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A comparison of TOEFL scores with English Placement Essay performance scores of selected Chinese students at Iowa State University, 1979

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A comparison of TOEFL scores
with English Placement Essay performance
scores of selected Chinese
students at Iowa State
University, 1979

by
Li-Jung Chen

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Background

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) was developed in 1963 through the cooperative effort of over 30 organizations, public and private. A National Council on the Testing of English as a Foreign Language was formed, composed of representatives of private organizations and government agencies concerned with testing the English proficiency of non-native speakers of English applying for admission to United States colleges and universities. The programs were financed by grants from the Ford and Danforth foundations and were, at first, attached administratively to the Modern Language Association and located in Washington D.C. In 1965, the College Board and Educational Testing Services (ETS) assumed joint responsibility for the program, and its office was moved to Princeton, New Jersey (Educational Testing Service Test and Score Manual, 1978, p. 5).

Recognizing that many TOEFL applicants are potential graduate students, a cooperative arrangement of the operation of the program was entered into by Educational Testing Service, the College Board, and the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) Board in 1973. Under this arrangement, Educational Testing Service is responsible for administering the TOEFL program, according to policies determined by a fifteen-member policy council (Educational Testing Service Test and Score Manual, 1978, p. 5).

The TOEFL is a standardized test designed to measure the English proficiency of non-native speakers of the language seeking admission to colleges and universities in the United States. It was originally a 200 question

test consisting of five sections: Listening Comprehension, English Structure, Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension and Writing Ability. But, in September 1976, a new format was introduced, which allowed for test reliability, validity and security for all international testings overseas; however, the old format is still being used in most institutional testing and TOEFL center testing in the United States.

The new format revised somewhat the content and format of the old TOEFL, reducing the total number of test items from two hundred to one hundred and fifty, and consisting of three sections: Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary. All responses are gridded on answer sheets that are machine-scored at ETS in Princeton. Applicants are allowed about two hours to complete the test.

The Listening Comprehension section measures the ability to understand spoken English. It provides several kinds of stimulus materials that are recorded in Standard American English and sent to test centers on reel-to-reel or cassette tapes. The response material choices are printed in the test books. Generally speaking, the Listening Comprehension section is divided into three parts, each of which contains a specific type of question. One part presents statements that require the applicant

to choose a printed sentence that is similar in meaning to one heard on the recording. For example:

Mrs. Black bought a twenty-dollar dress for sixteen dollars.

Statements in your test book will be:

- (A) Mrs. Black spent \$20.
- (B) Mrs. Black saved \$16.
- (C) Mrs. Black paid too much.
- (D) Mrs. Black saved \$4.

The second listening part consists of a number of short conversations, each followed by a spoken question. The applicant is required to choose an appropriate answer based on each conversation. For example:

Woman: I need some aspirin, please, and I'd also like to get this prescription filled.

Man: Fine. Here's your aspirin. I can have the prescription for you in about ten minutes if you want to wait.

3rd voice: Where did this conversation most probably take place?

Statements in your test book will be:

- (A) At a drug store.
- (B) At a doctor's office.
- (C) At a hospital.
- (D) At a dentist's office.

In the third part, the applicant hears a number of short talks, conversations, or presentations--such as news broadcasts, radio advertisements, public announcements or telephone conversations. Each is followed by several spoken questions. The applicant must choose one of the

answers printed in the test book for each question spoken on the recording. For example:

The theater is closed. Today's movie is 'The Godfather', winner of six Academy Awards. There will be continuous showing at two-thirty, five o'clock, seven-thirty, and ten o'clock. The movie is rated "PG". Tickets are two-fifty for adults and half price for children under sixteen.

If you need more information, the theater will open at two o'clock. Please call back at that time.

Questions and statements referring to the above content will be:

1. What time does the last show start?
 (A) five o'clock (C) ten o'clock
 (B) seven-thirty (D) eleven o'clock
2. How much does a ticket for a child under sixteen cost?
 (A) \$1.25 (C) \$2.00
 (B) \$1.50 (D) \$2.50
3. When did the speaker say that the theater would be open?
 (A) at two o'clock (C) at five o'clock
 (B) at two-thirty (D) at six o'clock

The structure and written expression section of the test measures mastery of standard written English. It is divided into two parts. The first part measures understanding of basic grammar. From the four responses provided for each question, the individual must choose the word or phrase that best completes a given sentence. For example:

She has been here _____.
 (A) after 1973. (C) for 1973.
 (B) in 1973. (D) since 1973.

In the second part of questions, the applicant must identify the underlined words or phrases in a given sentence that would not be acceptable in standard written English. For example:

The duties of the secretary are to take the minutes, mailing the correspondence, and calling the numbers before meetings.

The questions in this section test an applicant's knowledge of the structure of written English.

The Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary section, which is divided into two parts, measures the ability to understand various kinds of reading materials as well as the meaning, the use of words and idiomatic phrases. The vocabulary part on this section contains questions in which the applicant must choose an appropriate substitute for a designated word or phrase in the context of a sentence. For example:

My library card will cease to be effective in December.

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| (A) extol | (C) expound |
| (B) expire | (D) explore |

In the Reading Comprehension part, the applicant's ability to understand a reading passage is tested. The passage chosen represents subjects ranging from practical

items to academically oriented subjects of an expository nature.

Moreover, the material for the test is written by specialists in the teaching of English as a second language, members of the TOEFL committee of examiners, and ETS test specialists. All questions are reviewed for cultural bias and content appropriateness. TOEFL is regarded as one of the most reliable and valid standardized tests.

Statement of the Problem

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) was designed to provide valid test scores indicating the English proficiency of non-native speakers of the language seeking admission to colleges and universities in the United States. In other words, TOEFL is designed to help foreign students demonstrate their English language proficiency at the advanced level required for study at American colleges and universities. And, it continues to be the primary function of the TOEFL program.

Some test interpreters have assumed that the higher the TOEFL score is, the better the writing proficiency will be. And proficiency in the English language is one of the main factors which has been assumed to be crucial for the

"success" of the foreign students studying at an American university (Sharon, A. T., 1972). However, Mr. Joel Slocum, Director of Foreign Students Service at Columbia University, at the May 1972 annual conference of the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs said, "TOEFL is simply a measure of a person's ability to function at a given point in time in five areas of English proficiency--listening comprehension, structure, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing ability" (S. C. Jameson and D. J. Malcolm, 1972).

According to Mr. Joel Slocum, English proficiency measured by TOEFL seems to be subject to change. The proficiency in English of a foreign student measured by TOEFL is subject to considerable change over relatively short periods of time (Educational Testing Service Test and Score Manual, 1978, p. 13). It is commonly held that language proficiency will change greatly with the passage of time and personal experiences (e.g., language training). Therefore, to measure a person's real, practical English ability in terms of reading his TOEFL score would be very hard. The English department of Iowa State University provided the English Placement Test (EPT) to assist in determining writing ability.

There are two parts in the English Placement Test: a battery test measuring foreign students' competence

in the English language, based on listening, grammar, reading and vocabulary; and an essay test used primarily to measure students' writing ability. Those who fail in either part or both parts of the English Placement Test have to take some special remedial English program such as English 100B, C, D, or E. The second part of the English Placement Test, an essay test, is failed by about 80% of foreign students matriculating at Iowa State University, no matter how high their TOEFL scores are.

The researcher has chosen to examine the problem--assessment of writing proficiency--by concentrating on Chinese students at Iowa State University. Generally speaking, Chinese students from Taiwan have a minimum of six years of English training. However, because of the pedagogical system's emphasis on traditional grammar, such as vocabulary drill, labeling sentence patterns or parts, etc., most of the Chinese students usually have a good reading comprehension and good knowledge of structure and vocabulary expression. But, they do very poorly in essay writing. Every quarter, about 80% of the Chinese students fail the English Placement Test because of their poor performance on the essay test.

On the other hand, researchers on writing ability conflict with each other about whether grammar knowledge

is a fundamental part of facilitating a person's writing ability. And since both the TOEFL and English Placement Essay Test (EPET) measure a person's language proficiency, it would be interesting to know their relationship. As a matter of fact, the increasing number of foreign students coming and studying in the United States already causes most of the college professors who are in the English and Linguistics Departments to face this question: "What is the relationship between a foreign student's TOEFL score and his/her writing ability?" In other words, they try to find out, "to what extent a student's TOEFL score can be regarded as a critical determiner or measurement of his writing ability." The researcher chose to investigate the question, "To what extent can a Chinese student's TOEFL score be regarded as a critical determiner or measurement of his/her writing ability." The study was limited to Chinese students who comprise about 11 per cent of the foreign student population of Iowa State University.

Research Questions

According to an Educational Testing Service report, the three sections of TOEFL are designed to measure a person's different skills within the general domain of

English proficiency. That these skills are interrelated is generally recognized; persons who are highly proficient in one area tend also to be proficient in the other areas.

On the other hand, the objective of EPET is to measure a foreign student's language proficiency on the basis of his writing ability. One of the important components--linguistic competence (e.g., syntactic, semantic and lexical background)--will influence a person's writing ability. Therefore, the researcher would like to approach this research by answering two questions: (1) Can we predict a person's writing ability in terms of his TOEFL score? (2) Can we predict a person's writing ability on the basis of his sub-TOEFL scores--scores on the second and third sections--Structure and Written Expression and Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary.

Variables to be Considered

Although TOEFL is used primarily in measuring one's proficiency in English for decisions regarding admission to college institutions, the score is not as stable as a scholastic (Graduate Record Examination) or mathematical aptitude test (Sharon, A. T., 1972). A person's language proficiency measured by TOEFL, according to an Educational Testing Service report, can change considerably in a relatively short period.

Furthermore, some variables such as sex, major, personal experiences (e.g., language training), and motivation in learning English as a second language will influence a person's language proficiency. That females are superior in verbal process and memory for verbal content is a widely held generalization among both laymen and psychologists. Those who major in social science and language arts, compared to those who major in science and engineering, will have more of a chance to practice their writing ability.

A student who may be handicapped because of language problems during the first term of study may not be handicapped in subsequent terms. To assume a student's personal experiences such as language training, or times of taking TOEFL, etc. will influence his language proficiency would be very reasonable. As for the motivation, two kinds of motivations are commonly regarded as important factors to influence the language proficiency of second language learners. They are integrative motivation, which means that the purpose of language study is to learn more about the other cultural community, and instrumental motivation, which means that the purpose of language learning is utilitarian, such as getting ahead in one's own occupation. Based on several research studies on the second language learning, integrative motivation in second language learning

will influence a person's language proficiency more than will instrumental motivation.

The researcher will simultaneously consider the influence of these variables on performance on both TOEFL and EPET to determine the degree to which these variables interrelate to the TOEFL score as a measure of a Chinese student's writing ability.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to answer the following questions:

- (1) Are the TOEFL or the sub-TOEFL scores an adequate determiner of one's writing ability?
- (2) Are the total TOEFL or the sub-TOEFL scores influenced by variables such as sex, major, personal experiences, and motivation in learning English?
- (3) Do the variables such as sex, major, personal experiences and motivation in learning English affect a person's writing ability?

Educational Significance

English proficiency is regarded as a necessary, although not sufficient, prerequisite for foreign students studying successfully in the United States. The TOEFL has been widely used as a screening device for the admission of international students to study in American universities, while the EPET at Iowa State University

was designed to provide information about English competence, especially writing ability, of newly admitted foreign students of I.S.U. Basically, both tests are used to measure foreign students' English ability which is considered an important factor for their successful study in the United States.

More and more Chinese students will continue to pass the TOEFL and study in the United States. Yet, most of them, regarded as the elite of Taiwan, will soon be frustrated and discouraged by their weakness in writing English even if they have very high TOEFL scores. Hopefully, based on the findings of this research, the researcher can give some suggestions to English as a second language instructors at Iowa State University and to officials in the Ministry of Education in Taiwan.

Summary

Because of the problems in the area of English writing ability encountered by most of the Chinese students who study at I.S.U., the researcher would like to investigate the question, "To what extent can a Chinese student's TOEFL score be regarded as a critical determiner of his writing ability?" Since the objectives of EPET and both the second and third sections of TOEFL are considered to measure a student's language proficiency in terms of

*determiner
predictor
measure*

syntactical and lexical knowledge, the researcher will approach this research by answering two questions: (1) Can we predict a person's writing ability in terms of his TOEFL score? (2) Can we predict a person's writing ability on the basis of his sub-TOEFL scores--structure, written expression, reading comprehension and vocabulary?

Since some of variables such as sex, major, personal experiences and motivation in learning English will influence a person's language proficiency, the researcher will simultaneously consider their influences on the performance of both TOEFL and EPET.

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The Review of Literature contains five major sections. The first section, entitled Testing of English as a Foreign Language in General, deals with some advantages and disadvantages of using TOEFL to measure foreign students' language competency. The second section, entitled Testing of English as a Foreign Language in Comparison, examines research studies which compare the TOEFL test with various kinds of locally administered placement tests. The third section, entitled Testing of English as a Foreign Language in Prediction, provides information concerning the predictability of foreign students' academic achievement on the basis of their language proficiency measured by TOEFL. The fourth section, entitled Teaching Writing Skills, describes various kinds of teaching methods to help foreign students develop their writing ability. The fifth section, entitled Chinese Language Interference with Written English, reports some of the problems encountered by the Chinese students when they write English composition.

Testing of English as Foreign Language in General

The Testing of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) was developed in 1963 as a cooperative project of thirty organizations, public and private. A council for TOEFL

was established with members from both private and governmental agencies. In 1964, the TOEFL was put into use to help colleges choose and place students from abroad. In 1965, the administrative functions of the TOEFL council were assigned to the co-sponsorship of the College Entrance Examination Board and Educational Testing Service.

The TOEFL consists of five subtests which are: Listening Comprehension, English Structure, Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension, and Writing Ability. In September 1976, a new format was introduced which allowed for test validity and security for all international testings overseas. This new format was made up of three sections: Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary.

The Educational Testing Service Test and Score Manual states the following descriptions of the three sections on the TOEFL.

- Section I Listening Comprehension is a test of the ability to understand spoken English.
- Section II Structure and Written Expression is a test of recognition and mastery of standard written English. It is divided into two parts. The first part is designed to measure the applicant's understanding of basic grammar; and the second part is to measure the applicant's ability in identifying the words or phrases in a given sentence that would not be accepted in standard written English.

Section III Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary is a test measuring the applicant's ability to understand various kinds of reading materials as well as the meaning and use of words and idiomatic phrases (Educational Testing Service Test and Score Manual, 1978, p. 7).

Angoff and Sharon (1971) constructed a study which dealt with the hypothesis that TOEFL differentiates much less adequately among native speakers of English than among foreign students. Seventy-one native speakers of English, enrolled as freshmen at Western State University, were selected as samples for this study. These selected students also had scores on the American College Testing Program (ACT). As a group, these students scored below the 30th percentile on the ACT English Test, relative to the norm group. However, their total mean scores on TOEFL (662), when compared with foreign students' mean (492), indicated that the test was much too easy for them. The result of this study suggested that the TOEFL was consistent with its designed purpose and was inadequate for differentiating among native Americans. The final conclusion of this study was that TOEFL had significant construct validity. This means that the test actually measures the language proficiency of foreign students.

Although TOEFL is designed primarily to measure the English proficiency of non-native speakers of the language seeking admission to colleges and universities in the United States, it undergoes much criticism for

not being able to directly test the applicant's ability to write or to speak English. A study constructed by Kaplan (1967) reported that the TOEFL only measured the passive skills because it didn't permit the applicant to generate any grammatical structures; it did not test the applicants' ability to express themselves orally.

The same criticism was also presented in Chase's study (1972) in which he criticized TOEFL for measuring mainly American English and formal grammar sentence structure, and dealing little with the ability to understand and communicate in the language.

The Listening Comprehension test, part 1 and part 2 are general in content and only slightly tap the verbal skills that measure the students' ability to function in the American culture; the 3rd part of this subtest, which is a lecture, is more likely to measure the students' ability to take notes and recall details, general intelligence, or the students' previous knowledge of the topic of the lecture and not the understanding of spoken English. The English structure subtest deals with the formal rules of English grammar.... So, the language behavior required by this subtest does not simulate behavior required by the foreign students in an American college. The Vocabulary subtest, is a rather meager sample of the total vocabulary needed by the students. A better format could be developed for this subtest, possibly selecting synonyms which would provide a more adequate sampling of vocabulary, without the burden of sentence reading. The Reading Comprehension includes a short test and questions based on the text. The skills required for this test...[are] to scan the questions and skim the text for the answers....The final part, Writing Ability, is again bound by the formal rules of basic grammar, which does not really indicate the

students' understanding of the ideas and concepts conveyed.... Besides, the ability to recognize inconsistency in grammatical forms does not really indicate how the students will perform in their own writing... (pp. 28-29).

Since the new format was made to revise the content and format of the old TOEFL, Chase's critiques on the old format of TOEFL may still be a valid suggestion for the TOEFL. In addition, this may also explain the reason why foreign students can perform successfully in an American college without good knowledge of formal rules of grammar and structure of American English.

Testing of English as a Foreign Language in Comparison

Competence in the English language has been assumed to be the crucial factor in the success of the foreign students studying at an American college or university. Thus, most graduate schools recommend or require that their foreign students take the TOEFL in their native country and submit the results for admission. However, a person's language proficiency measured by the TOEFL, according to the report of Educational Testing Service (1978), can be changed relatively with the passage of time and personal experiences (e.g., times of taking TOEFL). Hence, a prospective student's TOEFL score, submitted to the admission office, may or may not represent his/her actual proficiency in the English language. To narrow

this weakness, most American colleges and universities use the TOEFL scores in conjunction with a so-called differential, locally administered placement test which, in combination with TOEFL, is used to measure the foreign student's genuine language proficiency and place them in remedial English courses if necessary.

These remedial courses are designed to increase the foreign students' proficiency in English. Studies have been conducted to determine the predictive validity of a number of these tests as related to grade point average (GPA). Domino (1966) conducted a validity study at Fresno State College using the TOEFL and the College Vocabulary Test. The validity of the TOEFL and GPA was .31, and the corresponding validity of the College Vocabulary Test was .34. On the basis of this study, Domino claimed that the locally administered English proficiency tests produce predictive validity comparable to that of the TOEFL, because of the low correlation.

Maxwell (1965) also investigated the comparative validities of the TOEFL and the English proficiency test used at Berkeley. In a sample of 238 foreign students, the coefficient correlation between the TOEFL and GPA was .17, and was .11 between the English proficiency test at Berkeley and grade point average.

Upshur (1966) reported a concurrent validity study using 100 foreign students from Indiana University (N=38), San Francisco State College (N=50) and Park College (N=12). The result he indicated was .89 of concurrent validity between the TOEFL and the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency. Furthermore, a similar study was also conducted by the Educational Testing Service (Educational Testing Service Test and Score Manual, 1978). The concurrent validity of the TOEFL compared with the American Language Institute (ALI) test of proficiency in English developed at New York University was .81 (N=166). This study also reported that the concurrent validity of the TOEFL and the Michigan Test of English was .84 (N=99).

The three sections of TOEFL are, according to an Educational Testing Service report (1978), highly inter-related; persons who are highly proficient in one area tend also to be proficient in the other areas. To test this idea, Pitcher and Ra (1967) conducted a study which compared the TOEFL scores with ratings of themes written by 310 foreign students. Each student wrote four themes, one on each of four assigned topics. Independent ratings of themes were made by two raters on overall quality. A correlation of .78 was reported between the TOEFL total score and the sum of the eight ratings. This high correlation suggests that the TOEFL actually tested writing ability.

Burgess and Greis (1973) presented a study which dealt with the problem of determining what testing device can best indicate a foreign student's readiness for satisfactory performance at the college level, especially in courses requiring a good command of writing and reading skills in English. They compared TOEFL, the Michigan Test, the Lado test of Aural Comprehension, lab. test and written grades on placement English 110 course with total grade point average, grade point average without English 110, and grade point average which was earned from those courses. The findings of this study indicated (1) TOEFL is the most valuable predictor of the foreign students' academic achievement; however, after completion of the English training, the best predictor in college performance is the writing grade in the English course itself; (2) the writing grade on English 110 may be the best predictor of the foreign students' academic achievement indicated by grade point average.

Testing of English as a Foreign Language in Prediction

Due to the overwhelming increase of foreign students studying in the United States, many researchers are interested in finding out the relationship between the TOEFL scores and their academic success. Ayers and Peters (1977) investigated the validity of the TOEFL by means of

prediction of success of 50 Asian students who had completed masters programs in engineering, chemistry, or mathematics. A significant correlation ($r=.40$, $p<.01$) was obtained between scores from the TOEFL and overall grade point average. The result led them to claim that TOEFL is a useful predictor in determining the success of Asian students in the completion of masters level programs in engineering, chemistry, or mathematics.

However, Hwang and Dizney (1970) reported inconclusive results in a study which investigated the predictive validity of the TOEFL as a predictor of the first term grade point average, and of grades in English as a Second Language (ESL) for 63 Chinese graduate students at the University of Oregon. The findings indicated that the significant correlation between total TOEFL scores and grades in English as a Second Language did exist; however, no significant coefficients were found between total TOEFL scores and the first term grade point average for the selected subjects. With the evidence of these results, Hwang and Dizney indicated that TOEFL is a relatively good predictor of grades in English as a Second Language for Chinese graduate students at the University of Oregon; but, its use to predict the academic success of Chinese graduate students is doubtful. The reason suggested for these findings was that Oriental students, in

particular, frequently through diligent and hard work and long hours of study, could earn much higher grades than a low TOEFL score might lead one to expect.

On the other hand, TOEFL is designed primarily in connection with admission decisions, and "it is inappropriately used as a predictor of academic performance of the applicants" (Educational Testing Service Test and Score Manual, 1978, p. 13). Some of the investigators have attempted to predict academic success of foreign students by using TOEFL as a moderate variable. In other words, they think that a person's language proficiency can moderate the relationship between scholastic aptitude tests and academic achievement. A typical study was conducted by Sharon (1972). In that study he tested the hypothesis that TOEFL would act as a moderator of the relationship between Graduate Record Exam-verbal and a measure of graduate school performance in the sense that students scoring high on TOEFL would be more predictable by Graduate Record Exam-verbal than those scoring low. A total of 975 foreign students who took both the TOEFL and the Graduate Record Exam tests were selected from twenty four schools throughout the states. The result of this study indicated that TOEFL may raise the validity of the Graduate Record Exam aptitude tests in predicting foreign students' graduate school grade point average.

Nevertheless, some contradictory results were found in Schrader and Pitcher's study (1970) which combined the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) and TOEFL scores to predict success in law school of foreign students. They reported that the combined use of the LSAT and the TOEFL in a linear regression model didn't increase the predictive validity obtained when either test was used alone. One of the main reasons summarized from several researchers was that the grade point average may be an inappropriate criterion for foreign students. Allowances are often made in the grades themselves to compensate for the inability of the foreign students to deal adequately with the American language, concepts and meaning of the material presented.

Teaching Writing Skills

If one were to look through the literature on the teaching of composition in the second language classroom, one would find a multitude of suggestions as to how to teach it. The various approaches are generally based on the experiences of the authors and their theories on what the teaching of writing entails. There are, basically, two different approaches: the grammatically-based approach and the grammar-free approach.

Researchers such as Allen and Valette (1972), Rivers (1968), Finocchiaro (1958), Chastain (1971), and Billows (1961) all believed that writing is a culmination of the other language skills and that composition is therefore dependent on the mastery of listening, speaking and reading. Theoretically speaking, students developed their writing ability by stages or sequences of exercises described by the foreign language methodologists.

Because of the influence of audio-lingual methodology, writing is seen as a habit-formed skill. Sequential control and guidance in terms of the grammatical manipulations of models, sentences, or passages was suggested by researchers such as Christina Bratt Paulston (1972), Dykstra (1964), Spencer (1965), Rojas (1968), Ross (1968), Pincas (1962) and Moody (1965). Unfortunately, some contradictory results were criticized--"Even when students were receiving practice in the recognition and manipulation of structures, rather than the formal study of grammatical terminology, writing ability was not affected" (Zamel, 1976, p. 73).

Although a knowledge of grammatical structures is an important factor, writing actually involves more than the manipulation and recognition of basic structure. The notion that writing is orthographic speech became favored by some researchers. Organization, style and rhetoric

become the crucial aspects of skill in writing, but, here again, control and guidance are still essential; drill predominates, but on a rhetorical level. Researchers like Kaplan (1967), Pincas (1964), Arapoff (1969), Carr (1967) and Green (1967) all accept this notion. In a word, both the notion that writing is the mastery of grammatical manipulation of sentence patterns and the notion that it is the mastery of imitation and differentiation of stylistic patterns are regarded as descriptive of the grammatically-based approach.

Rejecting the notion that writing is a grammatically-based approach, O'Hare (1973) constructed a study in which he claimed that grammar-free sentence-combining did affect the rhetorical aspects of writing. While it may be true that the syntactic skills that students had acquired provided them with more alternatives for expression, it does not seem likely that skills acquisition was responsible for the successful performances. As a matter of fact, syntax and rhetoric are complementary yet separate.

Chinese Language Interference with Written English

Lado's (1957) interference theory showed that the more unrelated the two concerned languages are, the more difficulties there will be for the learners. In general, Chinese and English are different from one another in many linguistic aspects. Whereas, English is a language with varied derivations, agreements, and parts of speech, each of which has a specific function in its syntactic use, Chinese is a language all of whose words are incapable of inflection or agglutination of any kind: all of whose words are root-ideas. In other words, Chinese is an isolating, underiving language which is characterized by the very special nature of its words. This nature enables them to play such varied parts as noun, verb, adjective, and adverb. Therefore, it goes without saying that the Chinese students will be faced with many problems when they proceed from a grammatically simplified language to a grammatically complex one.

Lay (1979) reported a study which dealt with linguistic interference of Chinese students when they wrote English. In her contrast table of English-Mandarin Chinese, she showed how specific structures in English are handled differently in Chinese. For instance, in Chinese, verbs are all one tense. As a matter of fact, there is no clear-cut distinction between noun, verb, and adjective. Any

word can be almost any part of speech depending on its word order and context. In addition, there are no conjunctions, articles, prepositions, or any noun/verb inflections. Kempf (1975) presented the same idea in her study and claimed that the fact that the Chinese language uses a minimum number of words and simple grammar to express ideas leads to vagueness in the Chinese students' English writing.

In summary, Chinese and English are syntactically both predominantly analytical, using word order, with the help of function words, as a major grammatical device. English has a few inflectional forms: for example, (1) the /s/, /z/, or /Iz/ ending for the plural number and the genitive case of nouns and for the third-person-singular present tense of verb; (2) the /t/, /d/, or /Id/ ending for the preterit and past participle of verbs; and (3) the /er/ and /est/ ending for the comparative and superlative degree of adjectives and adverbs. On the other hand, in Chinese, the concepts of number, tense, and degree are expressed primarily by vocabulary items, while the concept of case is expressed by word order. Such differences may explain some of the difficulties Chinese students encounter when they write English compositions.

Summary

The TOEFL is widely used as a screening device for measuring the English proficiency of non-native speakers of the language seeking to study in the American schools. A number of studies have been conducted to predict the academic success of foreign students from the TOEFL scores or a combination of TOEFL and standardized admission tests such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), and the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). Unfortunately, most of the results contradicted each other.

Whereas the Graduate Record Examination or Law School Admissions Test is labeled a scholastic aptitude test, the TOEFL is labeled as a language proficiency test. This difference contaminates the reliability and validity of the TOEFL. Educational Testing Service stated (1978) that English proficiency is an ability that may change greatly with the passage of time and experience and therefore would be a poor predictor of college level grade point average. The increased questioning of grade point average as an appropriate criterion measure also reduces the validity of TOEFL.

To compensate for the fact that student proficiency on the TOEFL is not as stable as aptitude tests, most of the colleges or universities try to combine TOEFL with the locally

administered placement tests, which are used to place the foreign student in remedial English courses and to predict the foreign students' language proficiency. Most of the studies have been conducted to determine the predictive validity of tests as related to grade point average. Usually the results of the tests are contradictory. The literature review focused on five areas:

- (1) Testing of English as a Foreign Language in General,
- (2) Testing of English as a Foreign Language in Comparison,
- (3) Testing of English as a Foreign Language in Prediction,
- (4) Teaching Writing Skills, and (5) Chinese Language Interference with Written English.

The fact that the Chinese language is syntactically, morphologically and phonologically different from that of the English language is the main reason Chinese students have difficulty in writing English compositions. The conflicts between two approaches, grammatically-based and grammar-free approach, are still being studied.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the question, "To what extent can a Chinese student's TOEFL score be regarded as a critical determiner or measurement of his/her writing ability?" To answer this question, the researcher considered the degree to which four variables--sex, major, personal experiences, and motivation in learning English as a second language--interrelated with the TOEFL scores as a measure of a Chinese student's writing ability.

Procedure

Sample

The main purpose of doing this research was to produce a descriptive study which suggested questions and directions for further research; hence, a small sample of students was considered. From the Chinese Association's Students Lists, thirty Chinese students (fifteen male and fifteen female) of the one hundred fifty who came from Taiwan and are now studying at Iowa State University were randomly selected as the research sample.

Among those selected students, eight were studying for the doctoral degree; two were studying for the Bachelor's degree; and the rest of them were studying for the Master's degree. Most of them had finished their Bachelor's degree in Taiwan before coming to the U.S. As for the doctoral candidates, all but two male students got their Master's degrees in the U.S. The years of their learning English and staying in the U.S. were, on the average, 9.8 years and 1.9 years respectively. Their average age was 27.5, with a range from 22 to 38.

Instruments

A questionnaire composed of two parts of information, demographic data and motivational data, was constructed. The first part, the demographic data, was designed so that the researcher could understand some of the important variables which were considered as the crucial factors in influencing a subject's language competency measured by both the TOEFL and the EPET. Those variables are sex, major, special language training before going abroad, English writing practice, and the degree to which English reports or papers were written when the student was in college.

The second part of the questionnaire was designed to elicit information about the students' motivation in learning English as a second language. Basically speaking, the questions in this part were adapted from Gardner and Lambert (1972), and they can be roughly differentiated into "integrative" and "instrumental" motivation for learning English as a second language. To secure the information, a verbal explanation of the questions and the reasons for them was given to the subjects before they began their responses. Responses to each item were scaled from one to five--one for not at all important; two, a little important; three, quite important; four, very important; five, most important.

In addition, an interview with seven Chinese students was also conducted to investigate information about students' personal difficulties in writing English composition. Both the questionnaire and interview instruments were pilot tested in the summer of June 1980 in educational research classes.

Furthermore, the English Placement Test (EPT), which was developed by the English Department of Iowa State University, was used as a part of the instrument. There are two sections in the English Placement Test, battery test and essay test. The battery test of the English Placement Test consists of four parts: listening comprehension, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and grammar.

The results of the English Placement Test are used to recommend the appropriate placement in remedial courses of English which were established to supplement the specific deficiency of the foreign students. However, since the purpose of this study was to investigate a Chinese student's writing ability from his/her TOEFL scores, it is the score of the second part of the English Placement Test, essay test, which was used in this study. In fact, each subject's score on the EPET was regarded as a criterion or dependent variable in this particular study.

Data collection

To complete this study, all the data needed was collected from the Admissions Offices, the English Department, the E.O. Building, the questionnaire, and the interview. The steps of collecting the data were as follows:

- (1) Collect the following data from the Admissions Office
 - a. TOEFL score and sub-TOEFL scores
 - b. major
 - c. date of taking TOEFL
- (2) Collect the following data from the English Department
 - a. scores of the English Placement Test (both battery and essay tests)
 - b. date of taking English Placement Test

- (3) Collect the following data from the E.O. Building
 - a. major in the undergraduate and graduate
 - b. degree pursued
 - c. length of stay in the U.S.
 - d. age
 - e. personal experiences before studying at Iowa State University

- (4) Collect the following data from questionnaire
 - a. times of taking TOEFL
 - b. years of learning English
 - c. motivation in learning English as a second language
 - d. length of practicing English writing
 - e. language training

- (5) Collect the following data from the interview
 - a. personal difficulties in writing English composition
 - b. personal opinion about the validity of the English Placement Test.

All of the information collected from the related departments was sorted out in terms of students' names. Results were reported by number rather than name.

Data analysis

To investigate the research question, "To what extent can a Chinese student's TOEFL score be regarded as a critical determiner or measurement of his/her writing ability?", the procedure used involved the correlation of the TOEFL scores and EPET scores to yield a measure of relationship between the two variables.

However, the scores of TOEFL were represented by numerical qualities, whereas the scores of EPET were graded by letter. Hence, the Spearman rank correlation could be applied to reveal only the relationships between a Chinese student's TOEFL score and his/her writing ability.

In addition, the variables of sex, educational background (e.g., major), motivation in learning English as a second language, and personal experiences (e.g., language training), influence a person's language proficiency and writing ability. To find out the influences of these variables on the TOEFL score as a measure of a Chinese student's writing ability, a series of tables and related inferences was constructed. All the data collected from the questionnaire and the interview were analyzed systematically and constructed into a series of tables. Then, related inferences were developed after a brief explanation of each table.

Summary

A small sample of Taiwanese students was used in the study. All the data needed were collected from the questionnaire, the interview, the Admissions Office, the English Department, and the E.O. Building.

Due to the limitation of the different numerical quality between the TOEFL and the EPET score, the Spearman rank correlation was conducted to investigate the relationship between the two variables. To understand the degree that variables, such as sex, major, personal experiences, and motivation in learning English as a second language, would simultaneously influence the relationship between a person's TOEFL score and his/her EPET score, a series of tables and inferences was constructed.

CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The major purpose of this research study was to investigate the question, "To what extent can a Chinese student's TOEFL score be regarded as a critical determiner of his/her writing ability?". To answer this question, the researcher considered the influence of the following variables: sex, major, personal experiences, and motivation in learning English. Hence, the following questions can be addressed:

1. Are the TOEFL or the sub-TOEFL scores an adequate determiner of one's writing ability?
2. Are the total-TOEFL or the sub-TOEFL scores influenced by variables such as sex, major, personal experiences, and motivation in learning English?
3. Do the variables such as sex, major, personal experiences and motivation in learning English affect a person's writing ability?

In order to answer the three questions, the data were analyzed to consider: (1) the relationship between the TOEFL score and the EPET score; (2) the relationships among TOEFL, EPET, and the concerned variables; and (3) the analysis of interview data.

The Relationship Between TOEFL and
Writing Ability Measured by the EPET

TOEFL is primarily designed to measure the English language ability of foreign students seeking admission to American institutions of higher education. There are three subtests: (a) Listening comprehension--a test of the ability to understand spoken English; (b) English structure and written expression--a test of recognition and control of important structural and grammatical points of standard written English; (c) Reading comprehension and vocabulary--a test of ability to read and understand English prose, including the ability to draw conclusions and make inferences, and to recognize the fairly advanced level of the vocabulary required for efficient reading. The minimum requirement for the student to study at Iowa State University is a TOEFL score of 500. Any student who does not reach this requirement must study in the Intensive English Opportunity Program in Iowa State University for at least three months.

On the other hand, the English Placement Essay Test (EPET), the second part of the English Placement Test, developed by the English Department of Iowa State University, is designed especially to measure the English language proficiency (emphasis particularly on writing ability) of foreign students on the basis of their

syntactical knowledge of English language. According to the policy of the English Department at Iowa State University, students whose EPET scores were graded "B" should take some English remedial courses, such as English 100 B (with an emphasis on English grammar) and English 100 D (with an emphasis on English composition). Those whose EPET scores were graded "D" must take only English 100 D. In other words, students who were at the English 100 D level were considered to have a higher (better) writing ability than those who were at the 100 B level. As for those whose EPET were graded "P", this "P" indicated that their writing ability was good enough to write an acceptable essay. Those students are able to take the full load of courses at the graduate level.

All the data collected from the questionnaire and the interview were analyzed and constructed into a series of tables. Then, related inferences were developed after a brief explanation of each table.

Both the EPET and the TOEFL were designed to measure the English proficiency of foreign students. A rank correlation analysis was undertaken to investigate the relationship between TOEFL and EPET for the thirty Chinese.

The data in Table 1 illustrated that there is little relationship between EPET and total TOEFL score.

Table 1. Spearman Correlation Coefficient among total- and sub-TOEFL and EPET (N = 30)

	Total TOEFL	Listening Comprehension	Grammar and Writing Experience	Reading and Vocabulary	EPET
Total TOEFL	1.00	.53	.81	.57	.24
Listening Comprehension		1.00	.30	-.09	-.13
Grammar and Writing Experience			1.00	.50	.26
Reading and Vocabulary				1.00	.27
EPET					1.00

There is little relationship between the EPET and the second and the third section of TOEFL--Grammar and Written Expression and Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary.

Several observations which seem warranted here are these:

1. TOEFL is a measure of an individual's ability in the general areas of English language. Proficiency measured by that score doesn't just concern competency in writing ability.
2. Three basic components influence a person's writing ability: (a) linguistic competence (vocabulary and syntactic foundation); (b) fundamental concepts related to composition; (c) a set of processes that enable him/her to approach the task of writing with a reasonable logic (Arapoff, 1967). None of these competencies, except linguistic competence, has ever been measured or related to students' performance on the TOEFL test.
3. "Writing is a purposeful selection and organization of experiences, including any kind of thoughts, opinions, facts or ideas." (Arapoff, 1969). A purposeful selection and organization of experiences requires active thought. Effective writing is determined by the factors of how clear the purpose is, and how relevant and well-organized the experiences are. So, the process of writing is largely a process of thinking in a more logical and coherent way. On the other hand, reading and recognizing grammar in the standard English language are essentially in a more passive thinking process.
4. In accordance with a Taiwan, Republic of China, college entrance examination, the pedagogical program, especially in the English area, puts much emphasis on the traditional grammar, such as vocabulary drill, labelling sentence, patterns or parts. Students from Taiwan, under the high competition of the entrance examination,

have good reading comprehension and good knowledge of structure and vocabulary expression. However, students may not be able to converse and express themselves as effectively as is desirable. (Schools in Taiwan, Republic of China still emphasize teacher-centered pedagogy.) Nor do students know how to "control" fundamental concepts related to composition logically, because they lack practice. Hence, many Taiwan students will do very poorly on writing expression even if they have extremely high TOEFL scores.

5. Most of the Taiwan students tend to study in language-make-up school before they take TOEFL. Since the main purpose of language-make-up school is to help students PASS TOEFL by analyzing test items intensively, students are more likely trained to be test wise rather than to learn English. Hence, most of the students can easily get a high TOEFL score; however, they may not know how to write correct sentences.

There are several inferences which the researcher has drawn from the preceding analysis. These include the following:

1. According to Arapoff (1969), the direction or pattern a person writes usually stems from his/her training and continuing practice, which is a product of both education and culture. For instance, the thought patterns which English speakers and readers appear to expect as an integral part of their communication is a sequence that is dominantly linear in its development. On the other hand, Oriental thought patterns are marked by what may be called an approach of "indirection". In this kind of writing, the development of the paragraph

may be said to be "turning and turning in a widening gyre" (Kaplan, 1966). The circles or gyres turn around the subject and show it from a variety of tangential views, but the subject is never looked at directly. Training and consecutive practice to write English composition are necessary for Chinese students before they decide to go abroad. Hence, most students should take a one semester or a one year writing course, either in a Taiwan college or in an American university.

2. The main reason that students study in the language-make-up school before they take the TOEFL is to apply for some kind of financial aid from American colleges. Since the ability to write a satisfactory paper is commonly believed to be an important ability for graduate students, it is suggested that students should take a writing test after they arrive in the U.S. The result of their application for financial aid may depend on performance on the test.

The Relationships Among the TOEFL, the EPET, and the Concerned Variables

Variables such as sex, major, personal experiences, and motivation in learning English as a second language are considered to influence a person's English proficiency. In order to know whether those variables affected a

person's writing ability and his/her TOEFL score, a series of tables about the selected samples' general background, language background, and motivation in learning English as a second language were constructed.

To answer the question whether a person's major will affect his/her English proficiency as well as writing ability measured by the EPET, all the selected samples' majors were sorted as follows:

- 1 = social science (English, Education, Industrial Education, Child Development, Journalism, Institution Management)
- 2 = physical science (Computer Science, Chemistry, Material Science, Industrial Engineering, Physics, Nuclear Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Metallurgy)
- 3 = fine arts (Music, Arts, Urban Design)
- 4 = biological science (Entomology, Animal Science, Food Science, Microbiology)

The writing abilities of those selected samples are indicated by three levels, B, D, and P, in terms of their performances on the EPET. As was mentioned before, students whose writing abilities are leveled "D" are considered better than those who are leveled "B"; whereas

those whose writing abilities are leveled "P" are considered the best.

Most of the Chinese students tend to study in the language-make-up school, which is different from the so-called language school whose purpose it is to improve a person's language ability before they take the TOEFL. A language make-up school is a kind of language institution whose purpose it is to help students pass any kind of standardized tests required by the American universities, such as TOEFL, Graduate Record Examination, and Graduate Management Admission Test.

The current TOEFL score shows the score on each of the three sections of the test and the total score. Scores for the three sections are reported on a scale ranging from 20 to 80. The total score, which can range from 200 to 800, is divided by adding the three section scores and multiplying that sum by three and one-third.

In this research study the researcher considered factors such as length of study in the language-make-up school, times of taking TOEFL, and length of time spent in writing courses before going abroad, as personal experiences which would influence a Chinese student's language proficiency and writing ability.

Table two indicated that there are only six students whose EPET scores were graded "P" (pass). Among those

Table 2. General background

#	Sex	Degree	Major ^a	Total TOEFL	Sub-TOEFL			EPET (by months)	Length of studying in school (by months)		Times of taking TOEFL
					I List.	II Gram.	III Vic.		making writing course	in make-up writing course	
1	F	Ph.D.	1	537	55	55	51	B	0	0	2
2	F	M	3	546	49	57	59	P	3	0	2
3	F	BA	2	533	55	56	49	B	0	0	1
4	F	Ph.D.	4	620	57	58	64	P	3	0	3
5	F	Ph.D.	4	516	44	54	59	D	0	0	1
6	F	M	1	620	59	63	64	P	0	24	1
7	F	M	1	557	53	55	59	D	0	6	2
8	F	M	4	536	36	55	60	D	2	0	1
9	F	M	4	587	55	60	61	B	3	12	1
10	F	M	2	523	46	59	52	P	3	12	2
11	F	M	1	617	59	63	63	D	1	0	1
12	F	M	3	543	49	56	58	D	3	12	4
13	F	BA	1	563	56	62	51	B	3	0	3
14	F	Ph.D.	1	566	39	61	67	D	2	6	2
15	F	M	1	560	48	59	61	P	3	36	1
16	M	M	2	490	45	48	54	D	3	0	4
17	M	M	2	517	51	52	52	D	0	0	2
18	M	M	2	603	56	64	61	B	0	0	1
19	M	Ph.D.	1	543	48	59	56	D	0	12	3
20	M	M	1	517	45	50	60	B	2	0	3
21	M	M	3	523	57	48	52	B	6	0	2
22	M	M	2	513	46	55	53	B	1	0	1
23	M	M	2	487	45	48	53	D	2	0	3
24	M	M	2	527	52	49	57	B	0	0	3
25	M	Ph.D.	2	533	55	56	49	P	1	0	1
26	M	M	2	537	54	48	49	D	0	0	1
27	M	M	2	550	52	57	56	D	2	6	1
28	M	BA	1	513	53	50	51	D	3	0	2
29	M	Ph.D.	2	517	49	51	55	D	0	6	7
30	M	Ph.D.	2	517	53	49	53	B	0	0	2

^aMajors are classified as 1 - social science, 2 - physical science, 3 - fine arts, 4 - biological science.

six students, five of them were female; one was male. Among the five female students, only one was a doctoral candidate; the rest were all pursuing their Master's Degree. The only male student who passed EPET indicated that he took the English Proficiency Test after he received his Master's degree at Kansas State University.

If the mean scores of total- and sub-TOEFL based on the sex difference were computed (see Table 3), one could infer that males are less facile with language than are females. Therefore, it may be reasonable to infer that females are superior in those tests which require more verbal skills, such as spelling, punctuation, comprehension of written tests, and comprehension of logical relations expressed in verbal terms (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). To generalize from this small sample, however, is not possible.

Table 3. Mean scores for total- and sub-TOEFL based on sex difference (Males = 15, Females = 15)

Structure and written expression		Reading comprehension and vocabulary		Total TOEFL	
M	F	M	F	M	F
52.93	58.20	54.07	58.53	525.80	561.60

Writing is basically an active thinking process. Effective writing is determined by not only high linguistic competence (vocabulary and syntactical knowledge) but also by a series of relevant concepts related to the topic and organized into a logical presentation. Therefore, it would be reasonable to assume that students who have a greater chance to practice writing could perform better on the EPET than those who don't have any chance to practice their writing skills. In Taiwan, students who major in English, Education, and Industrial Education, etc., have more of a chance to write English essays or reports than students who major in physical science, fine arts, or biological science. However, from the results of Table 4, it seems difficult to draw any conclusions based on that assumption. The possible reason may be the limitation of a sample size of Chinese students from Taiwan, Republic of China.

On the other hand, the mean scores for total- and sub-TOEFL as listed on Table 5 show that biological majors (564.75) have higher TOEFL scores than the social science majors do (559.30). Nevertheless, those social science majors have relatively higher TOEFL scores than the physical science majors do (526.69). (The biological majors are usually the best Taiwanese students.) Therefore, from this study, it seems difficult to infer that a person's major can influence his/her English proficiency as well as writing ability

Table 4. Percentage of three different levels of the EPET scores based on major category

	B (N=11)	D (N=13)	P (N=6)
social science	27.27%	38.46%	33.33%
physical science	54.54%	38.46%	33.33%
fine arts	9.10%	7.69%	16.67%
biological science	9.10%	15.38%	16.67%

Table 5. Mean scores for total- and sub-TOEFL based on major category

	Grammar	Reading compre. and vocabulary	Total TOEFL
social science	57.70	58.30	559.30
physical science	53.23	53.31	526.69
fine arts	53.67	56.33	537.33
biological science	56.65	61.00	564.75

measured by the EPET. From the results of both Table 4 and Table 5, one could infer that "major" is an interesting variable which is worth further investigation. An additional study could include students from many nationalities.

Language-make-up school is a kind of language institution whose purpose it is to help students pass any standardized test required by the American universities (e.g., TOEFL, Graduate Record Examination, Graduate Management Admission Test.) Students from Taiwan, Republic of China, tend to study in language-make-up school before they take any kind of standardized test. The reason for this is they want to become familiar with the test format so that they can increase their confidence. The general background of those sampled (see Table 2) showed that more than 50% of the students had studied in language-make-up school before they took TOEFL. Since the purpose of language-make-up school is to train students in taking TOEFL, students usually are good at testing. That is, they are trained to be excellent test wise. They may not know how to write a correct sentence; however, they would know how to choose the right answer during the test and get a high score. This is the most important reason why most of the students from Taiwan have an inconsistent language competency when their TOEFL scores are used as a predictor of their language proficiency.

In order to gather further information about the subjects' language background, the researcher analyzed some of the more important data, gathered from the questionnaire, and listed the results on Table 6.

Table 6. Language background (N = 30)

		Raw Total	%
How often did you write letters in English?	not at all	3	10.0
	a little	22	73.3
	fairly often	5	16.7
	very often	0	0.0
How often did you use English textbooks in college:	not at all	0	0.0
	a little	6	20.0
	fairly often	4	13.3
	very often	20	66.7
How often did you write papers in English when you were in college?	not at all	12	40.0
	a little	12	40.0
	fairly often	4	13.3
	very often	2	6.7
How often did you practice your English writing AFTER you decided to go abroad?	not at all	8	26.7
	a little	18	60.0
	fairly often	3	10.0
	very often	1	3.3

Table 6 indicated that most of the Chinese students didn't have a chance to write English essays or compositions either in letter or paper format. Even if they had decided to go abroad, they still didn't spend much time practicing their writing. When interviewing, the researcher asked them the reasons. Their answers could be summarized with such comments as: "Why should I spend time on practicing writing? I am not an English major and I don't have to write too many reports in my field. If I do have to write some English papers or reports someday, I believe I can survive because I am very good at synthesizing information."

Those six students whose EPET scores were graded "pass" had spent time on writing English letters or reports when they were in the undergraduate levels. So, a person who had more chance to practice his/her writing skill before he/she took EPET could contribute to his/her writing performance on EPET.

Although some students didn't spend too much time writing English letters or reports, they did primarily use English textbooks when they were in college. It is commonly held by the second language researchers that the more the second language learners are exposed to the second language, the better their language proficiency will be (Lambert, 1963). Since more than 50% of the

students indicated that they used English textbooks in college, it would be interesting to further investigate this variable.

According to Lambert (1963), two kinds of motivations are considered as important factors in influencing the language proficiency of second language learners. They are integrative motivation, which means that the purpose of language study is to learn more about the other cultural community, and instrumental motivation, which means that the purpose of language learning is utilitarian, such as getting ahead in one's own occupation.

Researchers on the second language learning commonly believe that students who have high linguistic aptitude and who, at the same time, are integratively motivated will be even more successful in language study (Gardner, 1968). Nevertheless, it was found that in environments where there is an urgency about learning a second language [such as English in the Philippines (Gardner and Lambert, 1972) or in India (Lukmani, 1972)] an instrumental motivation can be very effective.

Taiwan, Republic of China, is a developed country where English is learned as a utilitarian medium to promote international trade, technical training, cultural and economic exchanges, and political relationships with those highly developed countries such as the United States.

One could assume that students from Taiwan would be more oriented instrumentally than integratively. To consider this assumption, the researcher investigated the students' motivations in learning English as a second language. The results were computed and explained in Table 7.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of motivation in second language learning

	Mean ^a	Mean for female (N=15)	Mean for male (N=15)
instrumental motivation	3.61	3.54	3.68
integrative motivation	2.86	2.92	2.80

^aRange = 1-5.

Table 7 indicated that students from Taiwan were primarily oriented instrumentally rather than integratively. Also, male students are more instrumentally motivated than female students; while female students are more integratively motivated than male students.

Female students are generally considered, based on the results on both Table 2 and Table 3, more facile with language than are male students. According to Gardner (1968), those students who have the requisite ability and

who, at the same time, are integratively motivated will be even more successful in language study. The fact that five of six students who passed the EPET were female students and the female students are, in general, more integratively motivated than male students seems to imply that a person's motivation in the second language learning can influence his/her language proficiency as well as writing ability measured by the EPET.

Analysis of Interview Information

To further understand Chinese students' opinion about EPET and personal difficulties in writing English composition, three sets of interview questions were constructed. Twenty-five out of the thirty student samples were interviewed. Their opinions about each question are summarized below:

Question: 1. In the English Placement Test, which test--battery or essay test--did you feel was more difficult for you?

Narration: All of those interviewed agreed that the essay test was the most difficult part in the EPT. Their reasons are summarized as follows: (a) a lack of practice in writing English composition made them unable to organize their ideas into a logical process, especially under the pressure of a time-limited test, and (b) their fragmented knowledge about English grammar was an obstacle in writing English essays.

Question: 2. Compared to TOEFL, do you think the English placement Essay Test (EPET) is a good measurement to determine English ability of foreign students?

Narration: The answer was positive, although some students did complain about the content of English 100B, and 100D.

Question: 3. What is your main problem when you write compositions in English?

Narration: a. Vocabulary-- Some students indicated that their limited knowledge about vocabulary was the main difficulty in expressing their ideas whenever they wrote English compositions.

b. Thought pattern-- Some students indicated that they had problems organizing their ideas in a reasonable logical way. "I know there are three parts in composition: introduction, body (development), and conclusion. But I don't know what kind of information to categorize into each part."

c. Grammar-- almost all of the students admitted that they had a lot of difficulty in using verb tense, pronoun, article, preposition, and subject-verb agreement.

Summary

To investigate the question, "To what extent can a Chinese student's TOEFL score be regarded as a critical determiner of his/her writing ability measured by the EPET?", the Spearman rank correlation coefficient was used. The results indicated that there is little relationship

between EPET and total TOEFL score. There is little relationship between the EPET and the second and third section of TOEFL-Grammar and Written Expression and Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary.

Variables such as sex, major, personal experiences, and motivation in learning English as a second language, were simultaneously considered when the researcher investigated the major question. The data, gathered from the questionnaire and interview, were analyzed and constructed into a series of tables. Based on the results and discussions illustrated from each related table, several implications which seem valuable in this research study are as follows:

1. In this small sample, female students were, in general, more facile with language than were male students.
2. A person's major seemed to have NO influence on his/her language proficiency or writing ability as measured by EPET. However, students whose EPET scores were graded "pass" did spend more time practicing writing when they were in the undergraduate levels. Practice seemed to be an important factor in improving a person's writing ability.
3. More than 50% of the students indicated that they used English textbooks in college. If it is true that the more the second language learners are exposed to the second language, the better their language proficiency will be, this variable would be worth further investigation. A comparative study could be designed

to investigate the importance of studying with English textbooks as an undergraduate.

4. Students from Taiwan were primarily oriented instrumentally rather than integratively. In addition, male students were, in general, more instrumentally oriented than were female students; while female students were integratively motivated more than male students.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the question, "To what extent can a Chinese student's TOEFL score be regarded as a critical determiner of his/her writing ability?"

In the review of the literature, the variables of sex, major, personal experiences, and motivation in learning English as a second language, were found to be significantly related to a learner's language proficiency, including his/her writing ability. This research was designed to determine if these factors might have an effect on the English proficiency of Chinese students in learning English as a second language.

Conclusions

The results of the data analysis indicated that there is little relationship between a Chinese student's TOEFL score and his/her writing ability as measured by the EPET. In addition, there is little relationship between a Chinese student's writing ability, measured by the EPET, and his/her sub-TOEFL scores--scores on the second and third section of TOEFL. In other words, a person's linguistic competence (vocabulary and syntactical

foundation) was not found to be a critical determiner of his/her writing ability.

In general, female students appeared to be more facile with language than did male students.

One could expect that students who majored in social science would perform better on the EPET than those who majored in physical science, fine arts, or biological science. However, from the results of this research, major did not seem to be a variable which affected performance. Students whose EPET scores were graded "pass" did reveal that they spent much time practicing writing when they were in the undergraduate levels. Some further investigation of this variable could prove to be worthwhile.

Students from Taiwan were primarily motivated instrumentally rather than integratively. Male students were, in general, more instrumentally oriented than female students; whereas female students were more integratively motivated than male students. Researchers on second language learning commonly hold that students either with high linguistic aptitude or with a strong integrative motive will tend to be successful in the second language acquisition. Due to the limitation of the small sample size, it was difficult to support this contention. However,

the results of this research indicated that female students who were motivated integratively were more facile with language than were male students.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the data, the researcher believes that the following recommendations can be made.

1. Writing a satisfactory paper is commonly believed to be a competence needed by a graduate student. Therefore, it is suggested that the Ministry of Education in Taiwan should help each university in Taiwan to offer at least one advanced writing course as a requirement for students who are going to study in the United States.
2. The Ministry of Education in Taiwan should establish a committee to study the role of the language-make-up school in preparing students who will study abroad. One outcome of this study could be the limitation of the influence of these schools.
3. Since the TOEFL is not a good predictor of students' language proficiency, it is suggested that Iowa State University should continue to provide the English Placement Test to test students' language proficiency as well as their writing ability.
4. Applicants for university financial aid receive aid without demonstrating writing proficiency. Future scholarship recipients should pass a test similar to the English Placement Test before receiving aid.

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APPENDIX: MODIFIED CONSENT FORM, QUESTIONNAIRE,
AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

MODIFIED INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I am doing my thesis research to learn more about the relationship between a person's writing ability and his/her TOEFL score. To complete this research it is necessary to know the following details about you:

1. From the Admission Office
 - a. TOEFL score and sub-TOEFL scores
 - b. major
 - c. data of taking TOEFL
2. From the English Department
 - a. scores of the English Placement Test (both battery and essay test)
 - b. date of taking English Placement Test
3. From the E.O. Building
 - a. major in the undergraduate and graduate
 - b. degree they want to pursue
 - c. length of staying in the U.S.
 - d. age
 - e. working or any kinds of personal experiences before studying at Iowa State University

4. From questionnaire
 - a. times of taking TOEFL
 - b. years of learning English
 - c. motivation in learning English as a second language
 - d. language training
 - e. the degree of practicing English writing
5. From interview
 - a. personal difficulties in writing English composition
 - b. personal opinion about the validity of the English Placement Test

All of the information gathered about you will be reported in terms of code numbers or groups. Your name will never be used in reporting results. If you have questions concerning my project please call or write:

Ms. Li-Jung Chen

877, Pammel Ct.

Ames, IA 50010

Ph. (515) 292-6857

I give my permission to Li-Jung Chen to collect the above information about me. My name may never be used in the thesis or in any written publication. I may withdraw from this project at any time.

Name _____ Date _____
 Address _____ Signature _____

QUESTIONNAIRE

Code Number _____

A. Part I. General Information

Please answer all the questions to the best of your knowledge. Your answers will be kept in confidence. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Sex _____
2. Age _____
3. Major _____
4. Date of first arriving in the U.S. _____
5. How many years have you spent studying English?
_____ Years.
6. Did you go to college before coming to the states?
Yes ; No (please circle one of them)
7. If "yes", where? _____; Degree _____
8. If "No", where did you get your Bachelor or Master degree?
Bachelor degree _____
Master degree _____
9. Did you change your major? Yes ; No (please circle one)
10. If "Yes", what is your original major? _____
11. Did you ever study in the language school before you went abroad? Yes ; No (please circle one of them)

13. Did you ever study in _____ before you
took your TOEFL? Yes ; No (please circle one)
14. If "yes", how long? _____
15. How many times did you take TOEFL? _____ times
16. How often did you write letters in English? (please
check one)
- Not at all _____ Fairly often _____
A little _____ Very often _____
17. Did you use English textbooks in college? (please
check one)
- Not at all _____ Half English - Half Chinese _____
Very few _____ Mostly English _____
18. How often did you write your papers (reports) in
English when you were in college? (please check one)
- Not at all _____ Fairly often _____
A little _____ Very often _____
19. Did you ever take a writing course (English) when
you were in college? Yes ; No (please circle one)
20. If "Yes", how long? _____
21. How often did you practice your English "writing"
after you decided to go abroad?
- Not at all _____ Fairly often _____
A little _____ Very often _____

B. Part II. Reasons for Learning English

Listed below are some reasons for learning English as a second language. Please indicate, by placing a "circle" in the appropriate column, how important each reason is for you personally. (Most important = 5, very important = 4, quite important = 3, a little important = 2, not at all important = 1)

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. To fulfill language requirement
in High & Junior High Schools | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. To pass college Entrance Examination | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. In order to get a higher paying job | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. In order to read more advanced technical magazines in my field | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. In order to be an educated person | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. In order to learn about the American ways of life | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. To have a chance to meet and converse with more and varied kinds of people | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. In order to have American friends | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. To acquire more knowledge about English | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. To become acquainted with people in touch with the latest trends in thought and behavior in the west | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. In order to have a chance to travel
abroad | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. In order to have a chance to live
in another country | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

INTERVIEW

1. In the English Placement Test, which part of tests-- battery or essay test, do you feel was more difficult for you?
2. Compared to TOEFL, do you think the English Placement Essay test is a good measurement to determine English ability of foreign students?
3. What is your main problem when you write compositions in English?