A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS ENGLISH STUDY LITERATURE

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Abstract. *Business English is not only a language for specific purposes, but a discipline in Chinese university. A content analysis of Business English study literature is conducted to comprehend its studies. In total, 200 journal articles (n=200) are studied and the title of Business English is retrieved from six journal databases including the main Chinese journal databases CNKI and WanFang, and four international databases SAGE Journals, ScienceDirect, SCOPUS, and ProQuest Education Journals from the year of 1999 to 2013. The findings reveal that 1) Chinese scholars publish a large quantity of journal articles; 2) Business English studies are main at three disciplines: Foreign Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, English Language and Literature, and Curriculum and Pedagogy; 3) The study of Business English in academic dissertations is mainly at the level of Master; 4) Business English study focuses on the four categories from 1999 to 2013: issues of language study, issues of education, issues of translation, and issues of cross-culture communication. This study also critically analyzes the research limitations and recommendations of Business English study.*

Key words*: Business English, content analysis, business English institution, translation, cross-culture communication, English for Specific Purposes (ESP)*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the 1960s and 1970s, English for Specific Business Purposes (ESBP) is first classified at English teaching as a variety of EOP/EVP (Carter & Nunan, 2001). ESBP is abbreviated as Business English (BE) in English as foreign language (EFL) countries. Business English researches contained ESP and EAP aspects such as ESP classification (Hutchinson & Water, 1987), teaching (Carter & Nuan, 2001; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), need analysis (Stapa, 2003; Venkatraman, 2007; Songhori, 2008), textbook design (Rahman, 2011), teacher training (Venkatraman, 2007), corpus research (Fuentes, 2003; Pérez-Paredes, 2003) and assessment (Rahimy, 2007), etc. The theories in the area of research of Business English are focused on the ESP theory and practice, comparative study of ESP and EAP, and other borrowed theories.

Business English as one variety of ESP, has close relationship with the development of global economy. In order to cater for the social needs of Business English graduates in China, the Chinese universities begin to enlarge the enrollment quotas from the year of 1999. Chinese scholars have conducted many contributions to Business English study and improved it to broader fields. This reaches its the peak as a study of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for educational and business purposes in China after its entrance in WTO

in 2001. Researches on Business English study have covered wide fields including business language study, instruction, translation, and cross-culture communication. Zhou (2004) argues that Business English contains three essential elements, those being background knowledge of business, language in business settings, and business communication skills. It is necessary to survey the main journal articles and explore the content of Business English study.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to conduct a systematic review of the Business English study from 1999 to 2013, to investigate the limitations and recommendations for Business English study. The research questions focus on Business English study of:
   1) What is the research situation in Business English study?
   2) What is the content of Business English study?
   3) What are the limitations of Business English study?
   4) What are the recommendations of Business English study?

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative content analysis method (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) is chosen and 200 journal articles (n=200) are analyzed to categorize the research themes in Business English study from 1999 to 2013. The content of literature is conducted as inductive categories and then deductive categories to find out the situation and themes of business English study from the year of 1999 to 2013. To increase the reliability, the journal articles are selected from the high citation journal articles from six famous databases including CNKI, WanFang Data, SAGE Journals, ScienceDirect, SCOPUS, and ProQuest Education Journals. CNKI[1] and WanFang Data[2] collect all of the journal articles published in China, and graduate theses in Chinese universities.

The retrievals of databases are restricted to the period stretching from 1999 to 2013. To ensure the specificity of the reviewed articles, the keywords used for the retrievals are Business English, Business English teaching, Business English translation, Business English language, Business English Communication, and English for Specific Business Purposes. To further narrow down the research, the keywords combinations are used with 'and' and 'or', and retrieved alternatively as 'title' and 'keywords'.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Research Situation of Business English Study

In order to explore the research tendency on the quantity of journal articles, the keyword of 'Business English' is retrieved in the database of CNKI, Wanfang Data, SAGE Journal, ScienceDirect, SCOPUS, and ProQuest Education Journals, by the subject of 'journal

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[1] CNKI (www.cnki.net) refers to "*China National Knowledge Infrastructure*", founded at 1995, which is top one of the most popular three knowledge databases (CNKI, WanFang Data and CQVIP) in China, indexing all of journal articles, MA theses and PhD dissertations, magazine articles, newpapters, etc, in China.
[2] WanFang Data (www.wanfang.com.cn) is one of the most popular knowledge databases in China, which indexes all journal articles, MA theses and PhD dissertations, magazine articles, newpapters, etc, in China

articles' according to the 'title' from the publishing date of 1999 to 2013. Findings reveal that the total quantity of published journal articles in WanFang Data is 9857, CNKI 8513 and ScienceDirect 214. Chinese scholars have published almost ten thousand journal articles from 1999 to 2013. There is a definite tendency that the researches of Business English have an overwhelming quantity of journal articles in WanFang Data and CNKI. Chinese scholars have conducted the main researches on Business English.

Table 1 Quantity of Journal Articles on Business English
(Retrieved on 6 May, 2014)

Main Database	Journal Article Quantity
WanFang Data	9857
CNKI	8513
ScienceDirect	214
ProQuest Education Journal	35
SAGE Journal	24
Scopus	1

Findings also reveal that the number of published journal articles yearly is increasing stably and reaches a peak in 2012 at about 1515. And the quantity of MA (Master of Arts) theses is also increasing rapidly, which indicates that there are increasing numbers of scholars who are engaging in the researches of Business English at universities, with a total reach of 720 pieces from 1999 to 2013. At WanFang Data, there are 670 pieces of MA and PhD theses. However, most researches of Business English in the graduation dissertations are at the MA level, and only 7 pieces at the level of PhD dissertations.

Table 2 Quantity of Journal Article, MA thesis and PhD Dissertation in CNKI
(Retrieved on 6 May, 2014)

Year	Journal Article	MA Thesis	PhD Dissertation
1999	36	0	0
2000	28	1	0
2001	45	4	0
2002	55	6	0
2003	86	4	0
2004	98	18	0
2005	183	24	0
2006	251	43	1
2007	543	50	0
2008	749	79	0
2009	967	98	0
2010	1236	80	1
2011	1372	106	0
2012	1515	108	2
2013	1349	97	3

Another finding reveals that Business English study in China is at the three main disciplines including Foreign Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, English Language and Literature, and Curriculum and Pedagogy.

Table 3 Research Disciplines of Business English in MA & PhD Dissertation
(Retrieved from CNKI on 15 May, 2014)

Discipline	Quantity
Foreign Linguistics and Applied Linguistics	672
English Language and Literature	157
Curriculum and Pedagogy	90
Linguistics and Applied Linguistics	12
Vocational and Technical Education	6

The increasing publication of Business English journal articles are contributed to the research journals in China. There are many specific SSCI translation journals for Business English in China including Chinese Translators Journal, Chinese Science and Technology Translators Journal, Shanghai Journal of Translators, East Journal of Translation and Chinese Journal of ESP. English language and teaching journals which publish Business English articles on Business English teaching and linguistics studies, are Foreign Languages in China, Journal of Chinese Foreign Languages, Foreign Language World, Foreign Language Research, Modern Foreign Languages, Foreign Language Teaching and Research, and other hundreds of university journals.

Business English study theories originate from the language study such as First Language Teaching and Second Language Acquisition (SLA), linguistics, translation and communication. According to the retrieval of the journal database of CNKI searched by 'title' from 1999 to 2013, Business English study is mainly focused at the four perspectives that include language study, education study, translation study, and cross-culture communication study.

Table 4 Research Fields of Journal Articles in CNKI
(Retrieved on 25 May, 2014)

Research Field	Article Quantity
Education of Business English	10181
Translation of Business English	1297
Language of Business English	306
Cross-culture Communication of Business English	651

4.2. Content of Business English Study

The arguments and findings in this article, by the review study of six databases, revolve around Business English study from the following four categories: (1) issues of language study, (2) issues of instruction, (3) issues of translation, (4) issues of cross-culture communication.

4.2.1. Issues of Business English Language Study

Business English is a variety of English for Specific Purposes, which has the specialized language characteristics including lexical, syntax and text characteristics. The lexical characteristics of Business English includes terminology, formality, polysemy, synonyms, abbreviations and unity (Chen, 2000, 2003).

The syntax characteristics of Business English includes simple sentences and model sentences in business letter writing; long sentences, compound sentences and compound complex sentences in business legal documents; passive sentences in business law, contract and finance; model sentences and pattern sentence in business law, letter writing and international trade documents (Mo, 2002, 2003; Li, 2004; Yu, 2009; Li, 2010).

Business text can be categorized as business letter and international trade correspondence, note, memo, notice, meeting summary, business report, advertisement, and contracts (Li, 2010). The business text contains the characteristics of politeness (Yu, 2009), pattern texts (Mo, 2003), and nominalization (Li, 2004; Dong, 2011).

Some researchers explore the lexical and syntax characteristics in different genres of Business English, such as business contract (Chen, 2003), business law (Liu, 2004; Weng, 2013), business letter writing (Weng, 2009), etc.

4.2.2. Issues of Business English Education

The education study of Business English focuses on four parts: teaching methods, discipline construction and curriculum design, textbook and teaching materials construction, business English talent cultivation and development.

1) Teaching Methods
Business English teaching methods are borrowed from ESP, EAP, L1 teaching and SLA. There are theoretical studies and empirical studies on Business English listening, speaking, reading and writing. The popular Business English teaching methods are transferring from the teacher-centered teaching to the student-centered teaching in order to stimulate students' study interests and participation, such as task-based approach, discovery approach, group study approach, case study approach, study and discussion approach (Liu, 2001, 2003; Chen, 2005; Hou, 2007), and content-based instruction (CBI) (Yin, 2013). As for task-based approach, Gu (2006) argues for the six steps teaching model, including warm-up of basic knowledge, pre-task input, student's self-learning, group discussion, real materials discussion and written report.

The empirical studies of Business English teaching focus on the efficiency of related study approaches, and the need analysis and the review study. Devimeenakshi and Tyagi (2013) argue the empirical study on Business English teaching methods in India classroom. Judge (2011) conducts the business language learning strategies for Spanish adult learners.

Business English writing teaching methods pay attention to the product approach and process approach, task-based approach, genre-based teaching approach and peer feedback (Li, 2009). Mehrpour and Mehrzad (2013) studies the genre of English Business e-mails. Genre studies of Business English writing focus on business letter, e-mail, contract, and other business documents.

Business spoken English teaching focuses on the situation teaching to simulate the different situations such as at bank, factory, company and meeting, the communicative teaching to cultivate the students' communication language competence and cross-culture communication ability.

2) Discipline Construction and Curriculum Design

Business English (also called English for International Trade Approach), was set as a research approach of university discipline of English Languages and Literature in many Chinese universities and Vocational and Technical Colleges at the end of 1990s and the beginning of 2000s (Zhou, 2004). In 2006, Chinese Ministry of Education authorized 6 universities to establish Business English Discipline (BED) for Bachelor's degree. From then on, the Business English Approach, Business English Discipline construction, curriculum design, discipline construction and graduate cultivation are broadly discussed (Liu, 2009). Lin (2001) discusses the textbook compilation in Business English discipline construction. Sun and Gong (2001) argue the definition of Business English discipline. Yang (2003) empirically studies the situation and tendency of Business English discipline and makes a comparative study with Britain.

Business English discipline construction needs curriculum design and textbook compilation. Before the establishment of Business English discipline, there was a discussion whether the Business English discipline shall belong to the discipline of English Language and Literature or the discipline of Economy and Management. Its curriculum contains the courses of Language and Business, some called English Language + Business, or English Language + International Trade. The block of English Language includes compulsory courses such as English Reading, English Writing, English Listening, Spoken English and Integrated English, etc., and selective courses such as International Business, International Finance, International Trade and Practice, International Settlement, International Business Negotiation, and International Trade Correspondence (Zhou, 2004).

3) Teaching Materials Construction

The need analysis and curriculum construction are the premise and basics of textbook and teaching materials construction. Textbook compilation should be based on the principles of inter-disciplinary theory and inter-disciplinary talent cultivation and based on the guidance of practical, pertinent, knowledgeable, communicative, and scientific approach (Liu, 2010). In addition, Business English teaching materials shall pay attention to the language function and business knowledge function.

Business English Teaching curriculum needs teaching material which contains the three parts in Chinese university: integrated English courses (like listening, speaking, integrated reading and extensive writing), Business major courses (like International Trade Correspondence, Business English Translation, International Business, International Business Law, Marketing and Finance, etc.), and other business major and selective courses (like International Trade and Practice, Management, Accounting, Contract Law, etc.) (Li, 2013).

Textbook compilation shall adapt the teaching methodologies such as situation teaching and communicative teaching in oral Business English, genre in writing, and case study and analysis in international business and international trade practice, etc.

4) Business English Talent Cultivation and Development

The purpose of business English teaching is to cultivate qualified business talents, and to meet the needs of social economy development. Business English talent cultivation study pays attention to the local talent need analysis of various fields and districts, the cultivation and teaching strategies, the talent performance and knowledge structure survey, student internship, and the industry-university-research practice and corporation study (He, 2012; Bi, 2012; Wu, He, & Xiang, 2006). The industry-university-research practice and corporation study is broadly argued to combine the theory with practice, and to explore the internship

methods and the cooperation strategies between university and industry (Zhao & Xiong, 2009; Liu, 2009).

4.2.3. Issues of Business English Translation

Business English Translation theories and practices are closely connected with translation theories and translation practices. On the study of Business English translation theories, the studies have been conducted by using the language translation theories such as 'domestication' and 'foreignalization' of advertisement translation and brand translation (Dai & Lv, 2005; He & Tan, 2007), Nida's "dynamic equivalence", Newmark's "relative translation", cultural translation (Zhang, 2013).

Cross-cultural communication factors influence Business English translation skills and strategies such as "geological location", "individual values", "social ideology", "history" and "culture" (Zhang, 2013). Therefore, there are skills and strategies to cross the culture gap and meet the cross-culture understanding of the different business culture in translation.

Translation principles and criterion of Business English translation are explored, such as "faithfulness, consistency, concreteness, expressiveness, and configuration" (Liu, 2004). Ma and Guan (2006) point out that different texts shall have different translation principles. Wang and Li (2008) insist that Business English translation has special characteristics and rules, which need "alteration" to promote "efficiency". In addition, Weng (2013) studies the translation principle of "dynamic message equivalence", and summarizes as "4Es" including a) equivalence of semantic message of source language and target language, b) equivalence of stylistic message of source language and target language, c) equivalence of cultural message of source language and target language, d) equivalence of business effect of source language and target language.

Translation practice studies are conducted in various Business English translation fields, such as the mistranslation and errors of international trade contract (Chen, 2000, 2003, 2005), insurance policy (Chen, 2003), WTO text (Chen, 2004; Wu, 2008), International finance (Mi, 2012; Xie, 2005), international trade correspondences (Wang & Guo, 2008), advertisement (Li & Ma, 2005; San & Li, 2003) and ESP researches such as medicine English, computer English, sailing English, fashion English, even hair product English (Gao, 2012, 2013), etc.

4.2.4. Issues of cross-culture communication

Cross-culture communication is a kind of constructing relationship among different countries or district, culture, linguistics, and religions. According to the Shannon-Weaver communication model (Shannon & Weaver, 1949), communication is a product of five elements: an information source, a transmitter, a channel, a receiver, and a destination. Business English cross-culture communication is conducted by businessmen to send English information source to their business partners in the whole world to reach the purpose of business transaction.

In 1950s, American anthropologist Hall (1973) defines the concept of "cross-culture communication" and pointed out the relationship between cross-culture communication and business (Wang, 2012). In Business English instruction, cross-culture communication is implied at the curriculum design, teaching methodology, and practical performance cultivation (Xiao & He, 2007; Fan, 2008; Wang, 2012).

The empirical study of language and non-language cross-culture communication compares different languages and cultures, such as USA and India (LeFebrve, 2011), America and Vietnam (Kohl, 2007), USA and Japan (Rogers et al, 2002), China and Sweden (He & Liu, 2010), etc. In addition, the other empirical study includes effectiveness of teaching and communication (Okoro, 2013), the survey of cross-cultural performance and ability (Fu & Li, 2003), and needs analysis, etc.

4.3. Limitation of Business English Study

Business English study from 1999 to 2013 has several limitations. First, although there is a large quantity of journal articles on Business English study in China, there are a lot of repeated researches in China. Many Chinese scholars pay little attention to the research methodology in academic studies. Second, most journal articles on Business English writing are published in low impact factor journals, and few ISI journals. This is because Business English study is regarded as an interdisciplinary subject in EFL countries. Many high impact factor journals do not accept articles on Business English study. There are only few ESP journals in the world such as ESP China, ESP Malaysia, and Asian ESP Journal. Third, the empirical studies of Business English instruction are mostly conducted on university or vocational and technology colleges students, but few for working staff and adults.

In addition, most of EFL countries regarded Business English as only a course at university, except China where it is a discipline. Therefore, there are few studies on Business English in the world from the aspect of discipline construction, curriculum design, talent cultivation, translation and cross-culture communication. Most of the studies deal with a Business English course outside China.

4.4. Recommendations for Business English Study

There are several recommendations of Business English study. First, the theory study of Business English should construct a system to form the theory framework for Business English discipline. Second, Business English discipline construction needs not only teaching material but also people, which implies the urgent need for teacher training. However, a lot of scholars outside China do not regard Business English as a discipline. Third, Business English study neglected the study of assessment. Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) assessment differs from Language for General Purposes (LGP) in two parts: authenticity of task and interaction between language knowledge and specific purposes of content knowledge (Douglas, 2003). Business English curriculum assesses authenticity and situation application of language and business knowledge, and pays attention to the performance in formative assessment. In the long run, business language assessment should focus on the student-centered process of learning, which can be assessed by process assessment, portfolio assessment, and program assessment.

In addition, Business English teaching in EFL payed much attention to the English language, but neglected the balance of language and business knowledge. The language teaching theory and practice have mature development, but it needs to enhance teacher training, and class input of business knowledge.

5. CONCLUSION

According to the retrieval of journal articles in six main databases, Business English study has gained great achievement in China. The quantity of journal articles in China is overwhelmingly larger than in other countries. Yearly publication of journal articles has been over 1000 pieces since 2010. The number of MA theses and PhD dissertations also increase steadily, which implies significant research interests in Business English in Chinese higher education. Business English studies are mainly focused on the four aspects including education, translation, language and cross-cultural communication. The discipline study of Business English has achieved a lot in instruction, teaching material construction and teacher training.

The limitation of this study is that the literature is changing and a researcher cannot take the whole literature as sample to study the tendency and content of Business English study. The selected 200 articles are not enough for the study of the 15 years' Business English research. The categorization of the research tendency and content is from a macro aspect. Also, many specific studies are not explained in the findings.

This article analyzes Business English study in the four main parts, but there are other fields of theory studies which need analyses such as lexis, functional linguistics, cognitive linguistics, social linguistics, comparative linguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, corpus linguistics and teaching methodology. The empirical study of Business English mainly focuses on the survey of talent needs, efficiency of teaching methods, practical application of business English in business negotiation, translation and contract writing. For the further review study, each of the main four parts on Business English study can be analyzed in terms of content analysis.

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