited to spontaneous production of the target language, meaning fossilization focuses on learners' meaningful performance instead of performance of drills.

Research on fossilization during the last forty years has been trying to answer several questions raised by Selinker and Lamendella in their 1978 paper, such as the

nature of fossilization and the objects of fossilization (Han, 2013). What would interest and concern language teachers the most, among these intriguing questions, are probably the objects of fossilization (i.e. linguistic features prone to fossilization) given that language teachers would want to possibly foresee fossilizable linguistic features and strategize their teaching techniques so as to delay fossilization and to prolong the progression of their students' learning process.

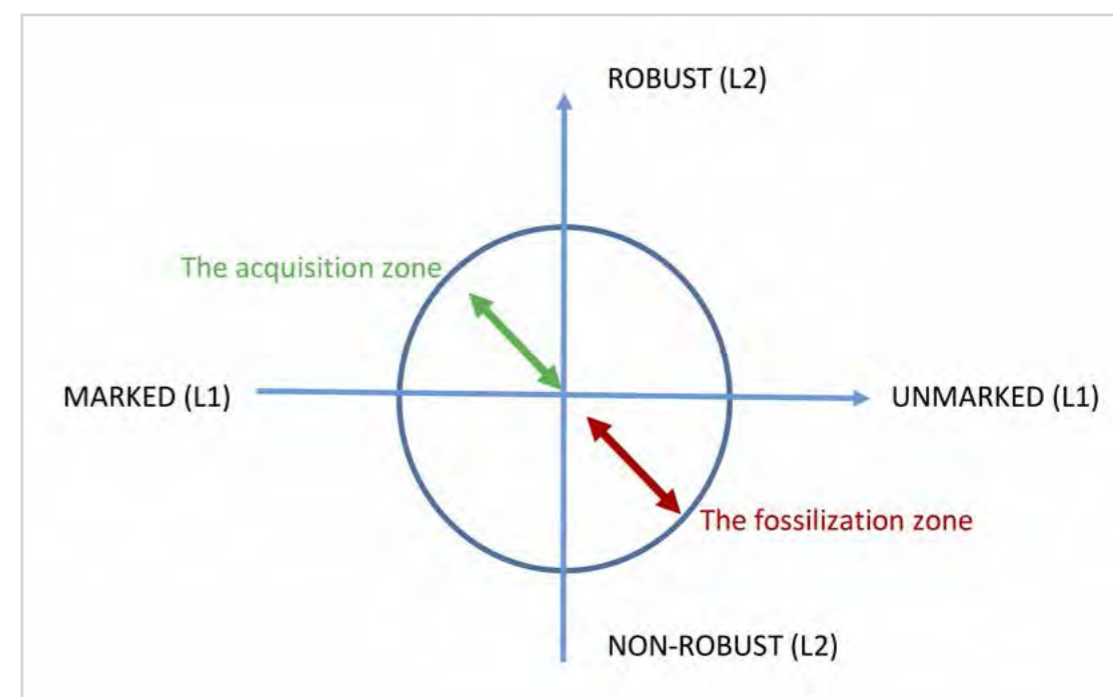
Given that fossilization has been observed to be extremely selective in the manners of intra-learner selectivity (i.e. same learner acquiring certain features over others) and inter-learner variability (i.e. different learners acquiring different features), the most recent research done on fossilization has been focused on addressing this issue of the selectivity of fossilization. Among many analytic models recently seen, the Selective Fossilization Hypothesis is considered the most general and inclusive one (Han, 2009; Han, 2013).

The Selective Fossilization

Hypothesis (SFH) tries to explain how the two core variables in SLA, learners' L1 influence and the target language input, interact to exert influence on learners' acquisition and, for that matter, on the fossilization of their acquisition. SFH places both variables on a continuum with L1 influence ranging from marked to unmarked and L2 input from non-robust to robust.

L1 markedness is determined by how frequently a specific linguistic feature is used and how variable (i.e. consistent) it is in the L1. An infrequent and variable linguistic feature is labeled marked and the opposite, being frequent and invariable, is unmarked. Unmarked features are the ones used most naturally and, therefore, most likely to be carried over to the learner's interlanguage system (i.e. features learners are like likely to 'fall back' onto if the target linguistic features are syntactically different).

The robustness of the L2 input is labeled with the same two sub-variables, i.e. an infrequent and variable linguistic feature in the target language is considered ▶



▲ Figure 1. Selective Fossilization Hypothesis (Han, 2009)

Target Language [English]	'With his sister, he went to the hospital.' 'He went to the hospital with his sister.'  The prepositional phrase of manner can be placed before or after [subject + predicate].	Frequent + Variable ↓ <b>Quite Robust</b> (i.e. not completely robust) <b>Target Language Input</b>
L1 [Chinese]	'他和他姐姐*去了医院.' tā hé jiě jie qù le yī yuàn (He with his sister went to the hospital.)  * This is treated as a prepositional phrase here instead of as part of the subject.  <b>The prepositional phrase of manner is placed in between subject and predicate.</b>	Frequent + Invariable ↓ <b>Unmarked L1 Influence</b>
Interlanguage	'He with his sister went to the hospital.'  <b>A Chinese learner of English is likely to place the prepositional phrase of manner in between the subject and the predicate when producing English.</b>	Likely to be fossilized

▲ Table 1. Analysis of the use of the prepositional phrase of manner for Chinese learners of English

non-robust and a frequent and invariable one would be robust. Non-robust features in the target language are usually the ones learners find difficult to generalize due to the low frequency and inconsistency in use.

Therefore, as shown in Figure 1, the most acquirable linguistic features to second language learners are the ones that are marked in their L1 with a robust correspondence in the target language. On the other hand, linguistic features that are unmarked in the L1 with a non-robust correspondence in the target language are more likely to be fossilized.

For example, as explained in Table 1, to a Chinese learner of English, the use of the prepositional phrase of manner would almost fall into this category. In English, the prepositional phrase of manner, very frequently used, could be placed either before or after subject and predicate. Admittedly, the latter option is significantly more frequently used, but both options are grammatically correct in both

formal and informal English. This means this linguistic feature is frequent yet variable, meaning the input is not completely robust. On the other hand, in Chinese, the prepositional phrase of manner is also used frequently, but is only considered grammatical when placed in between subject and predicate. The variation of placing it after subject and predicate does exist in colloquial Chinese yet this is not considered to be grammatically correct. This means the L1 influence is frequent and invariable, and hence unmarked.

This model seems to enable language teachers and learners to predict the linguistic features most likely to be fossilized (i.e. with unmarked L1 influence and non-robust L2 input) to some extent. However, the main issue that would arise when the attempt of applying this model is made is that no updated research so far has specified how frequency and variability of a linguistic feature could be quantitatively and accurately determined; it seems that in all examples seen (including the one above shown in Table 1) the markedness of L1 influence and the robustness of L2 input have been

determined completely intuitively or subjectively. It is then reasonable to propose that future research is needed to explore the possibility of setting up the criteria for determining the frequency and variability of a specific linguistic feature. ○

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# INSITES

This section highlights some useful learning and teaching websites that can help with planning, teaching and professional development. This time we look at writing skills and study advice resources.

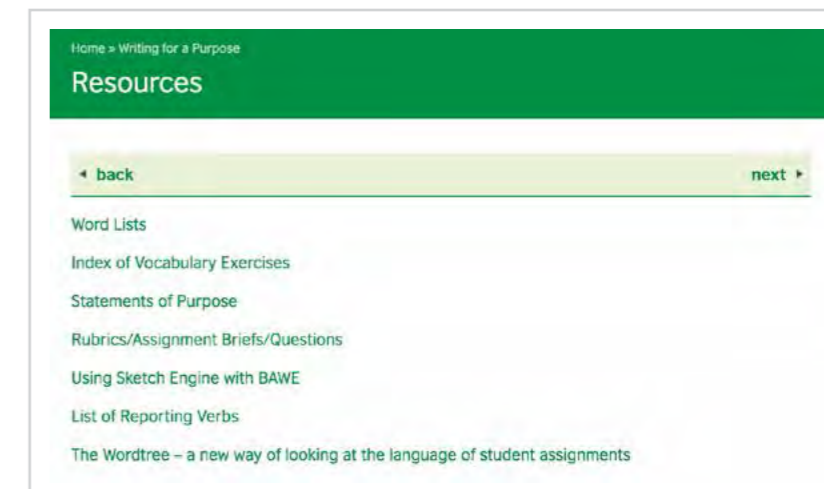
Jackie Hemingway & Sarah Butler

## WRITING FOR A PURPOSE

<http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/writing-purpose/writing-purpose>

Writing for a Purpose on the British Council website focuses on the specific types of writing students may encounter at university, examining the purposes of writing within different disciplines. This allows students from a variety of degree programmes to focus on the genres of writing applicable to their course of study. The site also provides tutors with a resource to help them understand and become familiar with the various genres. The website is research-driven and the development of materials has been informed by the British Academic Written English Corpus (BAWE) of 3000 examples of student work from over 30 disciplines, and has examples of successful assignments providing users with model texts. Research into the BAWE Corpus identified thirteen genre families (Nesi and Gardner, 2012) and these are all represented on the website including essays and research reports, along with more specific genres such as design specifications.

Each of the thirteen genres has an overview which presents the characteristics of that particular genre and this can be further explored through Listening, Structure and Vocabulary components. The Listening section provides an introduction in the form of a discussion giving context for the writing and supporting the subsequent information within the section. There is a transcript for each of the audio recordings. The Structure section analyses the genre in more detail, looking at the structure and particular features of each specific genre of writing. The Vocabulary section analyses authentic language generated from the BAWE Corpus, extracts key language and provides links to concordances from the corpus. Many of the sections have copies of authentic student work which are used in tasks where users can



check their comprehension of the material.

One small criticism is that at times the site can be difficult to navigate and, at the time of writing, the drag and drop exercises throughout the site did not work, which meant it did not reach its full capacity. However, overall the material is broken down into accessible and manageable sections and there is the opportunity for users to leave comments or questions in a forum. Students can navigate through the Disciplines section to access the appropriate genre for them. The Resources page has a variety of useful materials; for example, one section focuses on reporting verbs and another on language specific to assignments.

Writing for a Purpose is an extremely useful site for both students and tutors. It provides samples of student work which may be difficult for either tutors or students to source independently and provides a valuable insight into what is expected in written work within various university disciplines. It allows students studying on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses or university foundation courses to gain further understanding of their subject area and the specific requirements with regard to writing within their field. This resource could be used independently by students, or

could be exploited by tutors within a programme of study. Tutors could benefit greatly from the categorisation and exploration of the genres and exercises included on the site that can inform teaching. Overall, the specialised content and presentation of the website makes it well worth visiting for both students and tutors. ○

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF READING'S STUDY ADVICE VIDEO TUTORIALS

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/library/study-advice/lib-sa-videos.aspx>

Also available via:

[http://www.screencast.com/users/UniRdg\\_Library/folders/Study%20Advice](http://www.screencast.com/users/UniRdg_Library/folders/Study%20Advice)

The University of Reading's library website provides a collection of over 40 screencasts to develop study practices, focusing largely on writing skills (essays, reports, dissertations and referencing), as well as exam preparation. The collection includes both introductory study skills, e.g. 'Reading Academic Texts' and more advanced content, e.g. 'Effective paraphrasing for postgrads'.

A screencast is a video recording of computer screen output, typically with an accompanying voiceover. These are being increasingly used as a way of providing teaching content to students. The key benefits are that they can support self-paced learning, are accessible



at the point of need, and available at any time.

Each screencast tutorial in this collection is delivered via PowerPoint slides or Prezi and lasts approximately 5 minutes. The accompanying audio narration is provided in various British accents at a normal pace. The information

in each screencast is limited to a small number of key features. This avoids overloading viewers with information while both minimal text on-screen and clear images reinforce the message. Many of the screencasts also demonstrate the skills being focused on by working through an authentic example taken from a student assignment which provides

Study Advice  
[www.reading.ac.uk/studyadvice](http://www.reading.ac.uk/studyadvice)

clear context. Each screencast finishes with a clear summary to recap the main points and in some cases, recommends further resources for developing related skills.

The language used in this collection is generally quite high-level and occasionally idiomatic, which means that some of the tutorials may be challenging for lower level EAP students. Nevertheless, the screencast format provides visual reinforcement and allows pausing and replay, while accompanying transcripts of the narration improve accessibility for students with lower English levels.

These tutorials could be used both in class and out of class. In class, they could be used to introduce a skill before a practice activity. This could be one way to integrate authentic listening tasks into an EAP class with a clear goal for students to then apply the skills learnt.

Such resources are also ideal for a flipped learning approach, with students watching the tutorial before class and then practicing the skills with tutor support in class. They can be a good way of fostering autonomous learning outside of class and can help with consolidation, as the screencasts can be replayed when and as often as the student wishes, allowing flexibility. Research has indicated that such forms of online multimodal learning, involving both on screen animation and narration, are more effective than narration-only or text-only methods (e.g. Atkinson, 2002 and Mayer, 2003).

While the video tutorials have been designed primarily for self-access, many EAP students would benefit from guidance in using them. Tutors could suggest specific screencasts, as their relevance will depend on the student's programme of study and level. Some of the tutorials integrate small tasks (e.g. for the student to compare the effectiveness of two texts on the screen) according to

the content of the tutorial. Tutors may wish to adapt and expand such tasks to give students a clear purpose for watching the tutorial. This is also a valuable resource for tutors, particularly those new to the field of EAP, as the screencasts focus on key points and present these in a clear, focused way.

Although EAP tutors may find some of the screencasts inappropriate for the level of their students, the resource creators note that more tutorials will be added, thus a wider range of student needs may be catered to. Furthermore, this collection may inspire teachers to create their own screencasts using a similar format. Advice on how to make screencasts using video capture software such as Camtasia and Jing is available on the following websites: [TeacherTrainingVideos.com](http://TeacherTrainingVideos.com) and [MultimediaTrainingVideos.com](http://MultimediaTrainingVideos.com).

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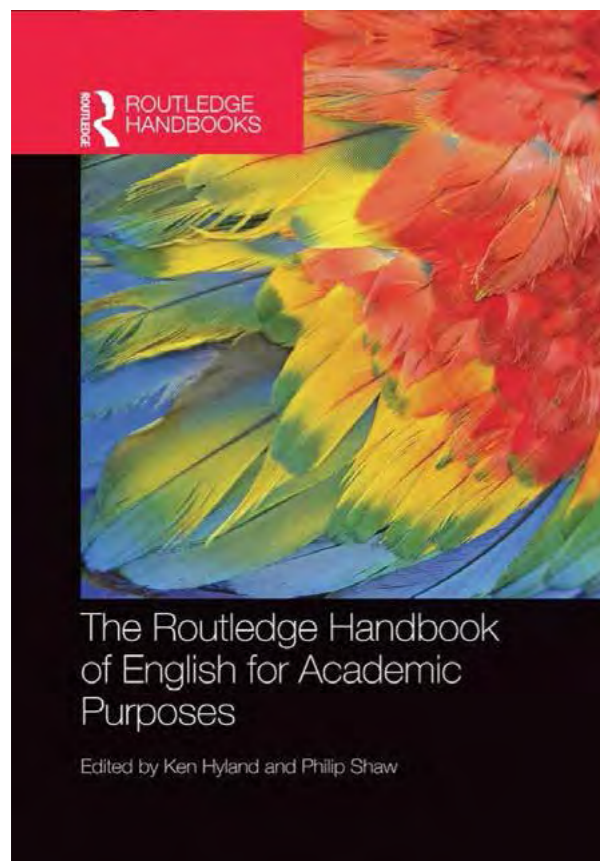
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# BOOK REVIEW: THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES

Stephen McAleer



**Title:** The Routledge Handbook of English for Academic Purposes  
**Editors:** Ken Hyland and Philip Shaw  
**Publisher:** Routledge (Routledge Handbooks)  
**Available:** [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk), £140.38  
**Published:** 2016  
**ISBN:** 978-1-138-77471-1  
**Pages:** 645

Notions of a handbook for any particular undertaking immediately raise the expectation that the text is one that the reader can browse, peruse and survey before selecting articles that are of interest or practical use. It is therefore the aim of this review to attempt to provide the potential reader an overview and orientation of the forty-five different contributions within the handbook. According to the publisher's cover blurb, this compendium provides an essential reference for EAP practitioners, claiming that each article delivers "a state-of-the-art review of the key ideas and concepts" pertaining to the discipline. However, on consideration of the readership of this journal, I wish to take a more pragmatic approach to discussion of the contents of this text, and examine how it can be of relevance to teachers, lecturers, researchers and academic managers working in China. Therefore, in addition to offering a more general synopsis of this wide-ranging text, where possible I attempt to focus more on issues and topics that may be more pertinent to the job of teaching EAP in China.

In introducing the set of forty-five chapters, the editors Hyland and Shaw remind us that EAP has gone beyond the job of preparing our students to cope with the academic and linguistic demands of attending institutions or taking courses that require working in the medium of English. The authors point out that EAP is now an interdisciplinary endeavour closely related to the field of applied linguistics, but one that also embraces broader ethnographic and pedagogic studies. However, it is pointed out that rather than suffering from "a possible overindulgence in theory" (p. 2), EAP is nevertheless still grounded in and committed to "research-based language education" (p. 2). I would advise that the reader hold on to that thought; as busy professionals seeking new and interesting ways to help our students, one could be forgiven for only seeking out texts with

more practical utility. The book does include numerous articles directly relevant to the EAP classroom and study skills, but it also raises important questions about the realities of the position of English as an academic lingua franca, an area of study that is of importance to China.

## ENGLISH AS AN ACADEMIC LINGUA FRANCA

Many articles in the handbook should prompt us to consider and provide principled responses to the fact that today the number of non-native speaker staff involved in the course management and teaching of EAP is increasing, especially in China (see Chapter 8). While the handbook fails to address the area of non-native speaker EAP staffing, notions of native speaker dominance are both implicitly and explicitly dealt with (see Chapters 3, 4, 7, 8, 17, 22). Moreover, the rising number of academic publications in all disciplines written by speakers of languages other than English also requires consideration from EAP practitioners.

In Chapter 4, Mauranen, Hynninen and Ranta point to the English language publishing rankings in the field of Science across the world; these tally in following order: US, China, UK, Germany, France and Japan. It is clear then that their assertion that "academic English has no native speakers" (p. 52) has considerable validity. Controversy and argument therefore arise as to who should be the gatekeepers of standards of language usage, style and expression, if it is not native speakers. While this handbook cites much of this contention, many of its chapters may dismay the reader as to the lack of useable practical research into this area of how universally acceptable language standards might change or evolve. Nevertheless, anyone seeking a comprehensive overview of the debate concerning the rapid spread of English as an academic lingua franca has a rich resource of references to draw on. As with all chapters in the handbook, a

comprehensive survey of the key writers and participants in each sub-discipline of EAP and applied linguistics is cited. The reader is also presented with an overview of developments and challenges in each sub-discipline.

Highlighting the challenges of addressing the needs of EAP students in a world where most readers and writers of academic texts are not native speakers, Hyland and Shaw discuss the often-cited criticism that EAP plays a part in reinforcing institutional power structures that privilege native speaker values and practices (see Introductory Chapter, Mauranen et al. Chapter 4, & Macallister Chapter 22). Such criticism includes censure of an academic system which allegedly imposes views of what constitutes acceptable language and patterns of rhetoric and argumentation. Such analysis also includes valuation of academic language as the propagation of Western cultural beliefs and notions of how knowledge itself is constructed. In this regard, in Chapter 3, Lillis and Tuck provide an overview of the relatively new field of Academic Literacies (now often referred to as "Ac Lits"). While the field has its roots in widening participation movements in the UK and post-apartheid South Africa, it now forms much of the basis of criticism of EAP education as one that focuses on "a fixed set of competencies which can be possessed or lacked" (pp. 31-32) resulting in negative "binary perceptions of learners as literate/illiterate" or "remedial" (p. 32). Ac Lit questions how students are socialized into the academic community and proposes that we rethink and transform all current practices to accommodate newcomers. In Chapter 17 an ethnographic approach to EAP is taken that, in the words of Hyland (2006), seeks "to achieve deeper understandings of the social influences on language use in EAP settings" (p. 68). Macallister in Chapter 22 takes discussion of academic English as

problematic further, referring to the use of Critical EAP which aims at revealing the hidden politics in Anglo-American academic discourse and practice.

In raising the above issues we can see that there are reoccurring themes that question the heart of what we do as EAP practitioners. This can be welcomed but as a handbook there may be an overemphasis on these issues. Few usable practical solutions are really offered. It is apparent that many solutions are hindered by ideology. However Mauranen, Hynninen and Ranta, in Chapter 4, go some way toward analysing possible directions of linguistic change that may occur in the future due to the proliferation of academic texts written by non-native speakers. Using corpora of non-native academic texts, they analyse the effect of a number of linguistic exponents on academic communication. They also cite the growth of non-native speaker gatekeepers or regulators of academic expression in their capacity as editors of academic journals. However, it is disappointing that concrete examples of different types of language usage to fully inform the discussion are minimal. It can be argued that research and discussion as to notions of correct vs incorrect or standard vs non-standard needs to be carried out. For this we need data and well-constructed research questions, with somewhat less ideological argument.

### THE POSITION OF ELT AND EAP IN CHINA

In Chapter 8 of this handbook, Cheng provides a useful overview of the position of EAP within tertiary education in China. While the article is perhaps overly descriptive, it does usefully point to the fact that EAP is undervalued in China and has failed to be sufficiently integrated into the ELT curriculum. For example, Cheng reminds us that all non-English majors at universities in the People's Republic of China (PRC) have to take English language

students requiring the ability to read or write within their subject-specific discipline. The need for more tailor-made EAP courses is highlighted by the fact that larger numbers of postgraduate masters and doctoral students are being required to publish in English-medium international journals as a part of their courses. Due to the fact that the number of postgraduate students in China is increasing, reaching 621,300 in 2014 (projected to pass one million in the next five to ten years), the importance of developing an EAP provision is clear. While calling for greater recognition of EAP across the Chinese university sector, Cheng advocates a move away from current exams such as the CET, or its reform at the very least.

### UNIVERSITY LECTURES

A number of articles in this handbook set aside examination of specific EAP skills. Chapters 14 and 24 specifically deal with university lectures. Since lectures are very often the predominant mode of delivery in China, these articles may be of more practical use to many readers. In addition the difficulties encountered by Chinese students in regard to coping with long stretches of academic monologue may also be a concern for those teaching in the PRC. Particular problems also pertain to students of lower levels of listening skills. Rogers and Webb in Chapter 13 discuss the need for greater attention on the teaching of bottom-up listening skills for lower level learners. While a combination of both top-down and bottom-up strategies are vital for weaker students, focus on the more direct teaching of note-taking skills is advocated. Research also points to the need for more input in regard to aural and visual cues. However, vocabulary size and knowledge is singled out as the most important element in improving bottom-up processing. Studies cited in regard to vocabulary size and the complexity of spoken discourse draw on data from British Academic Spoken English (BASE) and other corpora. Results reveal that to obtain

95% coverage, students need knowledge of about 3000 to 4000 word families together with input on proper nouns and marginal words. In addition, this needs to be complemented with subject specific input. The difference in difficulty across the various subject disciplines is, however, very significant and it is pointed out that blanket coverage of vocabulary through more English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) strategies may be of little help to students when preparing them for listening skill for lectures. Here the case for a genre or subject-specific approach to EAP is strong. Hyland in Chapter 2 offers extensive discussion on dilemmas over possible directions to take in regard to EGAP versus a more specialist genre approach and prompts us to consider the variety of literacies across higher education. As Hyland points out "EAP is most successful when it is tailored to meet the needs of the specific circumstances of students" (Chapter 2, p. 19).

In Chapter 13, Rogers and Webb also point to another useful aspect of research. They highlight the fact that Coxhead's AWL (Academic Word List) may be of limited use in improving comprehension of academic spoken text. But again this varies significantly by discipline. Another possible supplement to using the AWL is an exploration of the AFL (Academic Formulas List). For improvements in bottom-up processing this offers lists of formulaic expressions of high frequency with the additional benefit of being useful for writing also. Another useful resource is the ACL (Academic Collocations List). While it does not distinguish between collocations that appear in both written and spoken discourse, its focus is on combinations that are more common in academic speaking, such as lectures. Again application must be subject-specific to be effective. In Chapter 24 Camiciotoli and Querol-Julian recommend the use of authentic university lecture materials such as OpenCourseWare (OCW) ▶

(<https://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm>). Here students can access video lectures on their specific discipline, including lecture notes and summaries that develop genre-specific vocabulary. Students can be encouraged to exploit these as part of self-directed e-learning. Using notes, commentary, transcripts and subtitles students can work at their own pace. However, I would argue that these materials are of more benefit if learner-training is provided as how to best proceed. But for lower level learners, the adaption of authentic materials is also an important consideration. In Chapter 43, Fredricka Stroller discusses how authentic materials can be frustrating and demotivating. Outlining various ways that authentic materials can be adapted, she provides useful commentary on the design and authenticity of task where materials and activities are sufficiently scaffolded to provide the appropriate support required for students to satisfactorily benefit from the use of both edited and unedited material.

### ACADEMIC SPEAKING

Basturkmen in Chapter 12 offers discussion in regard to possible directions for speaking skills in EAP curriculum design. From my own experience of teaching academic English and study skills in China, I believe her ideas could be applied to help improve both the linguistic quality and the academic content of our student's spoken discourse simultaneously. Basturkmen's focus is not just on learning to speak the target language but also on what she describes as speaking to learn. The notion here is that language and content should go hand in hand in the learning process; building subject knowledge and language should operate together. Importantly, the actual content of academic discourse forms a part of a student's socialization or disciplinary acculturation into their given discipline. Hyland in Chapter 2 also provides discussion in this regard with his reference to students' "ability to construct the disciplinary arguments" that

different genres employ (p.21). Readers interested in the production of teaching materials for academic speaking may also be interested in Basturkmen's reference to the use of fixed language expressions that express particular language functions (e.g. asking for clarification, agreeing, disagreeing, or giving reasons). Referring to the inadequacies and limitations of many such language exponents, Basturkmen points to ways in which authentic recordings of group tutorials and seminar discussions can be more beneficial for students. Such recordings draw on the complexity of real language as opposed to working with static lists of expressions, often encountered in textbooks. The authenticity of this language not only provides rich data for further research but can also form the basis of EAP classroom activities. Hopefully the reader can see creative possibilities here. Scaffolding activities emerging from the use of recordings and the analysis of transcripts can stimulate language learning (learning to speak), develop problem solving and critical thinking skills and activate the use of genre specific argumentation (speaking to learn). However, such materials may need to be modified for the lower language levels that we often encounter in China. If authentic recordings are too challenging, an edited or simulated version could be produced.

### CONCLUSIONS

It is often difficult for teachers, education managers and researchers in China to find books or articles that are of use in the PRC context. Here I have attempted to review a large handbook that is designed to provide an overview of current thinking in EAP. Given the number of publications coming from the PRC, as well as its millions of EAP students, I believe that China provides a platform from which important discussion about the place of English as an academic lingua franca can take place. It is apparent from the handbook that much controversy about the actual

form such a language might take is of concern. I have argued that for this discussion to continue productively, more concrete language data is required. I have pointed out that lectures more often than not form a large part of an EAP student's timetable. How students can better benefit from such a challenging mode of academic communication raises questions in regard to choices of the adoption of a more general or specific EAP curriculum (EGAP or ESAP). Finding better ways to teach academic speaking also highlights the need to make more principled decisions in the design of programmes. For China a better balance may need to be struck where both the more general aspects of language acquisition and more discipline specific academic discourse is accommodated. ○

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Hyland, K. (2006). *English for academic purposes: An advanced resource book*. London: Routledge.

### AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

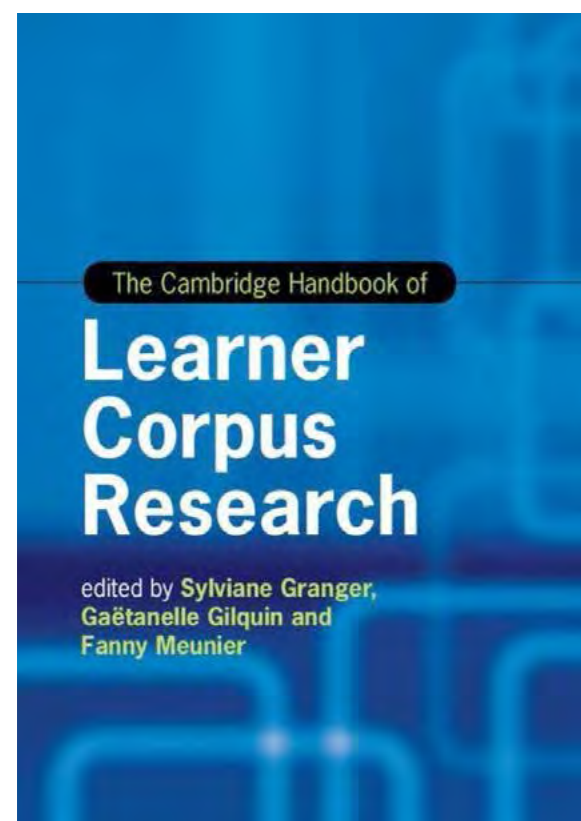
Stephen McAleer currently teaches EAP at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Suzhou. He holds a MA Applied Linguistics, LTCL DipTESOL and PGCE. With over 20 years of experience, Stephen has taught in China, Croatia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Turkey and the UK.

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# BOOK REVIEW: THE CAMBRIDGE HANDBOOK OF LEARNER CORPUS RESEARCH

Lee McCallum



**Title:** The Cambridge Handbook of Learner Corpus Research  
**Editors:** Sylviane Granger, Gaëtanelle Gilquin, and Fanny Meunier.  
**Publisher:** Cambridge University Press  
**Available:** [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk), £60.84 (Kindle edition)  
**Published:** 2015  
**ISBN:** 978-1-107-04119-6  
**Pages:** 755

The Cambridge Handbook of Learner Corpus Research is part of the Cambridge Handbooks in Language and Linguistics series and is an overview of the latest research and theory in learner corpora. The book is aimed at students, teachers and researchers who are interested in gaining a basic overview of how collections of learner texts (known as corpora) can be used.

The book is divided into five parts with a bibliography as well as author, corpus and software indexes at the end of the book to consolidate the key authors and software that readers have access to. Each part has chapters based around a theme, and each chapter is written by an established authority on corpora including input from Sylviane Granger, Marcus Callies and Sandra Götz. The chapters all make reference to a wealth of historical and contemporary research in learner corpora, and the bibliography cites references from the 1800s to early 2014, giving readers access to historical and contemporary information.

Part 1 details the design and methodology of learner corpora and holds particular relevance to budding linguists and teachers who may want to experiment in creating and annotating their own corpus for learning or teaching purposes. Chapter 7 on error annotation may be useful for teachers who want to explore their students' errors in more detail. It includes information on available error tagging software and highlights the steps that error analysis requires. Part 2 builds on this by analysing learner language with a focus on lexis, grammar and discourse in chapters 9, 11 and 12 respectively. These chapters show the latest research and applications of corpora in language teaching and detail how widely available software and tools such as LexTutor and Sketch Engine can be used to encourage the book's intended audience to experiment with corpus tools and software. Part 3's strength is that it brings together corpora and second language acquisition theories. Part 3 successfully focuses, through

chapter 14, on second language theory and corpora, and chapter 17 explores learners' development patterns and how corpora can help support and inform traditional and contemporary theories. The corpora contain large amounts of authentic learner language, and, alongside the corpus tools and software that the handbook promotes, it is easy for readers to see how corpora lend support to these theories in an efficient and accurate manner. As the penultimate part, part 4 sets out how learner corpora can be used to inform different branches of language teaching with chapters on pedagogic corpora, EAP and ESP corpora, and using corpora to inform instructional materials and to validate language tests. The final part, part 5, focuses on Natural Language Processing and includes automatic grammar and spell checking tools for language learners in chapter 25 and automated essay scoring in chapter 26. These chapters are invaluable modern contributions to the field of learner corpus research and will likely be researched further in the future given the increasing influence of computer-aided language learning on traditional classroom practice.

The strengths of the handbook are its wide ranging and well-researched software and corpus indexes. The software index includes information on well-known taggers which annotate corpus texts and identify word classes and further help teachers, students and researchers become more aware of different language patterns. The book's readers will find it especially useful that the book promotes established software like the CLAWS tagger, Sketch Engine and WordSmith as well as newer or less well-known software including E-rater by the English Testing System (ETS), the Example Extractor Engine for Language Teaching (Exxelant), and also parsing and tagging software such as the Stanford parser and tagger.

Similarly, the corpus index lists

a wealth of existing corpora spanning different languages, genres and language varieties. For example, British and American English corpora are included as well as large general corpora that allow access and comparative investigation of different genres including newspaper English and English used in novels. These corpora can be used on their own for research and pedagogic purposes; however, large general corpora such as the British National Corpus (BNC), the Contemporary American English Corpus (COCA) and the specialized British Academic Writing English (BAWE) can be used as reference corpora. These reference corpora can be used with smaller learner corpora such as the Chinese Learner English Corpus (CLEC) to give comparative insights into the interlanguage of Chinese learners compared to the branches of English found in the reference corpora.

Despite the wide-ranging content of the handbook and the awareness that it raises about learner corpora, the handbook may benefit from focusing on using learner corpora for classroom application to gauge how learners respond to using this data. The handbook could also further explore longitudinal individual or group learners' progress which would provide a unique insight into development and may be a topic that learners show interest in.

Overall, this handbook makes a key contribution to the emerging value of learner corpora and gives those who want to learn about or use learner language all the support and tools they need to gain confidence in exploring its unique patterns. ○



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Lee McCallum is an EdD candidate at the University of Exeter and currently teaches in China. She has wide-ranging teaching and assessment experience from Europe and the Middle East. Her research interests include testing, corpus linguistics and L2 writing.

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## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Although every effort has been made to supply accurate information, readers should visit the conference websites to receive the latest updates. Many conferences choose to extend the date for abstract proposals to ensure the maximum number of presenters.

Seth Hartigan

### CONFERENCES WITH OPEN PROPOSAL DEADLINES

#### 14TH CAMBODIA TESOL (CAMTESOL) CONFERENCE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING 2018: ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE DIGITAL ERA

February 10-11, 2018, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Proposal due: September 5, 2017

<http://camtesol.org/>

#### TESOL INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION & ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXPO (TESOL 2018) - TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

March 27 - 30, 2018, Chicago, Illinois, USA

Proposal due: TBD

[www.tesol.org](http://www.tesol.org)

#### 2018 INTERNATIONAL WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM CONFERENCE IWAC 2018: MAKING CONNECTIONS

June 4-6, 2018, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, USA

Proposals: Open

<http://wp.auburn.edu/iwac2018/>

#### THE 16TH ASIA TEFL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND THE 64TH TEFL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2018

June 27-29, 2018, University of Macau, Macau

Proposal due: TBD

Website in development

### CONFERENCES WITH CLOSED PROPOSAL DEADLINES

#### CAES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FACES OF ENGLISH 2: TEACHING AND RESEARCHING ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH

June 1-3, 2017; Hong Kong

<http://caes.hku.hk/facesofenglish2/>

#### THE EXCITELT CONFERENCE 2017 UN-CHARTERED TERRITORIES

June 4, 2017; Rikkyo University, Tokyo, Japan

<https://www.excitelt.tokyo/>

#### WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION OF CHINA CONFERENCE 2017: NEW BEGINNINGS

June 4, 2017; Rikkyo University, Tokyo, Japan

<https://www.excitelt.tokyo/>

#### JALTCALL 2017 ACTIVE LEARNING THROUGH CALL

June 16-18, 2017; Shikoku, Japan

<http://conference2017.jaltcall.org/>

#### THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE STUDIES

June 29-30, 2017; Open University of Hong Kong

<http://iclls2017.wixsite.com/iclls-2017>

#### ECLL2017 THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGE LEARNING 2017

June 30 - July 2, 2017; Brighton, UK

<http://iafor.org/conferences/ecll2017/>

#### GEN TEFL 2017: THE 2ND GEN TEFL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE RETHINKING ELT IN THE AGE OF UBIQUITOUS TECHNOLOGY

July 2-3, 2017; Bangkok, Thailand

[www.gentefl.org/gen-tefl-2017.html](http://www.gentefl.org/gen-tefl-2017.html)

#### CELEA 2017: THE 8TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT) IN CHINA: ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN A GLOBAL WORLD: NEW PERSPECTIVES, NEW METHODOLOGIES

October 20-22, 2017; Xi'an, China

<http://elt.celea.org.cn/2017/en/>

#### JAPAN ASSOCIATION FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING (JALT) 2018: 43RD ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

November 17-20, 2018, Tsukuba, Ibaraki, Japan

<http://jalt.org/conference>

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Seth Hartigan has taught Academic English for the last ten years at XJTU, Renmin and Tsinghua Universities. His academic interests include the philosophy of education and the science of learning.

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We accept submissions on an ongoing basis. More details about the types of article we accept, author guidelines, and our style guide are all available on our website, [etic.xjtlu.edu.cn](http://etic.xjtlu.edu.cn) or contact [jonathan.culbert@xjtlu.edu.cn](mailto:jonathan.culbert@xjtlu.edu.cn).

The following is a summary of what we are looking for.

### SUBJECT MATTER & FOCUS

The majority of our readers spend most of their time in classrooms, teaching. They are practitioners, and we aim to publish articles that will inform their practice. We will gladly accept theoretical articles, but they should not be so esoteric as to be irrelevant to the majority of teachers. A relevance to China is, of course, a must.

If you yourself are a teacher working in a Chinese context, ask yourself if your colleagues would be interested in your topic, and in reading your piece. Better still, ask them. If the answer is unequivocally 'yes', then there's a good chance our readers will want to read it also.

If you are in any doubt, please contact us, the Editors! We look forward to hearing from every potential author, whatever stage in the process you are at. Moreover, we try to be as supportive as possible, as a large proportion of our contributors are first-time authors.

### ARTICLE TYPES

**Original research articles**  
See Dawson (2016) in ETiC Issue 7 for a good example.

**Reflections on previously published research**  
See Huckle (2017) in this issue.

**Book reviews**  
See McCallum (2017) in this issue for a concise and mostly descriptive example, and McAleer (2017), also in this issue, for a longer and more critical example. Please contact the Editors to confirm the suitability of the book.

**Materials reviews**  
We accept reviews of any type of teaching material. Our 'Insites' feature is a good example of what we are looking for. Please contact the Editors to confirm the suitability of the materials.

**Interviews**  
See 'Speaking with ... Dr. Stuart Perrin and Markus Davis' in Issue 7. Again, please contact the Editors to confirm the suitability of the interviewee.

**Key Concepts**  
See Zhang (2017) in this issue.

**Reader's Responses**  
This will be a new feature from Issue 9. Readers are encouraged to respond to anything they have read in this, or older, issues. This could take several forms: challenging an argument expounded in the journal; showing how a teaching approach featured within these pages was applied successfully or otherwise; spotlighting resources which might help other readers investigate a topic further. All constructive responses are welcomed.

**Conference Reports**  
See Touchstone (2016) in Issue 6.

**Others**  
We are always open to new ideas. If you would like to propose an article which does not fit into any of the categories above, please contact the Editors. We would love to hear from you!

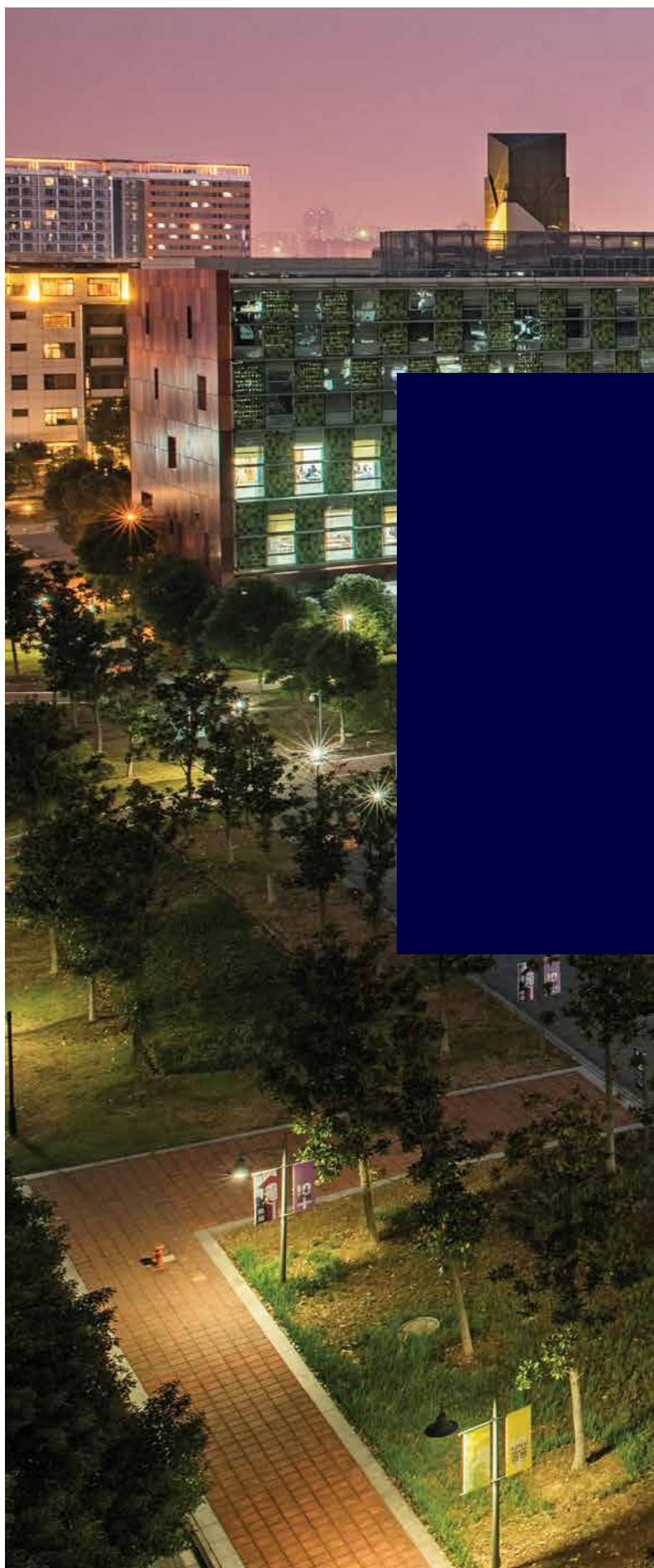
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