Academic Writing Instruction for EFL Undergraduates in Mainland China: An Intertextuality Approach

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Abstract: *The paper attempts to employ intertextuality as an approach to cultivate the EFL learners' literacy in academic English writing under the simulated English contexts in China. In the paper five intertextual links are found concerning text-internal and -external resources: defining rhetorical modes, signaling top-down pattern, and signalizing rhetorical moves of ESAP discourses, facilitating textual cohesion and exhibiting rhetorical forms genres. The dynamic intertextualization of these links facilitates learners in their improved competence through deconstructing and restructuring of academic knowledge in actual discursive professional practices of academia. Intertextuality prompts EFL learners as well to raise critical readers' awareness of academic literacy features, to acquire the ability of idiomatic English and critical thinking as critical readers and independent student-writers. The paper extends related previous studies in two ways: grammatical structure as a basic unit of intertextuality, intertextuality as an endogenous links in the minds of student readers.*

Keywords: *Intertextuality; Integration of Form and Content; ESAP Instruction of Social- cognitive Construction; Critical Genre Analysis; Academic Literacy*

Introduction

Intertextuality, a relationship of co-presence between two texts or among several texts, is a most investigated area in social sciences as in literary researches, critical discourse analysis in particular. (Kristeva, 1986: 231; Genette, 1997: 1, Fairclough, 1992; Bakhtin, M. 1981; van Dijk, 2007) A wide concept of intertextuality covers two dimensions: constitutive (text-internal resources like discourse conventions) and manifest (text-external resources like obvious borrowing from quoting, plagiarism, allusion, etc.), further identified as "interdiscursivity" (Fairclough, 1992: 117; Bhatia, 2012: 24). A narrow concept of intertextuality focuses on "text-internal properties" (Bhatia, 2012: 24) substantially involved in "discourse and genre theory"
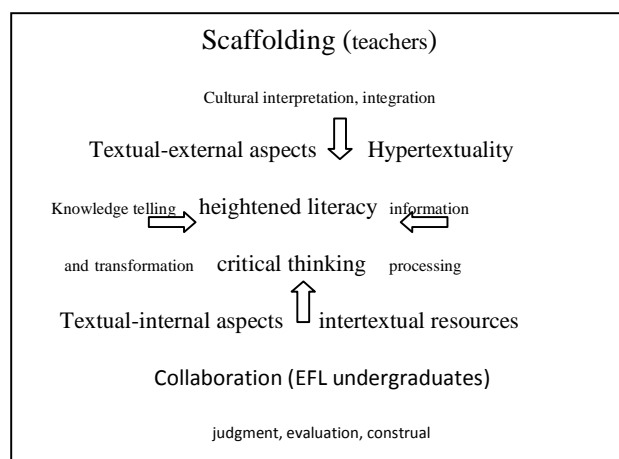
(Ibid., 26) via discursive practices. Intertextual studies have been given considerate attention in socio-pragmatic space like institutions, legal discourses or other professional practices but sparsely in pedagogical studies. It is thus suggested "a focus of educational research". (Lemke, 2004: 4) In fact "all of these aspects of intertextuality are important for learning, in both mother-tongue and second-language contexts."(Flowerdew, 2012: 145) It is of constructive importance for Chinese EFL learners under the simulated English contexts to construct their writings via references to native intertextual resources, for ESAP instruction is facing the challenge of the students' deficiency of written competence concerning academic discourses, even "causing students' or teachers' panic to linguistic forms".(Wang Lifei, 2007) So intertextuality, the constitutive type in particular, is of conical value to language instruction esp. ESAP literacy for nonnative undergraduates. This article is about intertextuality (in Bhatia's view) and EFL academic writing instructions. It focuses on how the idea of implicit intertextuality has been appropriated in research related to heightened EFL academic literacy via how native academic forms are written the way they are.

Intertextuality: A theotical Framework of ESAP Literacy Cultivating

Intertextuality in this paper serves as an approach to ESAP pedagogical methodology. Intertextuality in educational contexts can be viewed as semiotic resources within professional discourses, including both "lexico-grammar and genre" (Bhatia, 2012: 24) like thematic structure, rhetorical mode and conventions in academic discourses. It aims to the productivity of texts, to the transformation of existing conventions (genres, discourses), and to the generation of new ones in Figure 1 below. Figure 1 offers us a multidimensional concept of intertextuality from two directions: inner-textual and external-textual resources. Intertextuality from academic intertextual resources covers deconstructing and restructuring the resources of academia, and intertextuality from teachers-students interaction covers collaboration and scaffolding as well. Intertextual theories, in this sense, embrace the inner exchanges of the academia resources among experienced instructors and peer students.

Besides, the integrities are expected to be fully achieved of form and content, reading and writing, resources deconstructing and restructuring. Chapter 3 emphasizes the "deconstruction" of academic knowledge in all processes of representation via critical reading of native academic writing in the way of intertextuality, and Chapters 4 & 5 the "construction" or "restructuring" of academic knowledge in actual discursive professional practices of academia. This dynamic process of text planning, composing and revising leads to the reader's awareness, self-reflection and objective evaluation of intertextual messages. The source texts, intertextual texts and new texts are integrated in the intertextual relations.

Figure 1 Heightened literacy via intertextuality

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│           Scaffolding (teachers)                      │
│                                                       │
│        Cultural interpretation, integration           │
│                              ⇩                         │
│   Textual-external aspects        Hypertextuality     │
│                                                       │
│  Knowledge telling →  heightened literacy  ← information │
│                                                       │
│   and transformation   critical thinking   processing  │
│                              ⇧                         │
│   Textual-internal aspects    intertextual resources  │
│                                                       │
│       Collaboration (EFL undergraduates)              │
│                                                       │
│        judgment, evaluation, construal                │
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Intertextuality Relations in Academic English Literacy Instruction

"Every academic text draws from and depends on other texts and discoursal experiences in some way." (Fairclough 1992, p. 146) Writing strategies are exhibited through academic discourses in intertextual relations. Five intertextual functions are found in less explicit or implicit intertextual resources of general academic discourses like exposition, argumentation, general ESAP discourses: defining rhetorical modes (narrative, descriptive, expositive, and argumentative), signaling top-down pattern, and signalizing rhetorical moves of ESAP discourses (demonstrative, comparative, contrastive, classified, cause and effect, defining), facilitating textual cohesion and exhibiting rhetorical forms. The deconstructedness of internal resources can be further divided into two categories, horizontal (the last two) and vertical (the others).

The Horizontal Levels of Intertextuality in Academic English Writing Instruction

Genre conventions may be 'reproduced' from past discourses (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995: 17) either through reproduction, transformation, or imitation via intertextuality. "The intertextual properties of a text are realized in its linguistic features."(Fairclough, 1992: 195) The paper, first of all, demystifies the conventional genres in internal resources of academic discourses. "These features of academic writing break down into three key areas: high lexical density, high nominal style, and impersonal constructions". (Hyland, 2006: 13, 14) The core academic linguistic forms, though various, are likely in possession of two features: lexical chunks (multi-words models); collocations of de-lexicalized verbs; non-adjacent models in various constructions like subject-predicate and predicate-objects; impersonal construction.

Chunk Models in ESAP Prose

Chunks other than words and sentences are seen as central to language. The chunks include polywords, more or less transparent/opaque idioms, and institutionalized sentences with recognizable pragmatic meaning. (Lewis, 1993: 186) Chunks, a typical feature of ESAP prose, takes various forms like subject, predicate, object, prepositional, adverb trunks etc. whose major components are nouns in intertextual writings as forensic (1), medical English (2), classical writings (3, 4), Internet material (5), peer writings of natives (6). "Written language, although using phrases which organize the discourse, has a much higher density of collocation, particularly relatively fixed collocations which make high information content noun phrases. " (Lewis, 1993: 123)

(1) *Registration statements*, *prospectuses* and *other information* are available to the public in *the Washington*, *New York* and *Chicago* offices of the SEC and to a lesser extent at regional offices in *Seattle*, *San Francisco*, *Denver*, *Ft. Worth*, *Atlanta*, and *Boston*. (Subject chunks of nouns and prepositional objects of proper nouns)

(2) Around the world, as many as one in every three women has been *beaten*, *coerced into sex*, or *abused in some other way*---most often by someone she knows,… (Predicate chunks of verbs)

(3) During the next two years I sold dozens *of poems*, *letters*, *jokes* and *recipes*. (Object chunks of nouns)

(4) Studies serve *for delight*, *for ornament*, and *for ability*. (Prepositional object chunks of prepositional phrases)

(5) We all stood *watching*, *smiling* and *laughing* as they darted past the cars. (Adv. chunks of present participles)

(6) The guys saunter by *in sneakers*, *T-shirts*, and *blue jeans*, complete with a package of cigarettes sticking out of a pocket. (Adv. chunks of nouns)

Chunks are likely to increase the lexical density in student Academic prose writing, for written language is dense; spoken language is sparse. "It is a characteristic difference between spoken and written language (that) written language displays a much higher ratio of lexical items to total running words." (Halliday, 1989) "Broadly, written language achieves lexical density, and the resultant density of information, by using a relatively high proportion of complex noun phrases and subordinate clauses" (Lewis, 1993: 100) Lexical chunks are a possible way to enrich information density of linguistic constructions of various kinds. There needs "a shift from grammatical teaching to that of lexical chunks" in college Academic English teaching (Wang Lifei, 2007). This device is an urgent need to EFL students who tend to build their lineal expressions in a loosely constructed way.

Collocations of De-lexicalized Verbs Models of ESAP

"Lexical patterns can be more powerfully generative as collocations than structural patterns". (Lewis, 1993: 34) Collocations of de-lexicalized verbs are *have, make, do, get, put, take*, as pattern generators, (Ibid. 144) via concordancing with corpus data. The collocations can be found of *do-type* like *do individual counseling*, *do correction*, *do research in*, *do assurances*, *do this certificate for*, *do justice*…, of *get-type* like *get promoted*, *get access to*, *get a decisive determination*, *get a conviction*…, and of *take-type* like *take installation of machinery*, *take grave exception to*, *take instructions*, *take precedence over the rules*, *take the consequences of*, *take responsibility for decision*…etc. For collocations, it is believed to be a better access in web corpora than in grammatical books, where are abundant examples or illustrations of idiomatic and authentic collocations. This hypertextual construction provides authentic data for EFL undergraduates to transform and imitate via multitextual conditions.

Non-adjacent Construction Models of ESAP

Non-adjacent constructions can be typically demonstrated by various types like subject predicate (7), compound predicates (8) and predicate object (9), verbal phrase (10-11), of which the first type is most frequently used in academic discourses.

(7) Doubts *concerning the viability of the target* have also been raised by the National Audit Office in its report Better Public Services through E-Government and in a follow-up paper Government on the Web II. (Cyber law in the United Kingdom, 2010: 20)

(8) Although the courts have *in many instances* adopted a broad interpretation of the scope of their powers, room for challenge has been limited. (Cyber law in the United Kingdom, 2010: 47)

(9) We believe that *in order to achieve our broad objectives of fairness and efficiency*, an effective framework should strike the right balance between the interests of consumers and investors; support social cohesion; and strike a balance between short term consumption and long term conservation of resources. (Cyber law in the United Kingdom, 2010: 29)

(10) These shafts actually led, *via a series of interconnected shafts and tunnels*, into Fletcher's mines and land. (Legal English)

(11) In the event of any internal conflicts between the Community requirements themselves, OFCOM is *again to resolve this in the manner they think* best. (Cyber law in the United Kingdom, 2010: 29)

As the above shows, native written language is largely composed of collocations, most of which are free collocations, or non-adjacent collocations. Collocations as the non-adjacent type are believed to have the functions of the coherence about pragmatic linking and the connection

between two communicative acts. The not immediately adjacent "hyponomous category is more useful than an individual word" (Lewis, 1993: 120) in the information density of academic prose as in literary prose, legal English, Medical English and etc. Chinese undergraduates often lack confidence in their ability to meet these rhetorical standards in native academics.

The Vertical Levels of Intertextuality in Academic English Instruction

This link in academic writings is found in most cases with genre of academic writing conventions, for "genre is quintessentially intertextual" (Briggs & Baumann, 1992:147) concerning both the coherence of thematic structure and discourse structure of rhetorical mode in academic genres.

One feature of thematic structure is of coherence. A thematic unit is made up of two functions, theme is linked to the given information and rhyme is linked to the new information. (Halliday, 1994) In most native cases the typical information chain is found of Given $\Rightarrow$ New $\Rightarrow$ Given $\Rightarrow$ New. The complex thematic structure in ESAP discourses can be termed as the continuous thematic progression in forms of R1$\Rightarrow$ T2, R2$\Rightarrow$ T3, R3$\Rightarrow$ T4... Violating rules of information delivery may cause text to lose some degree of coherence. This is often the case to EFL students whose mother tongue is marked by indirection approach or "turning and turning in a widening gyre". (Kaplan, 1966: 12) The rhetoric mode of academic writing can be classified with such terms as 'argumentative', 'expository', and 'descriptive' styles as the academic types shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Some Academic Genres (Hyland, 2006: 50)

Written genres		Spoken genres	
Research articles	Book reviews	Lectures	Student presentations
Conference abstracts	Ph.D. dissertations	Seminars	Office hour sessions
Grant proposals	Textbooks	Tutorial sessions	Practicum feedback
Undergraduate essays	Reprint requests	Peer feedback	Dissertation defenses
Submission letters interviews	Editor response letters	Colloquia	Admission

Table 1 is one attempt to offer a set of principles for 'general expository academic prose' based on the arguments of three writing experts concerning the nature, values and features of academic writing (Johns, 1997: 59-64). Transforming and imitating the source texts of academic writings

by native writers are the chief ways of intertextuality. Linear arrangement, thematic processing and text structure lead students pivotally to the improvement of idiomatic English literacy.

Intertextual Functions in Critical Genre Awareness

Intertextuality provides EFL students full access to the languages and forms of genres. Intertextuality can thus be viewed as a function of "appropriation of generic resources" as widely in "recontextualization, reframing, and resemiotisation". (Bhatia, 2012: 24-25) "The concept of intertextuality points to the productivity of texts, transforming prior texts and restructuring existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones." (Fairclough, 1992: 102) This internalization is realized via consciousness raising of critical genre awareness.

"Critical genre awareness, rather than multiple genres of engagement, can help students maintain a critical stance and their own agency in the face of disciplinary discourses, academic writing, and other realms of literacy." (Devitt. V., 2004: 337) Intertextuality can thus be used as a kind of "strategic device" for seeing the assumed genre resources and views of the text, the reader, the author, and the context via critically examining and deconstructing texts. Actual practices such as commenting, contrasting with a spoken one, critiquing, help move towards a critical genre awareness. Using expository papers, for example, reinforces the objectivity and distance from the subject as well. Persuasive papers involve benchmarks for using thesis statements and different kinds of details with an emphasis on meeting the readers' needs. Such explicitness of genre awareness enables students to gain accesses to language awareness and critical thinking as well. Furthermore, it helps to revise the students' prior knowledge of rhetorical forms and writing structure, by navigating horizontally and vertically academic literacy via teachers' intertexts, imparting to the students ESAP identification, classification, and interpretation. This discussion is likely to enrich and improve the potential ideas and viewpoints of the students, enforcing the intertextual environments.

Intertextuality is a possible way to prompt students to develop critical genre awareness, for "armed with genre awareness, I would argue, students can distance themselves from the everyday practices of the genres that surround them but also can act, can participate in those genres."(Ibid.), and it seems to be crucial to the study of professional genres and practices. It offers a way of intertextual exploitation of linguistic and genre resources at all levels of discourse.

The Possibilities of Intertextuality to Enhance Academic Literacy of EFL Students

Intertextuality helps students become more analytical learners as critical readers and independent student-writers. Readers' interpretation of Western thought patterns and readers' critically examining the rhetorical forms of academic discourses are so crucial to EFL readers in lack of native academic norms.

Critical Readers of Intertextual Resources

Grammatical conventions are expected to be treated as resources to be exploited rather than rules to be followed. (Bhatia, 2012: 35) This needs the awareness raising of critical readers via intertextual resources, concerning the distinction between Western and Eastern Cultures, and the awareness of academic conventions.

Awareness of the Social Cultural Patterns of Native Academic Texts

The deductive norm of English essays can be traced back to Anglo-European culture. "The expected sequence of thought in English is essentially a Platonic-Aristotelian sequence, descended from the philosophers of ancient Greece...." (Kaplan, 1966: 12) The development of Chinese paragraphs is largely indirect ways. Furthermore, the language of Chinese tends to use active words, verbs in particular, while English is in favor of static words; Chinese writing is involved in covert coherence, while English in overt coherence; Chinese tends to be subjective but English writing tends to be objective. The cultural shock would by an avoidable barrier to the progress of EFL students' academic literacy, with obvious spoken traits in their writings, especially in their sentence constructions. Objective clause is, for example, one major occasion of spoken features in most students' essays, resulting from the frequent use of private verbs such as *think*, *hope*, *assume*, *believe*, *hold*, *guess*, etc. This cultural awareness can be possibly raised via exposure to intertextual resources through "discursive practice". (Fairclough, 1989) Such practice would produce potential influences on how readers interpret critically a native text and their distinctions of the norms between target language and Chinese, of spoken and written genres.

Awareness of Academic Conventions via Cognition of Intertextual Resources

Critical readers' awareness of academic features of writings is supposed to be gained through various steps like deconstructing, modeling, independent construction as the main stages suggested by Hyland (2006, 85). The horizontal and vertical dimensions of intertextuality are processed via literacy practices such as deconstructing and modeling.

a) Deconstructing rhetorical form expressions for intertextual resources

Intertextual texts offer non-native undergraduates a unique way of transforming linguistics conventions of source texts to readers' via deconstructing its sentential constructions. This intertextual imitation is likely to increase EFL students' generalization that single words are seldom used in native writings especially in academics. Instead, words are used in company with others such a verb with an adv, a noun with one or more adjectives, for example. The deconstructing of academic rhetorical construction brings such academic conventions in front of EFL students as linguistics chunks, de-lexicalized verbs, non-adjacent construction, and impersonal constructions as shown in horizontal dimensions in Part 3.2. Rhetorical conventions

of native academic writings to readers' texts are the product of transformation and imitation via substantial comparisons or contrasts with spoken writings and Chinese conventions of linguistic expressions. To undergraduates, much exposure to academic texts of native writers is expected to the gradual increase of the academic literacy of the undergraduates.

b) Modeling intertextual organizations

Modeling writing is usually organized on a reader base via top down dimensions and thematic conventions in the sources texts of native writers by way of discursive involving in discursive practice through intertextual readings involving "reflection, systemizing, explanation, and developing practice" (Fairclough, 1989). "Theme-based models emphasize language competence while sheltered models attempt to help students master content material and so are more discipline-specific" (Brinton et al., 1989: 18). In modeling, a writer transforms writer-based prose (common in first drafts) into reader-based prose (Flower, 1979), as one of the intertextual multidimensions shown in Figure 1.

This theoretical framework is transferred further to students' writings through frequent references of academic discourses reading. Frequent reading is strictly practiced in class both classical and contemporary academic discourses of English for General Academic Purposes and English for Specific Academic Purposes, and identify through peer demonstration, response and editing the academic linguistic features of the academic written texts, like academic forms of various kinds, the content, the theme, the structure, and the logic in the prose.

Autonomous Student-writers via Scaffolding and Collaboration

Intertextuality is instructive to EFL students' academic literacy through the shifts of thinking resources via teacher and student interactions: scaffolding, and collaboration.

"Scaffolding emphasizes interaction with experienced others in moving learners from their existing level of performance, what they can do now, to a level of 'potential performance', what they are able to do without assistance." (Hyland, 2006: 91) Scaffolding promotes independent student writers through this collaboration. Scaffolding principles of academic writings via related intertexts is navigating the incorrection of rhetorical grammar of EFL learners via the native correctly rhetorical grammar. Teacher-learner collaboration (Feez, 1998: 27) is oriented toward independent learner performance through initial processes of considerable teacher contributions, increased learner independence, and reduced teacher involvements to scaffolding, the learner-driven technique. Intertextuality can help students' writers realize the transition from "knowledge telling" to "knowledge transforming", the ultimate "objective of writing instruction" (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987: 359) with the outputs of heightened literacy and critical genre awareness and language awareness.

Conclusion

Intertextuality, in non-native undergraduates' literacy construction as stated above, demonstrates a potential way to the improvements of academic literacy concerning linear constructions, rhetoric and genre demonstrates for Chinese undergraduates and their critical language awareness in particular. The reference of intertexts between writings of natives and EFL undergraduates via intertextualization offers us a possible way to cognitive skills training of discovering issues, analyzing and solving problems, and the vivid, authentic examples of intertexts, moreover, enrich the students' thought, thus cultivating their interest in learning. Intertextuality in instruction, a dynamic way of literacy processing, facilitates learners in their improved competence and critical thinking. The high efficiency of intertextual construction is an important advantage of student center with cultivated academic literacy, raised cognitive potentials, heightened abilities of critical thinking such as analysis, query, evaluation, self-regulation, innovation and etc.

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