The Correlations between Students' Business English Writing Skills and Their Motivation and Satisfaction of Learning

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Abstract

Aims: The objective of this study is to investigate the correlations between students' Business English writing skills and their motivation and satisfaction of English learning.

Study design: This is quantitative study using descriptive research design. The sample consists of 40 vocational college students. The students were given 3 types of Business English writing test two email writing, one letter writing and one report writing). Their writing tasks were marked by a lecturer using rubric provided by the researchers.

Methodology: Forty Business English Major students from second year of Guangdong Polytechnic Science and Technology participate in the study. In addition to the writing task students were given two sets of questionnaires namely on writing motivation and satisfaction of learning Business English.

Results: The findings from quantitative data revealed that there is a moderate significant correlation between students' writing skills and their motivation towards learning Business English. In addition, the results also indicated that there is a high significant correlation between students' writing skills and their satisfaction towards learning Business English. The correlation between students' motivation and their learning satisfaction is significantly moderate.

Conclusion: The findings conclude that there is a significant correlation between students' writing skills and their motivation and satisfaction towards learning Business English. As such teachers and lecturers should take steps to enhance students' motivation and their learning satisfaction in teaching Business English because they are related to their writing performance.

Keywords: Business English Writing, Motivation, Satisfaction, Vocational College, China

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Communication skill in written form is one of the essential competencies for student even will significantly support a person in his work field (Sulisworo, Rahayu and Akhsan, 2016). Writing practice improves the applicant's comprehensive ability to use language from the aspects of vocabulary, layout, writing strategy and critical thinking (Shih, 2011). That is why writing is the most difficult one for students to improve.

Learning motivation and satisfaction are important factors affecting the learning quality of Business English Writing courses. From the perspective of learners, the motivation and satisfaction of business English writing learning is studied, summarize the relationship between learners, teachers, and learning support services and provide important reference value for improving the quality of business English writing courses. What factors affect the learning motivation and satisfaction? How to improve the learning motivation and satisfaction of business English writing course? These are content worthy of our consideration and research. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to empirically study the factors that affect learning motivation and satisfaction from the perspective of learners, investigate and study the current situation and problems of business English writing course, and on this basis, it is expected to provide important suggestions and measures for improving the learning quality of business English courses.

1.2 Research Questions

1: Is there any significance correlation between students' Business English writing skills and their motivation of learning?

2: Is there any significance correlation between students' Business English writing skills and their satisfaction of learning?

3: Is there any significance correlation between students' motivation to learning Business English and their satisfaction of learning?

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Constructivism theory

Constructivism is the theory of cognitive development proposes base on the work of Jean Piaget (Piaget, 1973), that means the learners must construct their own knowledge through prior knowledge and experience rather than they get information directly. They think the knowledge exist in individuals, they cannot be fully transferred from teachers to students, so students have to try to make sense of what is taught by trying to fit it with their experience (Lorsbach & Tobin, 1997). Based on Carlile & Jordan (2005), constructivism is a significant procedure that small changes in the knowledge construction may

lead to changes in overall understanding. Therefore, teachers' main job in this approach is to give directions of students constructing their new information through exploratory activities and make connections to their own conclusions (Martin, 2006). Student-centered learning is the main characteristic of the Constructivist perspective. It includes using information technology to encourage students learning activities and building positive relationships with teachers. In addition, constructivism is a process approach, that teacher is as a director to guide students reconstruct the information and make decisions about their learning. Blended learning model provides an environment to both teachers and students to generate ideas and achieve educational objective at any time wherever you are. It will also help to make criteria formative assessment systematically and promote of independent learning. In addition, the development of information technology provides technical support for the ideas advocated by constructivism and becomes reality. Constructivism provides theoretical support and guidance for information-based teaching (He Kekang, 2004b).

As a kind of informatized teaching method, one of the important theoretical foundations of blended learning is the constructivist learning theory. Traditional classroom teaching is often centered on teachers. Teachers preach, teach, and solve puzzles. Because classroom learning time is limited, there is not enough opportunity for full thinking and interactive communication. In fully online learning, students will feel lonely due to inconsistent time and space alienation.

The interactive communication between teachers and students in blended learning has been greatly strengthened. Or use instant messaging tools such as QQ or WeChat to interact online, or carry out interactive sections on the online learning platform, or use e-mail, etc. The development of information technology makes it easy for teachers and students to interact asynchronously, answer questions, cooperative learning, exchange and discussion, etc. Because the content of the knowledge transfer part is more or less undertaken by the online learning after class, there will be more time for various interactive activities in the face-to-face class. The combination of synchronous and asynchronous interaction greatly increases the chance of interaction. In addition, students can also conduct personalized learning as needed. Being able to provide rich, diverse forms and media resources, as well as real learning situations to achieve learning by dong, enhance interaction and emphasize autonomous learning is the characteristics of blended learning model.

2.2 Cognitive Theory

According to the literature of cognitive psychology, when learners are allowed to seek their own interest, their motivation to learn grows, subsequently leading to a heightened attention level (Bandura, 1982; Chaffee & Schleuder,

1986). Even within the same institution, learners' levels are different. In the past, conduct selective learning is difficult in the traditional classroom environment, especially when teachers are facing a large number of learners with limited teaching time. While the advent of the Internet and online learning technology make it possible for learners to make learning processes adapt to their own needs and interests. To enable learners at different levels to achieve task goals, teachers need to provide appropriate input materials so that learners can select "useful parts for deep processing, practicing, and memorizing" to optimize learning outcomes (Wen, 2015). In business report writing courses, teachers should selectively prepared learning materials at different levels. All learning materials are labeled as "basic", "intermediary", and "advanced" and are uploaded to the online learning platform where students can choose according to their own interests. This ensures the availability and accessibility of the input learning materials (Kumara vadivelu, 2006).

2.3 Chomsky's Theory of Language Learning

Noam Chomsky (1957) proposed transformative generative grammar in his book "Syntactic Structure". He believes that language acquisition is an inherent ability based on perception. He disagrees with Skinner's behaviorist learning theory. In Chomsky's view, language learning is subordinate to cognitive psychology, and creativity in human language is the main goal of generative grammar. Therefore, he shifted the focus of his research from the unpredictable language phenomenon to the specific language acquisition mechanism. He proposed a distinction between two concepts: language intrinsic ability (language competence) and language performance, which makes the research object of generative linguistics transfer from sentence to language practical ability, and further explains why human beings know whether a sentence is consistent with their own perception of their mother tongue Syntactic rules, so the focus of research has shifted from the study of individual behavior to the study of human cognition of language. Chomsky believes that language acquisition is not the result of learning, but the language ability acquired through conscious deduction, that is, the ability to master the basic codes that constitute all the words of a language (Chen Jianlin, 2010). As for the deep grammatical structure of language, Chomsky believes that it can determine the meaning of a sentence, so humans can create endless sentences. The creative characteristics of language enable language teachers to make full use of their advantages and human cognitive laws to instruct students to create unlimited sentences that conform to grammatical structures.

2.4 Keller "ARCS" model

Keller's ARCS model which focuses on problem-solving methods and aims to motivate, encourage and enhance and support students' learning motivation. The ARCS model consists of four factors, namely i) attention (A), ii) correlation (R), iii) confidence (C) and iv) satisfaction (S). These four factors represent different situations or conditions that are considered essential for a fully motivated person (Sultana & Khalil, 2017).

When applying the ARCS model to an online environment, online public forums can be used for student interaction. Moore (1989) defines three different types of interaction, namely: i) content-learner interaction, ii) learner-teacher interaction, and iii) learner-learner interaction. In an online learning environment, these types of interactions are achieved through synchronous or asynchronous functions. Research shows that learners are usually more interested in learning while cooperating with other learners rather than working independently. In addition, cooperative forums can support effective and useful discussions by encouraging learners to develop clear and structured descriptions when discussing issues or ideas with peers and teachers. This is important because research (theory and empirical) shows that student learning is significantly affected by the interaction of teachers and peers.

The researcher applied the four categories in the ARCS model to study motivation and conduct business English writing practice, and designed related questionnaires based on different motivational factors. Among them, attention refers to the interest of the learner. Therefore, mastering and maintaining the interest of learners is crucial. Its subcategories are Capturing Interest (Perceptual Arousal), Stimulating Inquiry (Inquiry Arousal), Maintaining Attention (Variability), (Keller, 2010). To stimulate students' motivation to study this course, first of all, their attention and interest must be aroused in a certain learning task. On the other hand, students' curiosity can be stimulated by using different teaching methods. In the teaching of business English writing, the effective combination of this model and information technology can well stimulate and maintain students' writing motivation. Therefore, it is necessary to help students set goals, clarify their learning goals and try to guide students to correctly deal with various external temptations. Secondly, information technology and various other means can be used to improve students' interest in learning. Finally, for teachers, it is also the most important scientific design of each teaching link, so that students can be integrated into the classroom learning environment (Deng, 2016).

2.5 Learning Satisfaction Theory

The theory of learning satisfaction originally derived from the theory of customer satisfaction proposed by American scholar Cardozo (1965), who

believed that customer satisfaction is a kind of emotional response containing different intensities, and this response occurs in the process of customers purchasing products. Subsequently, the theory was promoted and applied in the field of education in various countries, and the American Board of Education in 1966 began to measure student satisfaction. Learning satisfaction is the influence of the process that occurs in the teaching and learning process that students participate in. In addition, satisfaction can also be seen as the result of comparison between expectations and perceived services, with pleasure or disagreement (Oliver, 1980; 1999). In previous studies on student learning satisfaction, it has been explored that service quality, teaching quality, and the quality of participation in the learning environment are related to student satisfaction and successful learning outcomes. Then, Henning et al. (2001) found that teaching quality and student learning satisfaction are both important factors in maintaining student loyalty. Holdford and Reinders (2001) proposed a three-dimensional model of service quality, including students' views on school facilities, faculty and staff services, and administrative services. Since then, Holford and Patkar (2003) proposed five items of overall student satisfaction, including facility quality, learning process quality, service quality, curriculum quality and teaching implementation quality. A study is needed to clarify the impact of the quality of teaching and learning services provided by educational institutions on the perceived learning satisfaction of students in the time spent in the entire learning plan. Therefore, this study will examine learning satisfaction from five factors, namely (1) teaching methods; (2) course content; (3) learning environment; (4) learning activities; (5) Teacher's ability.

3. METHODOLOGY

This is quantitative study using descriptive research design. The sample consists of 40 vocational college students. The students were given 3 types of Business English writing test (two email writing, one letter writing and one report writing). Their writing tasks were marked by a lecturer using rubric provided by the researchers. Forty Business English Major students from second year of Guangdong Polytechnic Science and Technology participate in the study. In addition to the writing task students were given two sets of questionnaires namely on writing motivation and satisfaction of learning Business English.

The current situation of Business English writing teaching is analyzed through test papers and questionnaires. On the basis of the Business English writing teaching give certain guidance and put forward corresponding reasonable suggestions, the research methods used in this study are as follows:

3.1 Business Writing Test

At the beginning of the study, all participants need to complete a diagnostic writing test which ask them to write two emails (40-60 words each), a letter (100-120 words), and a report (140-160 words) based on the materials that are given. These tasks are marked by two experienced business English professors according to the rubrics (see table1).

	A Outstanding	B Good	C Satisfactory	D Barely Adequate	E Inadequate
Focus on Topic	All requirements of the task are fulfilled with outstanding performance and in a highly convincing way. All content points have been included	All requirements of the task are fulfilled in a very effective and convincing way. All content points are handled well.	Can meet the requirements of the task. All the main content points have been included, and some minor content has been omitted.	Cannot fully meet the requirements of the task. Some major content points are omitted or not dealt with adequately, which may be irrelevant.	Failed to meet the requirements of the task. Significant content omissions and/or large amounts of content are irrelevant, possibly due to misunderstanding of the topic requirements.
Grammar	The language is standard and natural Highly accurate with a wide range of grammatical structures supporting sophisticated and clear messages	Generally accurate; errors when using complex language. Accurate with a wide range of grammatical structures supporting clear messages	Some errors occurred, but they did not hinder communication. Generally accurate with mastering moderately of the structure and vocabulary.	Sometimes mistakes affect clear communication, and many mistakes confuse readers. With major grammatical and structural errors and narrow range of grammatical structures are displayed.	Serious irregularities and basic errors often occur. With many major grammatical and structural errors and simple grammatical structure are used most of time.
Coherence and cohesion	The organization effect is good Cohesion and organization are highly effective	Reasonable structure and accurate wording. Generally, well organized, pay attention to logical relationships.	The organization and arrangement are generally satisfactory. Cohesion and organization are generally effective	Cohesion and organization are generally ineffective, causing difficulties in understanding.	Cohesion and organization are ineffective. Lack of organization causes communication failure.
Supporting Details	Highly appropriate for the content organization and development	The format and content organization are appropriate	Generally appropriate; the format and content organization are acceptable, although not completely successful	Generally inappropriate	Inappropriate
Vocabulary	Highly appropriate and very wide ranging.	Appropriate and wide ranging.	Generally appropriate and adequate.	Generally inappropriate words cause communication failure.	Inappropriate words cause communication failure.

Table 1. The grading criteria (Zou, D. & Xie, H. 2018)

3.2 Writing Motivation and Satisfaction

In this study, a standardized questionnaire of the ARCS Model Approach was adopted to collect information on students' learning and performance in Business English writing and the problems that they encountered. The test

items in the questionnaire, which allowed participants a range of responses, were based on a Five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=not sure, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree) and respondents were free to select from the range of five answers. A popular rule of thumb is that the size of the coefficient alpha should generally be, at a minimum, greater than or equal to .70 for research purposes (Johnson & Chirstensen, 2014).

Furthermore, the satisfaction questionnaire consists 30 items, using five Likert scales from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Both of them are modified slightly to be better fit into our participants' learning environment.

Based on the pilot test, the reliability of motivation and satisfaction statistics are shown below:
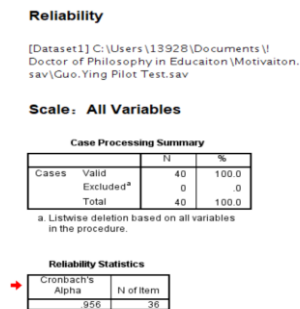
Reliability

[Dataset1] C:\Users\13928\Documents\!
Doctor of Philosophy in Educaiton\Motivaiton.
sav\Guo.Ying Pilot Test.sav

Scale：All Variables

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	40	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	40	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Item
.956	36

Figure 1. The reliability of the students' motivation statistics

The data shows that the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.956. It is higher than 0.7, this is considered highly reliable.

```
GET
  FILE='C:\Users\13928\Documents\!Doctor of Philosophy in Educaiton\satisfaction.sav'.
DATASET NAME DATASET1 WINDOW=FRONT.
DATASET CLOSE DATASET2.
RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=Q2 Q3 Q4 Q5 Q6 Q7 Q8 Q9 Q10 Q11 Q12 Q13 Q14 Q15 Q16 Q17 Q18 Q19 Q20 Q21 Q22 Q23 Q24
   Q25 Q26 Q27 Q28 Q29 Q30 Q31
  /SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL
  /MODEL=ALPHA.
```

Reliability

Scale：All Variables

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	40	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	40	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

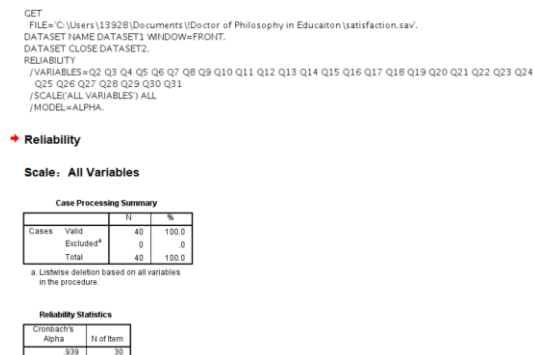| Cronbach's Alpha	N of Item
.939	30

Figure 2. The reliability of the students' satisfaction statistics

The data shows that the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.939. It is higher than 0.7; this is considered highly reliable.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 'Statistical Package for the Social Sciences' (SPSS) Windows version 25.0 should be used to gather the data. The correlation analysis is used to test whether there is any significant correlation between students' writing skills and their motivation and satisfaction.

The study aims to identify the correlations between students' writing skills and their motivation and satisfaction of leaning English. The following null hypotheses are tested in this study ;

Hypothesis 1: There is no significance correlation between students' writing skills and their motivation of learning English.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significance correlation between students' writing skills and their satisfaction of learning English.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significance correlation between students' motivation to learning English and their satisfaction to learning English.

Correlations

Correlations

		Motivation	Poverall
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.639**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	40	40
Poverall	Pearson Correlation	.639**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	40	40

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 1. The correlation between students' writing skills and their motivation

Correlations

Correlations

		Poverall	Satisfaction
Poverall	Pearson Correlation	1	.667**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	40	40
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.667**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	40	40

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 2. The correlation between students' writing skills and their satisfaction

Correlations

Correlations

		PMOTIVATION	PSATISFACTION
PMOTIVATION	Pearson Correlation	1	.641**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	40	40
PSATISFACTION	Pearson Correlation	.641**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	40	40

**. Correlaiton is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure3. The correlation between students' motivation and their satisfaction

The findings show that the course still has great improvement in future if the data will be fully established. The findings from quantitative data revealed that the correlation between students' business English writing skills and their motivation of learning is 0.64. The correlation between students' writing skills and their motivation of learning is 0.67. The correlation between students' motivation and satisfaction to their writing is 0.64. It revealed that there is a moderate significant correlation between students' writing skills and their motivation towards learning Business English. In addition, the results also indicated that there is a high significant correlation between students' writing skills and their satisfaction towards learning Business English. The correlation between students' motivation and their learning satisfaction is significantly moderate.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings conclude that there is a significant correlation between students' writing skills and their motivation and satisfaction towards learning Business English. As such teachers and lecturers should take steps to enhance students' motivation and their learning satisfaction in teaching Business English because they are related to their writing performance.

Acknowledgments

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