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MBA LITERACY PRACTICES: AMONG TAIWANESE MBA STUDENTS
IN TAIWAN AND THE UNITED STATES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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This empirical study investigated the nature of MBA literacy from the experiences of Taiwanese MBA students and faculty members in Taiwan and the United States. It extends our understanding of MBA literacy by focusing on the literacy phenomena students experienced during their literacy process and also sought to better understand how students utilize their languages as advantages for different purposes and functions. While there is existing literature focusing on ESP, EAP and professional business discourse, research in pedagogical business literacy could be more thoroughly understood.

Data collection was conducted through snowball and convenience sampling. The data included documents and interviews. The interviews were conducted, transcribed and analyzed in Chinese and English. The interviews were only translated when the quotes from the participants were used. The analysis focused on a series of comparisons between the literacy practices in Taiwan and the United States to see if there were similarities and differences, including students' processes of approaching different literacy tasks, professors' observations and experiences with Taiwanese students and study-abroad students, and prior and in-school MBA literacy experiences.

From the results of this study, the nature of MBA literacy practices has the characteristics of multimodality and multilingualism. Meaning making in disciplinary business communication

requires a combination of textual and non-textual modes. L2 students may flexibly use their linguistic resources to function in accordance with their varying levels of control over their languages. With both linguistic and cultural diversity existing in student backgrounds, their literacy practices can be flexible and creative because they may use their resources as strategies. The results also implied that business professionals dealing with communication that is crossing linguistic and cultural boundaries need to reconsider the nature of business communication and business literacy performance.

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I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my late grandfather (Yu-Yin Yeh) and grandmother (Mien Chang Yeh) who were in the food business and my late grandfather (Hsiang Chen) who was a doctor.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Why I Conducted This Research

The purpose of this study is to investigate and compare how four groups of Taiwanese MBA (Master of Business Administration) students understand business literacy and further apply their understandings to required assignments in their programs in two settings. These two settings include one program in Taiwan and three programs in the United States. I specifically focus on the literacy performance of these four groups of Taiwanese students in order to systematically document how they construct their knowledge of academic and professional genres through literacy practices as well as in their L1 (Chinese) and L2 (English) in their programs. This study is interested in understanding how these groups of students utilize languages within the multilingual, multicultural, social and academic environments during their academic years. In the process of linguistic and cultural transitions, their experiences of using L1 and L2 in knowledge construction draws attention to the potential struggles, adaption, compromises and conflicts that international students may encounter. The development of strategies and solutions can be a challenge for study abroad students.

In this chapter, the real world justification and the disciplinary justification sections present the significance of conducting this study including the statistics of study abroad population, fields of study, and expectations in MBA programs. Definitions of literacy practice and genre provide a general framework for how a community functions with particular sets of conventions and communicative practices. This explains the pedagogical discursal activities that business students may face in their programs. Since I compare literacy practices across countries, I find it important to justify the purpose of selecting four groups of Taiwanese students, which is included in the study abroad and language use section. Also, I look at how languages

(L1 and L2) and literacy practices come into play within four MBA programs. The language-switching between L1 and L2 section offers the cause and effect of why L2 writers switch languages. It may assist us to further understand how and why Taiwanese students switch languages when performing literacy practices in their business programs. With the sections of business literacy and business English as a lingua franca, we can understand the potential academic requirements these four groups of Taiwanese students are expected to fulfill.

Real World Justification

Based on the statistics provided by the Department of Statistics of the Ministry of Education in Taiwan, business management has been ranked as the second most popular major for undergraduate level study, and ranked fourth for graduate level study for the past two academic years (<http://www.edu.tw/Default.aspx?WID=31d75a44-efff-4c44-a075-15a9eb7aecdf>). Also, the student population enrolling in the college of management has increased by 3.5% while the enrollments in the college of humanities and the college of sciences have been decreasing. Other than receiving business education in Taiwan, study abroad has been an option for students to experience different academic, cultural and professional environments. Among the countries for study abroad education, the United States is favored by much of the student population, according to the Bureau of International Cultural and Educational Relations (<http://www.edu.tw/Default.aspx?WID=409cab38-69fe-4a61-ad3a-5d32a88deb5d>) in Taiwan for the year 2011.

The Institute of International Education's Open Door data (<http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data>) provides ample data about international student populations, their academic status, academic choices, nationality backgrounds and other international student related information.

Table 1

International Student Population 2009/10-2010/11

Rank	Place of Origin	2009/10	2010/11	2010/11% of Total	% Change
1	China	127,822	157,558	21.8	23.3
2	India	104,897	103,895	14.4	-1.0
3	South Korea	72,153	73,351	10.1	1.7
4	Canada	28,145	27,546	3.8	-2.1
5	Taiwan	26,685	24,818	3.4	-7.0
	World Total	690,923	723,277	100.0	4.7

(Institute of International Education, 2011)

Table 1 shows the total international students from around the world enrolling in the education system in the United States from the academic year of 2009/10 to 2010/11. In the two continuous academic years, Taiwan was positioned as the fifth largest country based on the study abroad student population. The IIE also reported that among the Taiwanese study abroad students, 13,269 students were enrolled in graduate programs, which makes up 53.5% of the study abroad group.

The following table (See Table 2) represents the top five fields of study for international students from 2009 through 2011. Business of Management was the program with the largest international student population. It not only continuously attracts the majority of study abroad population for two academic years in a row, but also has the largest increase of international students during that timeframe.

Table 2

Popular Fields of Study 2009/10-2010/11

Field of Study	2010/10 Int'l Students	2010/11 Int'l Students	2010/11 % Total	%Change
Business of Management	145,401	155,769	21.5	7.1
Engineering	127,433	135,592	18.7	6.4
Physical and Life Sciences	61,311	63,471	8.8	3.5
Math and Computer Science	60,800	64,588	8.9	6.2
Social Sciences	59,978	63,343	8.8	5.6

(Institute of International Education, 2011)

Similar to the international enrollment trends in the world, as evident in Table 3, business and management were also the most popular fields of study favored by Taiwanese students. The favored fields of study in this table were to show the sequence of education programs based on the Taiwanese student population.

Table 3

Preference for Fields of Study 2010/11

Place of Origin	Business/ Management	Engineering	Fine/ Applied Arts	Physical/ Life Sciences	Social Sciences
Taiwan	23.4%	14.7%	11.5%	10.0%	7.0%

(Institute of International Education, 2011)

These statistics demonstrate that there may be potential career or academic demands in Taiwan for domestic and international business. With the number of students enrolling in the business and management program in the United States, it indicates that language proficiency and the ability to perform business literacy practices are necessities within the academic environment.

However, what is unclear is how these students utilize their languages (L1 and L2) in their programs of academic study, what languages they use to approach tasks, decisions or problems, and why certain languages are utilized in knowledge construction.

Disciplinary Justification

Being the largest group in the higher education system, international business students are confronted by cultural adjustments, cross-cultural interactions, linguistic challenges and, most importantly, the competence of performing business literacy in MBA programs. Previous studies examined academic writing at the university level pedagogically and theoretically (Zhu, 2004b). From the pedagogical perspective, the recognition of L2 writers' literacy needs can serve as an indicator of better preparation for their academic writing (Zhu, 2004b). From the theoretical perspective, research studies have focused on the relationship between features and conventions of communities, and how writers become skilled at the discursal conventions (Zhu, 2004b). However, the standards of evaluation in academia and the business world may differ. In the academic environment, disciplinary knowledge is important while the ability to perform professionally is recognized in the workplace (Thorstensson, 2001). Therefore, the reading and written assignments designed in MBA programs are based on developing students with general academic genre knowledge and further expanding those genres into disciplinary genres that can facilitate students to better understand professional literacy practices (Zhu, 2004b). Through these assignments, students can understand the socially constructed values embedded within disciplinary contexts (Raymond & Parks, 2002).

According to Zhu (2004b), "a successful business written product would mark the *professional* status of a student" (p. 123). Performance with accuracy is a necessity in business programs because assignments, whether written or oral, stress a great emphasis on reporting

content with a precise and appropriate manner (Bayliss & Raymond, 2004). In order to accurately incorporate, interpret and present content, a heavy reading load is inevitable. The reading ability is an indication of academic accomplishment for MBA students (Bayliss & Raymond, 2004). Raymond and Parks (2002) compared literacy practices in an EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and MBA programs. They concluded that the increased difficulties of literacy practices in MBA programs are due to reading assignments being disciplinary knowledge specific, content driven and with heavy reading volume. Written assignments require the incorporation of professional and accurate content, the skills to internalize materials and produce proper interpretations and the ability to work collaboratively. Zhu (2004a) stressed the significance of the writing ability in business programs which requires general writing proficiency and, more particularly, disciplinary-specific knowledge and writing process. Further, from Zhu's (2004b) analysis on written assignments in business programs, there was a shared characteristic among the ten categories that he created based on the specific purposes and genres. They all required reading contextualized materials with various amounts in order to produce writing with acceptable style and content.

In order for international students to develop professional knowledge and participate intellectually to their full potential, the mastery of literacy practices plays an important role in MBA programs (Bayliss & Raymond, 2004). Also, the literacy skills are significant for academic success for study abroad students (Sasaki, 2007). However, it has been pointed out that the amount of existing literature regarding pedagogical business written discourse at the graduate level is insufficient (May, Thompson & Hebblethwaite, 2012). Also, Zhu (2004b) reported that a great volume of literature on academic literacy has been focusing on the fields of science and engineering.

As MBA programs are favored by Taiwanese students in Taiwan and the United States, there is a significant emphasis on their ability to read and write in business programs. These abilities are needed to understand how business literacy practices can differ across academic communities, linguistic environments and cultural surroundings. Therefore, the first aim of this comparative study is to investigate the business literacy practices in the selected programs in Taiwan and the United States. The second aim is to investigate how Taiwanese students and Taiwanese study abroad understand and cope with literacy practices and further apply their understandings to fulfill their programs' requirements. The anticipation of comparing these literacy practices between these two settings is to create a conversation to discuss business written communication spanning across both language and culture.

Definition of Literacy Practice

Literacy practice is a form of meaning making and knowledge construction through reading and writing. It is the way people use text to communicate and it occurs constantly within our everyday life (Barton & Hamilton, 2005; Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000). Also, it links individuals, events, contexts and cultures together which involves social interactions across different communities and in various situations (Street, 2003). Since literacy is constructed and contextualized by individuals based on events and contexts, it can be regarded as a social practice (Barton & Hamilton, 2005; Hanauer, 2006), rather than literacy assets owned by individuals (Barton et al., 2000). Individuals and contexts are the vehicles of making literacy meaningful in a community where individuals are not restricted by "ethnic, religious, linguistic and national groupings", but should be regarded as a whole working to achieve goals within a community (Hanauer, 2006, p. 3). To fully and appropriately function in a community, one must

practice literacy with meaningful content through a process of experimentation in a contextualized environment (Gee, 1989).

Literacy practice can also be defined as “particular ways of thinking about and doing reading and writing in cultural contexts” (Street, 2003, p. 79) because literacy practices can differ across cultures, languages and settings. There are particular ways of performing in a community where social events require proper individual behavior and understandings of recognized regulations. Those literacy events are “conceptualized as socially contextualized activities which are directed by the guidelines of the community” (Hanauer, 2006, p. 3). Without full immersion within a community, the awareness of how literacy performance proceeds can be limited (Hanauer, 2006), and individuals can be regarded as outsiders due to their unfamiliarity of how literacy practices function within a community. Other than perceiving literacy practices as a social practice, there is another characteristic embedded in the concept of community of practice that reveal most of our communications in the social environment are literacy related (Barton & Hamilton, 2005).

According to Kress (2003), “language-as-speech will remain the major mode of communication; language-as-writing will be increasingly displaced by image in many domains of public communication, though writing will remain the preferred mode of the political and cultural elite” (p.1). In addition to the conventional method to define literacy as meaning-making through reading and writing, literacy can go beyond linguistic and text-based components (Bachmair, 2006; Jewitt, 2008; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Miller, 2007; Williams, 2004). More specifically, meaning-making is not limited to alphabetical literacy or linear production (Zoetewey and Staggers 2003), but instead works in association with multimodal and interactive elements due to rapid technological developments (Córdova, 2013; Miller, 2007) and our

culturally and linguistically diverse global community (Jewitt, 2008). With the changes in how we learn and use languages as a global and integrated society, multimodality embraces other possibilities and modes in meaning-making such as visual (Arnheim, 1969; Miller, 2007), audio (Ciekanski & Chanier, 2008; Hampel, 2003), verbal (Granström, House & Karlsson, 2013; Katz & Odell, 2013), media-related (Ball, Bowen & Fenn, 2011; Ellis, 2011; Besser, 2011) or a combination of these modes (Kress, 2010; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). However, in order to deliver fully constructed meanings and knowledge, interactive communication usually involves the combination of modes (Bergh & Beelders, 2014) due to the unique characteristics of each mode (Jewitt, 2008). During literacy processes, the combination of modes allows readers and authors to explore different meanings and interpretations (Coles & Hall, 2001).

The “new landscape of communication” (Kress, 2000, p. 183) contains various communicational modes which reshape the way we think about how knowledge, learning and literacy are constructed (Jewitt, 2008; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Miller, 2007). Further, those multimodal modes are flexible because they are created or transformed to meet the community needs which connect communities and their users tightly together (Flewitt, 2006; Jewitt, 2008). Multimodality allows users to create contextualized meanings, communication and representation with dynamic sources. But, research studies regarding multimodality in business discourse is limited that they simply focus on specific genres (Garzone, 2009).

There has been a shift in disciplinary business literacy practice where interactive, collaborative and multimodal elements are integrated into theory-based and application-based tasks to facilitate students to develop communicative skills thereby meeting the demands in diverse communities and literacy landscapes (Planken & Kreps, 2006). According to Miller

(2007), due to business and professional demands, it is necessary to introduce a variety of literacies, conduct practical applications and incorporate multimodal literacy experiences into disciplinary environment as they are the communicative skills and knowledge which are required in the frequently changing professional community. In addition to training students to be “information architects” (Eunson, 2005, p.23) who are proficient at print-based communication (Campbell, 2006), tasks assigned in MBA courses stress an emphasis on developing students’ analytical and quantitative skills involving numbers and symbols (Hesseldenz, 2012). Business discourse involves different modes for communication and representation. Business literacy tasks contain modes such as textual (Davidson, 2005; Yang & Shi, 2003), visual (Baker, 2006; Campbell, 2006), numerical (Alyousef, 2013), media-related (Planken & Kreps, 2006; Zuckweiler & Cao, 2009) and verbal (Bowman, 2014; Skorczynska, 2014). The nature of disciplinary business literacy is multimodal, which corresponds directly with the more broadly defined understanding of literacy.

In addition to a variety of literacy modes used for communication and representation, there needs to be a broader way to understand and interpret how literacy is conducted while taking into consideration social and cultural contexts, time (Street, 1994), linguistic differences and globalized communities (The New London Group, 2000). The notion of literacy should be pluralized as multiliteracies due to the fact that literacy can be transformed based on culturally and linguistically diverse societies, instead of defining literacy into a unified or universal form (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Durgunoglu & Verhoeven, 2013; Mills, 2011; Street, 1993).

Multiliteracy changes the way meanings are produced that multilinguals need to “negotiate multiple Englishes and communication patterns that cross subcultural and national boundaries”

(Mills, 2011, p.7). It is also the result of the multiplicity of communicative modes and globalized communities (Provenzo Jr., Goodwin, Lipsky & Sharpe, 2011).

There are particular ways of performing literacy practices in differing contexts. For instance, social events may require mixing literacy practices because such events can include multiple practices (Barton & Hamilton, 2005). Literacy practices also contain the fluidity characteristic (Barton et al., 2000) due to the fact that social practices differ in contexts and may require intertextualized literacy practices to make written language meaningful (Barton & Hamilton, 2005). Put simply, literacy practice is a socially constructed and culturally contextualized event which differs across contexts. By looking at four MBA programs located on two different cultural and linguistic continents, we may be able to distinguish the similarities and differences in business literacy practices, in terms of their disciplinary and real world literacy activities, and thereby understand how students function appropriately within the two academic environments.

Multilingualism

Due to the globally intertwined business environment, a variety of Englishes is emerging, while regional languages are on the rise because of governmental policies, educational demands and regional commerce (Aronin & Singleton, 2008; Fish, 1998). Multilingualism is when language users have the “need to communicate across speech communities” (Edwards, 1994, p. 1). With the changes in economical and social interactions, technology and mobility, the ability of individuals, societies and communities to acquire and use two or more languages on a regular basis is regarded as multilingualism (Franceschini, 2011; Jessner, 2008; Piller & Pavlenko, 2007).

For multilinguals, the practice of codeswitching and codemixing is not necessarily an indicator that they struggle to find corresponding vocabulary in other languages, but their

originality and creativity in communication for different purposes (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). Multilingualism can only be put into practice when multilinguals use the languages they know as their lexical and linguistic resources to communicate (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007). Therefore, when multilinguals' linguistic performances requires cross-linguistic processes, transfer from L1 to L2 should not be viewed as "deficient use of the target language", nor indicating influence from L1 as "interference" (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011, p. 358). Cook (2005) stressed that "the L1 in the mind of an L2 user was by no means the same as the L1 in the mind of a monolingual native speaker" (p.4). It is important to note that linguistic transfers from L1 to L2 and vice versa should not be understood to have negative influences on the communication process (Cook, 2003).

Multilinguals can retrieve literacy skills, creativity and thinking skills that they have acquired from their language education and prior experiences (Franceschini, 2011; Lambert, Tucker & d'Anglejan, 1973). But they may not necessarily have full competence or control over their languages (Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck, 2005; Kemp, 2009). For multilinguals, depending on the purposes or functions of the languages they possess, they have a diverse way of using them (Kemp, 2009). In this sense, multilinguals possess more linguistic and literacy assets and resources than monolinguals to communicate (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; Jessner, 2008; McLaughlin, 1990). When multilinguals alternate between languages, it can also be considered as a strategic approach (Baker, 2006). Language alternation can also be seen as translanguaging (Williams, 2002) in that this linguistic process allows multilinguals to connect the languages they know to accomplish communicative goals (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011).

Definition of Genre

In order to properly perform literacy practices in a community, each individual is responsible to understand how different sets of genres are used within different situations. With the understandings of how genres function in a socially contextualized environment, his/her textual performance demonstrates the expected literacy phenomenon in a community.

Based on the purposes and application, the definition of genre can be divided into two different notions, a community of practice and a social practice (Kamberelis, 1995; Miller, 1984). The former notion looks into how individuals participate in a community through particular language use; the later focuses on educational application (Hyland, 2002). In each community, there are specific ways of using textual conventions in social interactions that are identified by the members (Orlikowski & Yates, 1998). Using textual language is not only for communicative purposes, but also, according to Hanauer (2006), accomplishing goals within a community. Genre consists of particular textual functions and structures that are created based on events and contexts (Hyland, 2002). It is constructed through a series of social activities and is regarded as “typified rhetorical action based in recurrent situations” (Miller, 1984, p. 159). Any social event in a community is made up by a set of components and genres are developed based on those repetitive events. Therefore, multiple types of genres may be utilized to solve problems or complete expectations in a community (Hanauer, 2006). However, genre is a situated written discourse which has practical and rhetorical features, rather than simple regulations (Kamberelis, 1995). Also, it reveals the relationship between writers and readers. On the one hand, it represents the justifications of producing certain text for their audiences and contexts, while on the other hand, the text generated reflect the communication situations (Hyland, 2002).

In addition to the situated and social characteristics, genre is not just a set of rigid rules. Another characteristic of genre is its flexibility that written communication can be created through textual features and reduce boundaries between communities which include intertextuality and interdiscursivity (Hyland, 2002; Kamberelis, 1995). According to Briggs and Bauman (1992), writers can repetitively use particular textual features for various purposes and this kind of behavior leads to the continuation of reconstruction of written discourse in a community. Therefore, genre is in a state of constant change due to social activities. Even though genres can change based on social contexts or situated events, the flexibility and features of genre is mutually recognized and identified by the members of particular communities (Bhatia, 1997).

The development of genre can vary across countries based on the purposes and demands in communal settings. The four selected MBA programs are located in Taiwan and the United States where cultures, linguistic systems, academic environments and social settings are more or less dissimilar. The construction and development of pedagogical business genres are to meet the literacy demands in academia and to socialize students with future professional literacy practices. By looking at the business literacy practices in four different MBA programs, we can understand how business literacy is constructed through genre sets and explore the purposes of why certain genres are emphasized.

Study Abroad and Language Use

The main purpose of the research questions proposed in this study is to understand how Taiwanese MBA students in two settings undergo the literacy process and transformation during the linguistic and cultural transitions. Through this set of questions, it permits access to their individual and academic progress so that we are better able to understand the roles of their L1

and L2 in their knowledge development, the construction of their second language literacy and their transformation of pre- and post-arrival literacy. More importantly, most studies have only focused on comparing L1 and L2 writers, instead of comparing writers who compose in both their L1 and L2 (Tardy, 2006). This can lead to overlooking L2 writers' multilingual performance and the misinterpretation of the cause and effect of their linguistic practices. By looking at both Taiwanese MBA students and Taiwanese study abroad MBA students, it allows a more balanced starting point of linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds. Kubota (1998) pointed out that by looking at L1 and L2 writing from the same authors, their rhetorical performance can be regarded as potential positive L1 and L2 transfer, rather than negative textual phenomenon. Kubota and Lehner (2004) also stated that the comparison between English and other languages can construct stereotypical rhetorical conventions.

Within these two settings, we can also see how languages (L1 and L2), cultures and environments interweave with students' business literacy development within their MBA programs. According to Lantolf and Thorne (2006), "learners would be influenced by their personal histories of language education as well as by language ideologies in the form of implicit and explicit discourses produced at institutional and nation-state levels" (p. 239). Social interactions and contextualized environments can influence how L2 users develop and construct their linguistic assets. Also, Sasaki's (2004) exploratory study on how L2 proficiency can change over a three-year period discovered that there are potential benefits in L2 written discursal growths for study abroad students. Through sociolinguistic perspectives, the process of selecting languages to use in composition is a complicated case of language switching which involves "language status, language context, and attitudes toward the languages" (Woodall, 2002, p. 10). How L2 writers bond with their native and target languages and cultures will come into play with

their literacy growths (Leki, Cumming & Silva, 2008). By selecting programs in Taiwan and the United States, we can see the similarities and differences among social, cultural, academic and professional environments and how these elements affect business students using their L1 and L2. Several studies have pointed out that the juggling between L1 and L2 may serve as a means to enrich the writing process of L2 writers and impact their final written products (Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll & Kuehn, 1990; Leki et al., 2008; Roca de Larios, Manchón & Murphy, 2000, 2006; Qi, 1998; van Weijen, van den Bergh, Rijlaarsdam & Sanders, 2009; Wang, 2003; Wang & Wen, 2002; Woodall, 2002), rather than seeing language switching as negative transferability or as a lack of expertise in their fields. By exploring how L1 and L2 are required by four business programs located in two settings, it may provide us with potential insights of how linguistic environments affect the way Taiwanese MBA students use languages, the purposes of switching languages and how language switching facilitates learning business literacy practices.

Even though international students have the previously learned knowledge regarding literacy practices in specific disciplines, they are challenged by different academic cultures and social environments in which knowledge construction and literacy practices can differ from what they learned in their country of origin (Sasson, 2010). Yet, it has been pointed out that “mere competence in an area such as being fluent in a language is not sufficient to guarantee success” (Bacon, 2002, p. 645) while connecting language, self-reflection and the target culture is likely to assist intellectual growth to its full potential (Pagano & Roselle, 2009; Savicki, 2011).

Business education was officially systemized in the early 20th century in the United States due to the business demands in the market, followed by international business education in the 1950s responding to the diverse student population and the breakdowns in providing cross-cultural business education (Thorstensson, 2001). The first MBA program was launched in the

beginning of the 1900s (Antunes & Thomas, 2007). The development of business education in the United States was profoundly influenced by European business schools during the early stages of development (Spender, 2007). The differences among business schools in the United States and in Europe are “the diversity, quality and the range of cultural offerings” (Antunes & Thomas, 2007, p. 389). Business schools in the United States, including undergraduate and graduate programs, are leading the direction of business education in the world (Antunes & Thomas, 2007), and serve as a business pedagogy prototype for other countries (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). Since MBA programs are the most populated areas of study for Taiwanese students in Taiwan and the United States, it is important to understand and examine how their past and current literacy knowledge fits into their academic environments and social interactions.

Research Questions

1. What first language (Chinese) and second language (English) literacy practices are required by a MBA program in Taiwan?
2. What first language (English) and second language (any language) literacy practices are required by three MBA programs in the United States?
3. How do Taiwanese students understand and cope with different genres of writing in their business program?
4. How do Taiwanese study abroad students understand and cope with different genres of writing in their business programs?
5. What are the differences and similarities of literacy practices among these MBA programs?

Language can be considered a barrier in academic and social life for international students (Cooper, 2009; Sasson, 2010; Thorstensson, 2001). In L2 composition, the literacy concerns from writers can be categorized as “task-examing, idea-generating, idea-organizing,

text-generating and process-controlling” (Wang & Wen, 2002, p. 231). These categories can occur during each stage in the composing process and they can affect the quality and quantity of text production. Yet, L2 writers also have dual or multiple literacy systems that they need to draw from. Therefore, for L2 writers, their literacy development is a far more complicated web (Carson et al., 1990) than L1 English writers. It was also reported that between L1 and L2 writing from the same authors, L2 writing appears to have fewer goals for the content, smaller amount of linguistic and rhetorical resources to draw upon and more attention on structures and forms at the expense of elaboration of content (Roca de Larios et al., 2006). However, Sasaki’s (2007) study on the impacts of study abroad experiences on writing revealed that students who studied overseas were more motivated to compose better structured L2 writings than those who did not participate in the language programs abroad. More specifically, Bayliss and Raymond (2004) demonstrated that writing competence and reading comprehension play essential roles in MBA programs. There is a need to not only understand how they learn and adapt to the familiar and unfamiliar business literacy practices in the academic context, but also how they use their L1 and L2 to facilitate their academic growths.

It is a long journey from being a language learner to a professional language user in an individual’s L1 and L2. For international students, the capability to perform academic literacy practices represents a significant indicator of academic accomplishment. Therefore, when investigating L2 writing, it is important to “take into account not only the learner’s L2 language proficiency, but also the possibility of interaction of first literacy skills with second language input” (Carson et al., 1990, p. 248).

Language-Switching between L1 and L2

It is important to note that L2 writers come from different cultures, linguistic backgrounds, educational experiences and language practices; their written performance can differ tremendously from L1 writers (Silva, 1997). However, the differences in written discourse should not be regarded as negative transferability. Based on Tardy's (2006) analysis of 60 empirical studies of comparison on L1 and L2 writers' genre writing, she concluded that most studies only investigate writers with different linguistic levels, the comparison between L1 and L2 writers, and writing composed in different contexts. Such studies can easily ignore the literacy construction through the interaction between L1 and L2. They can also disregard how writers utilize their knowledge of L1 in L2 literacy practices or apply their understandings of L2 in cross-linguistic development. Reading and writing abilities are mutually related to literacy development (Leki et al., 2008) in which lexical and structural elements in written text and cognitive behavior from writers are communally significant for improvement (Carson et al., 1990). For L2 writers, the efforts put into reading is a key factor in writing development. Besides, the amount of spontaneous and autonomous reading can affect L2 writers' writing performance (Carson et al., 1990). Previous studies have confirmed that language transfer in reading is only possible when both languages share the same writing system (alphabetic system) (Bialystok, Kwan & Luk, 2005; Liu, Perfetti & Wang, 2005). It is still not clear how second language writers compose in both their L1 and L2 and the potential transferability.

Writing in a second language is a complicated phenomenon which involves linguistic and cognitive operations that require writers to retrieve knowledge and memories from their prior literacy foundation and experiences (Qi, 1998). Further, during the process of producing L2 text, writers are anticipated to go through the phase of "decision-making and problem solving" (Roca

de Larios et al., 2006) so that writers' abstract thoughts can be converted into concrete written forms. Even though previous studies on second language writing in the past two decades have pointed out that the process of writing in L1 and L2 are identical, some differences exist (Woodall, 2002). It has been reported that the characteristics of L2 writers include longer composing time periods, shorter length of text and providing fewer words (Roca de Larios et al., 2006; Wang & Wen, 2003; Woodall, 2002) as compared with their L1 composition.

During the process of generating text, language switching is a common approach for L2 writers to move back and forth between their L1 and L2 for various purposes (Krapels, 1991; Manchón, Roca de Larios, & Murphy, 2000; Wang, 2003; Wang & Wen, 2002), regardless their language skills (Wang, 2003). Language switching is an unstructured cognitive behavior occurring in L2 composition where writers receive help from their language resources (Qi, 1998; Woodall, 2002). However, language switching differs from direct L1-L2 translation (Wang, 2003; Woodall, 2002) or code-switching (Qi, 1998). In the L2 composition field, the use of L1 has positive impacts on the writing process and is a valuable technique for L2 writers to convert their thoughts into words (Leki et al., 2008). For example, L2 writers use L1 to verify the equivalence and appropriateness of vocabulary (Qi, 1998; Wang, 2003; Woodall, 2002), generate thoughts and ideas (Wang & Wen, 2002), organize text (van Weijen et al., 2009) and evaluate text by backtracking (Manchón et al., 2000). There have been debates on how L2 writers' language proficiency and task difficulties affect the amount of L1 use in their composing process (Carson et al., 1990; Roca de Larios et al., 2006; Wang, 2003; Wang & Wen, 2002). The amount of L1 use differs with an individual writer's need to articulate coherently in their writing; however, utilizing language while switching in the L2 composition process may signify the difficulties of tasks and indicate the presence of cognitive overload (van Weijen et al., 2009; Qi,

1998) in that writers revert to their L1 to solve problems. Therefore, the intention of the first two research questions proposed in this study is to discover the purposes of how Taiwanese MBA students use their L1 and L2 in literacy practices.

Business Literacy

In the field of business English, genre analysis is frequently utilized by scholars when investigating written business texts. Business genres have shaped and created “discriminative moves” and “non-discriminative rhetorical strategies” which represent how genres can be structured in certain professional settings (Nickerson, 2005, p. 371). Since knowledge is socially constructed, business written discourse continues to emphasize the correlation between social contexts and textual performance (Nickerson, 2005) in which a sufficient understanding is needed to investigate the linguistic choices made in professional settings. In the business environment, professional and appropriate language usage ties different individuals and communities together through situated textual and social performance which constructs the complex web of business discourse.

Literacy practice in a community is socially constructed and situated. It is not a spontaneous action through an individual’s cognitive behavior (Leki et al., 2008). With the involvement of individuals, contexts, cultures and communities, written discursal communication in the business world involves intertextuality and interculturality which are carried out through collaborative writing. Collaborative writing plays an important role in business communication (Bremner, 2010; Cross, 1993) and it complements writers’ areas of literacy, including genre-specific and professional knowledge within and across business communities. In workplace settings, business writing is not isolated or individually produced, but “drafts may be casually passed around and discussed, for instance, so that the written text readily

becomes part of the shared network of meanings and may readily surface” (Dias, Freedman, Medway & Pare, 1999, p. 227). Therefore, in order to pick up the pace of business communication, collaboration can bring each professional individual’s expertise, specialty and conventions all together. Collaboration and intertextuality play significant roles in the professional business community.

Further, business schools are a reflection of the business world. The business written discourse in the academic environment also puts a great emphasis on tasks relevant to problem-solving (Thorstensson, 2001; Zhu, 2004b) and decision-making (Zhu, 2004b) in order to initiate and socialize students to future professional business writing and rhetorical skills. The workplace is the extension of business schools where writing skills are ranked as the most significant expertise that individuals need to acquire and develop (Katz, Haras & Blaszczyński, 2010). The importance of writing skills is also a highlighted area of pedagogical business written discourse (Zhu, 2004a). Writing skills are an essential requirement to enable individuals to effectively communicate and elaborate on information properly within business communities (Katz et al., 2010). With the ability to produce written discourse, individuals not only need to understand the cultures and concepts that a community values but also follow the written formats and regulations in order to generate acceptable text in the business environment. Also, using rhetorical patterns and approaches proficiently in communication is an important requirement for business literacy practitioners (Nguyen & Miller, 2012). The pedagogical business genres are designed to prepare students for imagined business communities, the development of persuasive abilities to create strategies based on problems and situations and the structures and forms of business information and data (Zhu, 2004b).

In the academic business community, literacy practices are learned through a series of disciplinary and professional genre sets, in which students may need to retrieve knowledge from their previous experiences, participations and disciplinary interactions in order to accomplish tasks (Uhrig, 2012). At the present moment, the focus has been emphasized on how L2 writers approach business literacy practices and their development in the professional community (Uhrig, 2012). Also, for L2 graduate students, linguistic and cultural backgrounds can affect how they learn from a new discourse community in the higher education environment (Ridley, 2004).

Within the academic and professional written genres, there are specific textual and conventional features that writers are required to abide by. Besides understanding the constraints and conventions in business literacy practices, it is also important to recognize how individuals solve problems with strategies to perform properly in communities (Bhatia, 1993) since problem-solving and decision-making are the two important skill sets in both academic and professional business environment (Zhu, 2004b).

Business English as a Lingua Franca

In the past few decades, studies have indicated the importance of contextualizing the teaching of business English in order to assist business students to cope with the complexity of business communication in the real world context. In addition, with globalization, cross-cultural communication has intensified so that different languages, genres and cultures are now brought into multinational contexts (Nickerson, 2005; Gerritsen & Nickerson, 2009). Further, even though English is commonly used in business communication, it is not the first language for most business communicating professionals (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2007). Kankaanranta's (2006) study shows that having perfect English skills is not as important as having the knowledge of how genres and languages work in the professional business context.

Due to the changes in how textual discourse is perceived and produced, cross-cultural written communication in the business field has been more common among L1 and L2 speakers. With this transformation, investigation focusing on business English has shifted to Business as a Lingua Franca (BELF) (Nickerson & Planken, 2009). English is still the dominant language used in both academic and professional fields, even though it is not the mother language for many individuals. In written discourse, the personal choice of language use and communicative strategies can be potentially influenced by language learning experiences, understandings of the conventional features in specific genres, as well as cultures within organizations (Nickerson, 2005). Nguyen and Miller (2012) also pointed out that “writing patterns that are effective in one culture and language may not transfer successfully in intercultural communication” (p. 6). With all of the external literacy influences, it can be confusing if there is not a mutual written communication system practiced by individuals. Therefore, BELF symbolizes a neutral role in business communication, in which professional individuals use BELF as a mutual linguistic tool to accomplish tasks, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality or linguistic backgrounds (Tietze, 2008). How people communicate using English around the world and how languages (English and L1s) are used in business contexts should be equally essential in academic or professional contexts (Planken, van Meurs & Radlinska, 2010; Nickerson, 2005; Gerritsen & Nickerson, 2009).

With the awareness of how linguistic properties affect literacy practices, we may be able to understand how bi/multilingual individuals perform written discourse in the academic and professional communities. Therefore, linguistic skills, professional knowledge and genres can be presented as a whole. It is not only important to find out appropriate materials including similarities and differences in academic and professional settings (Nickerson, 2005), but also to

raise students' awareness in genres used in real business contexts (Nickerson & Planken, 2009) and the role that BELF plays in the business world.

Conclusion

English proficiency seems to be a vital element to building social relationships, constructing academic accomplishments and establishing professional credibility. While language proficiency may appear to have a great impact on international students' study abroad experiences, their academic life and future career opportunities, students' cultural backgrounds, L1 literacy and how these components interplay with their L2 literacy should not be overlooked (Sasson, 2010).

To understand how L2 students practice their business literacy and communication strategies, a holistic view on how languages are presented and employed in their communities is needed. By withholding assumptions and perceptions of linguistic issues that L2 business writers have when they are compared with L1 writers, it is possible to create an open-minded arena to explore L2 business writers' literacy practices. As a result, this study aims to understand how Taiwanese students utilize their linguistic assets to perform business literacy as well as the similarities and differences of literacy practices in the four selected MBA programs across countries. Textual documents and interviews are implemented to understand the pedagogical business genres and literacy activities within these programs. With two sets of data, we can see how students understand and perform business literacy from different perspectives.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction to Business Discourse

Discourse used in specific contexts is influenced by the relationship among individuals, organizations and academia. Each discourse community requires certain patterns of specialized linguistic performance and social practices for members to follow in order to create mutually understandings and acknowledged communication systems (Porter, 1986). Those requirements serve as the conventional symbol of a social group and represent the communication styles members practice. In order to identify oneself and receive recognition from a social group, one must follow the particular discourse codes which are socially appropriate and accepted by a community (Gee, 1989; Leitch, 1983). Bearing those requirements in mind, specialists and experts have more professional knowledge about proper communication through genre-specific frameworks (Bhatia, 1993). Without knowing the discorsal patterns a community has, it can be complicated for outsiders to participate or understand the flexibility and creativeness that a genre contains. Those considered specialists in a community are able to operate business discourse based on social contexts and make changes in different situations in order to make appropriate choices.

According to Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson and Planken (2007), in the process of accomplishing tasks and achieving goals, spoken and written communication are both exploited by professionals who may come from different linguistic communities, professional fields, cultural backgrounds or with different levels of experience. When professionals come from different communities, a mutual language and appreciation toward social factors are needed to complete their jobs. Therefore, business discourse can be seen as social interaction. In the

process of meaning making, concerns may arise from an array of transitions and interactions, including when environments turn from monolingual to multilingual, when organizational cultures meet ethnic cultures, when communication methods switch from traditional to digital, when literacy practices require multiple parties to accomplish tasks and when powers determine the hierarchy of interpersonal and organizational workplace discourse. Participants from certain communities establish their communications and relationships with others through spoken or written discourse in order to achieve their goals (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2009).

Business discourse is mainly performed in a situation where professionals work together to negotiate, communicate or explain various types of strategies and approaches. The language used in professional settings represents the real world discourse and it is both contextualized and situated (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007). The business literacy performance may not necessarily be limited to a single generic structure or linguistic conventions, so it should not be seen as text in general. The discourse used in the workplace can be regarded as a hybrid product resulting from professionals' textual and verbal performance in contextualized settings. This kind of communication is an interdisciplinary social action which requires the distribution from both professionals and academics to generate knowledge and use different approaches in understanding the process of meaning making (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2009).

Business discourse is to some extent a part of business communication, focusing on North American and applied linguistics (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007). Business discourse and business communication share some similarities in understanding how communication facilitates workplace productivity, the analysis of micro issues such as individual communication, and the analysis of macro issues, including communication across professional settings (Louhiala-Salminen, 2009). Even though both business discourse and business communication focuses on

the relationship between textual performance and contexts, they differ in the population size of their target research. The former centers on explaining how certain “linguistic phenomena” (Louhiala-Salminen, 2009, p. 305) on textual performance appear in specific professional contexts, with the core purpose of the latter being to discuss text and contexts in a broader manner (Louhiala-Salminen, 2009). In the late 1990s, the research in business discourse was more pedagogically-driven and served as the potential model for two different professional communities, including the group of prospective educators working in academia and professionals working in business with varied working experiences (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007). Regardless of the population size of these research studies within the business environment, “actors co-create their subjectivities in the form of personal and professional identities, relationships, communities, and cultures through linguistic performances” (Jian, Schmisser & Fairhurst, 2008, p. 314). It not only shows the close relationship that exists among people, contexts and communication, but also the essence of business discourse and collaboration in moving tasks forwards.

History of Business Discourse

Researchers involved in the subdivisions of Applied Linguistics, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) had intentions to investigate how people use languages to communicate in different social environments (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007). Due to the fact that English has become the common language for cross-cultural and cross-linguistic business communication, the study of English for Business Purpose (EBP) focused on the nature of business discourse and the operation in business settings in order to stimulate the development of language teaching and learning specifically for the workplace (Bhatia & Bhatia, 2013). The researchers were also mainly interested in discovering how

communicative strategies and approaches were utilized among professionals in different situations (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007). The research in business discourse in the late 1980s was mostly motivated by career-driven intentions in which linguistic and social factors did not receive much attention (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007).

Mirjaliisa Lampi, a pioneer in business negotiation, initiated the language-based trend in business discourse research and inspired others interested in business negotiation to investigate language use in real world settings (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007). Later, there was research on business meeting discourse (Angouri & Marra, 2010; Bargiela & Harris, 1997; Davison, 1997; Louhiala-Salminen, Charles & Kankaanranta, 2005; Yamada, 1990) and business negotiation (Ehlich & Wagner, 1995; Graham, 1985; Sheer & Chen, 2003). Marian Williams' (1988) analysis on the business language comparison between workplace and textbooks demonstrated the gap in pedagogical and professional language use. Her work continues to remain valid because of the differences that exist between the academic materials and the language used in real world professional settings (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007).

There was a transition in the 1990s where the research direction of business discourse moved from vocational to pedagogical. Linguistic and social factors were included to understand the communication framework of the business world and the first definition for business discourse was generated at that time (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2009). The communication among these professionals involved spoken performance and literacy practices with the emphasis on their social roles and communicative practices (Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson, 1999). In this sense, professionals from the business world create a community where knowledge and conventions are generated through social interactions. According to Bargiela-Chiappini (2009), writing in the business world is regarded as a social activity and is realized by professional

members from the community. The process of producing textual communication stimulates the construction of the conventions, the structure of business discourse and the framework of the community of practice, situating in professional settings.

Business written discourse also has experienced tremendous growth. Vijay Bhatia's collection of work in business discourse has "shaped the work of a generation of applied linguists specialization in writing in organizational contexts" (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007, p. 9-10). Bhatia's contribution to business discourse heavily emphasized on the relationship among contexts, rhetoric and language users. From the 1980s to the 1990s, the analysis of business letters was an important and widely studied genre (Boiarsky, 1995; Jenkins & Hinds, 1987; Johns, 1980) which has continued to flourish and expanded to research on other business letter related written communication used in contextualized settings (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007; Flowerdew, 2012; Foz-Gil & Gonzalez-Pueyo, 2009; Mei & Shuib, 2014). The written discourse did not just stop on the traditional paper-and-pen communication trend, but moved forward to electronic communication along with digital developments, including fax communication (Akar & Louhiala-Salminen, 1999; Louhiala-Salminen, 1997; Zhu, 2013), email communication (AlAfnan, 2015; Gains, 1999; Gimenez, 2000; Kankaanranta, 2006) and text messaging (Kiddie, 2014).

Community of Practice

According to Lave and Wenger (1991) a community of practice is "a system of relationships between people, activities and the world; developing with time, and in relation to other tangential and overlapping communities of practice" (p. 98). Through a series of social interaction and human phenomena, the social engagement of groups of practitioners using their educational and professional experiences as their shared resources to complete tasks can be

regarded as community of practice, including committing to achieving identified goals, developing partnerships and participating in activities (Duguid, 2010; Li, Grimshaw, Nielsen, Judd, Coyte & Graham, 2009; Wenger, 2007; Wenger, Trayner & de Laat, 2011). Within a community, spoken and written text are produced under the discursal framework which creates consensus among practitioners about appropriate communicative and social behavior. A community is assembled by practitioners engaging in social activities and can be constructed through agreement among members within a community about appropriateness while conducting business (Rubin, 1988). With conventional standards and principles, members of a community need to be able to perform organizational dialogues with the intra and inter personal and organizational values in mind. They are able to function as a group due to the acknowledgement of proper communication (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999). Members from certain social groups practice the shared and recognized ways of communication through spoken or written discourses.

From Orlikowski and Yates' (1994) interpretation of a discourse community, a community consists of a social group or a professional organization in which people have a set of shared and recognized practices within a community. In this sense, over a period of time, each discourse community develops a body of conventions and standards that members from a community are able to perform under the scrutiny of shared communicative practices. How a community constructs its social purposes, functional values and communicative procedures is based on a community's needs, but more importantly, through social realization. Social realization requires active participation of social practitioners who have different levels of experiences, but all rely on one another during the process of accomplishment (Lave, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

When writing in professional settings, there are principles to direct how meanings should be constructed in order to fulfill the expectations of certain social communities. The professional members are expected to create proper genres for business situations in consideration of social, cultural and linguistic factors because they can affect the success of communication and are regarded as the values in written genres in professional settings (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999). Professional discourse shapes and is shaped by professional communities. Especially in business communities, it is common for professionals to jump between social communities in order to participate in the process of meaning making and building connections. The ‘hybrid membership’ is an exceptional characteristic assigned to those professionals for their ways of connecting business together (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999). Their performance can be influenced by their expertise, backgrounds, social surroundings and responding parties. At the same time, those professionals construct or maintain the structure of their organizations through the shared communities of practice. Christine Barabas’ (1990) study explained how organizational/national cultures influence the process of meaning making and further have an effect on the shared communicative practices. Her study reveals that the notion of a community is created based on the process of producing written and spoken discourse by members of a community (Barabas, 1990). Cultures within a community further evolve and develop by the social interactions between people and organizations (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999). Further, her findings demonstrated that professional writings are not only about the structures and format, but also other social factors, including audience, organizational beliefs and understandings toward cultures (Barabas, 1990).

Genre

The spoken and written forms of communicative practices are regarded as genres used specifically within communities which members put into practice to develop knowledge and further make changes based on different circumstances (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999). Genre is a continuously practiced rhetorical activity within discourse communities (Tardy, 2009). Due to its evolution through social contexts, by community members, and with the transformation and combination of other existing discourses (Todorov & Berrong, 1976), genre can be regarded as a situated rhetorical communication (Bazerman, 1988, 2012; Miller, 1984; Tardy & Swales, 2014). In this regard, genre is not merely a set of linguistic features or de-contextualized written activities, but a phenomenon which includes human participation, application purposes and a series of processes (Hyland, 2007; Prior, 2009). According to Bhatia (1993), “in the case of many other academic or professional genres a successful achievement of the specific communicative purpose that the genre in question serves, depends on the use of specific conventionalized knowledge of linguistic and discursal resources, depending upon the associated with the setting with which the genre is associated” (p. 9). Each genre serves the purpose of fulfilling the goal of certain circumstances.

Swales (1990) defined genre as a form of communication which is constructed with a set of standards and principles to meet a social community’s needs and to provide all community members with applicable rules to follow. He also pointed out that the features that characterize a discourse community are better understood and practiced by specialists within a community (Swales, 1990). That is to say that the creation of a genre is socially influenced by the intentions and functions in a community and is also closely intertwined with its community members and contextualized settings (Devitt, 2004). Bhatia (1993) later elaborated Swales’ definition of genre

that every genre has its own communicative functions that fit into certain situations and it changes based on the purposes of achieving goals from multiple parties for different matters. Genres are created by specialists' communicative purposes for their communities and they are regularly operated to construct the solid structure of their frameworks. The members of a community are likely to perform refined and higher level professional or academic discourse. Creativity in linguistic performance is acceptable but the conventions of generic structures and rhetorical resources cannot be discarded entirely. The importance of genre is that it structures the communicative formation of a community, and it also secures the status of conventional standards and linguistic rules within a community that leads professionals to success while keeping specific purposes in mind (Bhatia, 1993)

From a social constructivist view, Mikhail Bakhtin and Norman Fairclough expanded our understandings of genre through intertextuality (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999). Miller (1984) specifically pointed out that genre needs to be defined based on how it is used within or outside a community, including the purposes of using it and why it is structured in a particular format, as genre used in certain situated circumstances needs to be treated differently in order to have appropriate and mutual responses from each party. Intertextuality holds the responsibility in opening new rhetorical channels to handle unknown situations and the process of transformation results in new knowledge for a community. The genre-specific knowledge of a community is typically developed through the continuous process of producing and reproducing linguistic performance (Miller, 1984). The development of genre can be viewed as a continuous process of change (Todorov & Berrong, 1976).

Intertextuality plays an important role in the construction of a genre because it allows new genres to evolve from old or existing ones (Miller, 1984), and members of a community can

use one genre and refer it to another at the same time (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999). In any social context, a genre that consists of particular rhetorical characteristics and literacy principles can be used as a method to determine proper discourse in a community (Todorov & Berrong, 1976). In other words, to comprehend how a community functions as a whole, it is necessary to recognize how language is operated through genre types in social contexts (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999).

The flexible nature of intertextuality is that it can happen when there is a need to reach a mutual understanding in written and spoken communication with members who are from the same or different communities (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999). Bazerman's (1995) genre system specified that when different professional communities communicate, intertextual activities can occur. Therefore, a universal genre is not feasible for the complex nature of rhetorical conditions in the professional world because intertextuality allows genres to be more interactive with the responding parties and fit into particular social contexts (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994; Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999).

Also, experts have been voicing concern about how cultural norms and deviations are realized through communication in academic and professional settings where cultures can impact the flow of the construction and organization of idea development and linguistic formation (Bhatia, 1993). In order to produce publications in English, researchers from different disciplinary fields have to comply with the conventions to meet the academic standards while socio-cultural factors hold an important status in linguistic performance in the business world because they are the elements that determine achievement (Bhatia, 1993). Bhatia (1993) also pointed out that socio-cultural factors may not drastically change the structure of business genre;

however, they can still influence how experts manage their linguistic moves and communicative strategies in their performance.

Professional Business Discourse

Business discourse is a situated performance which requires specialists to respond mutually and have an objective in mind. According to Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (1999), business discourse can be simply defined as using professional languages to do business with the proper manner. Writing skills, strategies in spoken discourse and social interactions can determine successful accomplishments. Therefore, textual performance and social interactions are the essential elements to assist and accelerate the flow of business.

Writing in the business world not only has the purpose of negotiating business but also creates the potential individual-individual, company-company and individual-company relationships. Business writing is also an assessment of professionals' knowledge about 'intra-group' and 'inter-group' communication (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999) due to the individual and organizational communication they may encounter. When professionals come together for business activities, they bring in their conventions and specificities to the table. The business relationship can result in intertextuality in written negotiation based on the combination of individuals in business communities. Business written discourse can be concluded as a complex development in which the conventional standards and rules are produced based on situated language use, professional relationships and social factors within or across organizations (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007).

Collaboration

The importance of writing in collaboration is that it combines individuality from different perspectives which results in better writing (Cross, 1993). In business contexts, collaborative

writing is common (Burnett, 2001; Bhatia & Bremner, 2012) and it creates an opportunity for experienced and novice writers to provide input from different perspectives. Bremner (2010), in his comparison between workplace and academic literacy practices, pointed out that collaborative writing increases the quality of the input with “management monitoring, efficiency and effectiveness” compared to individual writing (p. 123). Collaborative writing represents the real world literacy practices (Cross, 1993) and also how professionals manage and organize personal viewpoints into literacy products. Language proficiency, position titles, individual/organizational cultures and familiarity in business discourse can create hierarchy in interpersonal and organizational relationships and further influences the process of accomplishing tasks. In addition to the hierarchical situation in professional settings, collaboration can bring out better writing because employees are urged to work together and complement their strengths and weaknesses in professional backgrounds, knowledge about generic and communicative practices and familiarity in working in professional environments (Bremner, 2010). The process of collaboration in the business world can be complex due to the linguistic, individual and organizational issues. Besides the social hierarchical structure in the workplace, Bakhtin (1981) specified that business discourse can also be affected by “specific points of view, specific approaches, forms of thinking, nuances and accents characteristic of the given genre” (p. 289). Taking all these components into consideration, textual performance by members in the business world cannot be investigated as simply text, but complex social action as a whole.

Collaborative writing is an important element in the business world (Bremner, 2010; Cross, 1993). However, the emphasis and process of literacy practices in the academic and professional settings are viewed differently. In accordance with Cross, Bhatia (2004) in *Worlds*

of Written Discourse, he made an important distinction between writing in academia and in the workplace. The former has the emphasis on writing individually due to the nature of writing tasks in the academic setting while the latter calls attention to collaborative writing because of the integration of multiple sources of knowledge (Bhatia, 2004). In addition to the writing context, there are other factors that increase the differences between academic and professional writing. In Bremner's (2010) study, he distinguished features that magnify the gap between business student writing and professional writing, which are goals, audiences, motives, interdisciplinary backgrounds and intertextuality.

Intertextuality

Discourse has the characteristic of flexibility that it expands its communicative realm through intertextual realization (Wodak, 2011). It cannot be viewed as an isolated communicative phenomenon, but a verbal or textual action that comprises "previous discourses and also typically prospect or predict future discourses" (Warren, 2013, p. 12). Kristeva (1969) defined intertextuality as a concept that "every text is from the outset under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose a universe on it" (p. 1) which explains that text used in discourse communities currently are built upon previous text in progression through a series of literacy practices (Bhatia & Bremner, 2012; Warren, 2013). Intertextuality is the notion of incorporating, transforming and configuring text from one another to produce knowledge in a meaningful way in a discourse community (Devitt, 1991; Fairclough, 1992; Gee, 2014; Leitch, 1983; Porter, 1986). This transformation process includes a heterogeneous collection of textual elements which can range from simply incorporating words (Gee, 2014) to genres and discourses (Fairclough, 1992). In the professional fields, members from certain communities need to practice and follow the specificity of linguistic features and social norms. Gunnarsson, Linell and

Nordberg (1997) proposed that professional discourse communication is “a unique set of cognitive needs, social conditions and relationships with society at large” (p. 5). Even though the linguistic and social performance in certain professional discourse can be confined to certain communities, they can still share some similarities in meaning making (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999; Bhatia & Bremner, 2012). While professional discourse can be very specific, professionals may need to embrace the differences in communicative characteristics from other fields to reach mutual understandings (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999). The intertextual elements in verbal or written phenomena can be directly related to who the author intends to interact with and where the genre-specific and discursual interactions take place within the social context (Fairclough, 1992) which can influence the quality of communication in workplace environment (Warren, 2013).

The process of producing and receiving information from different discursual communities to fulfill social goals and intentions increases “genre-mixing” (Bhatia, 1997, p. 189) in communication. Bhatia (1997) also proposed that the process “does not seem to be an exclusive property of academic introductions alone; it is found more commonly in many other forms of professional discourse (p. 189). With professional discourse’s exceptional characteristics of embracing knowledge from different fields (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2009), the performance in professional settings is the combination of multiple disciplinary fields. Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (1999) mentioned that ‘intertextuality’ and ‘interdiscursivity’ are the main approaches to understand the characteristics of business discourse because it has the tendency of incorporating rhetorical traits and generic features from other professional fields. Bazerman’s ‘systems of genres’ (1995) can be practical to understand the intertextual performance that exists in business discourse because it investigates how genres from multiple

occupational communities are utilized in social interactions (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999).

Communication in the business world has evolved from the electronic media into a more complex state where text is viewed differently with technology. Written genre is no longer restricted to the traditional styles, but instead there is a tremendous move in changing literacy practices from ‘monomodality’ to ‘multimodality’ in which conventional business discourse still exists but digitalized communication methods are slowly changing the nature of how people do business (Akar & Louhiala-Salminen, 1999; Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007; Bhatia, 1995, 1997).

Interculturality

Due to the globalized business community, intercultural communication and interaction are inevitably increased and this topic has caught business discourse researchers’ attention (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007; Bhatia & Bremner, 2012; Freeman & Browne, 2004; Markaki & Mondada, 2012). During the process of initiating and retaining meaningful communication, an individual’s collection of linguistic and cultural knowledge can influences his/her turn taking, moves and responses (Gumperz, 1982; Gumperz & Roberts, 1991; Kiesling & Paulston, 2008). In addition to the linguistic and cultural aspects, the power structure within a community is another factor to be considered (Kubota, Singh, Lele & Martohardjono, 2008). Intercultural communication is a social interaction which is commonly regarded as the involvement of multiple participants who belong to different cultural communities (Nishizaka, 1995; Piller, 2012; Scollon, Scollon & Jones, 2011). In order to reach mutual understandings, a second language is used when intercultural communication occurs (Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2009). Comprehension difficulties occurring in intercultural communication may be due to their cultural backgrounds (Scollon et al., 2011).

In the business environment, Bargiela-Chiappini (2009) defined interculturality as “the process and the condition of cultures-in-contact” (p. 6). Language and communication in intercultural interactions have been not thoroughly discussed within existing literature, although there are some exceptions that the existence of cultures has been recognized in studies on multinational organizations (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007). Also, researchers have brought up the need to determine the proper methodologies to investigate the language use in and across multinational business organizations (Harris & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003).

The most influential researcher in cross-cultural communication is Helen Spencer-Oatey, who has developed theories about how languages are used in cross-cultural organizational contexts (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007). She established the ‘rapport management’ framework, which is defined as having two facets, including “the management of face and the management of sociality rights” (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, p. 13). Rapport management is more than general communication strategies used to achieve successful intercultural interactions, but with the assistance of ‘social pragmatics’, ‘politeness theory’ and ‘face theory’, it can also clarify how language is used to maintain or create interpersonal relationships (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007).

After the ‘rapport management’ framework, Spencer-Oatey and Xing (2003) investigated the management of relationships, in particular the perceptions from Chinese-British business parties in an intercultural business meeting. Planken (2005) compared the differences between experienced and novice negotiators through using English as a lingua franca. According to Bargiela-Chiappini et al. (2007), ‘rapport management’ changes the way to researchers understand business. In addition to the competitive characteristic of business, ‘rapport management’ uncovers the nature of business, such as collaboration and mutual relationships.

Poncini (2004) promoted that the focus of linguistic features used in multi-national business interactions is to prevent the potential assumption and stereotypes about different cultures in interpersonal or organizational communication. Tanaka (2014) also proposed that when English is used as a mutual language for intercultural communication, mistakes and misunderstandings can be caused by linguistic features. Without cultural assumptions, working as a group can reduce the potential one-sided conversations during business meetings and balance the dominance within the workforce because of individuals' experiences as well as value professionals' capability to communicate in mutual languages (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007). According to Poncini's theory (2004), groupness can be used to maintain the relationships in organizational contexts where multiple languages and cultures meet.

Power Issue

In addition to understanding the relationship between textual performance and organizational contexts, researchers in business discourse are also interested in understanding the relationship between language competence and power and understanding how communication can be carried out when different cultures and languages converge (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007). Language used in business corporations is not only viewed as a social practice but also "powerful action" (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007, p. 20) because language competence can determine and construct the power structure when cross-cultural communication occurs (Bhatia & Bremner, 2012; Gunnarsson, 2009).

Pedagogical Business Discourse

"Technical subject matter" is one of the writings in business academia that requires writers to construct analysis reports with comprehensive explanations and analyze numerical data with clarity and distinction (Jameson, 2006, p. 76). The types of writing students are

expected to produce in the academic environment are “letters, memos, cases, reports and proposals” (Stowers & Barker, 2003, p. 338) which are also commonly seen in the business world. However, business materials provide limited professional literacy tasks. On the one hand, business textbooks only display the surface level of workplace literacy practices; on the other hand, the nature and functions of written discourse are not explicitly discussed, especially intertextual writing (Bremner, 2008). The disciplinary business discourse can be regarded as the preparation for professional literacy practices. Even though academic writing stresses emphasis on individual work (Bhatia, 2004), collaboration is a significant characteristic in the disciplinary business community (Connor & Kramer, 1995).

Authenticity

There have been debates on the authenticity of teaching materials used in business classrooms, including the recreation of business interactions and the representation of real world business communities. However, it is not an easy task to define authenticity because this term can be interpreted in different ways with various factors involved (Belcher, 2006). Widdowson in 1979 clarified that authenticity can only occur when text and contexts are simultaneously discussed as one subject (Belcher, 2006).

In Bremner’s (2010) analysis of eight business textbooks, he pointed out that even though those textbooks include some features of workplace literacy and communicative practices, the provided examples/exercises and the nature of business discourse are not directly manifested, particularly collaborative writing. Without experiencing how professional discourse and social interaction function, students may not be able to grasp how business professionals accomplish tasks in the workforce. Even though it is difficult to duplicate the same discourse practices occurring in different business situations, there are researchers who recommend constructing a

business community in the classroom for students to role-play the potential interaction they may encounter in the real business world (Bremner, 2010). This way, the distance between academic and business discourse can be reduced. Since intertextuality is such an important element in business writing, it can also be valuable to explain the relationship between rhetoric and cultures in producing genres (Bremner, 2008).

Interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinarity is initially defined as the knowledge in specialized fields that can be intertwined with other general knowledge found in different communities of practice (Klein, 1990). Previous studies also manifested that the essence of interdisciplinarity is when disciplinary components from different fields are integrated during the process of knowledge creation (Haraway, 1997; Kuhn, 1970; Milgram, 1969; Mills, 1959; Snow, 1993; White, 1985). Yet, the development in disciplinary concentration and specialization has been the emphasis of academic departments in the past ten decades which distinguish them from one another (Lee, 2007). In this case, setting narrow disciplinary boundaries can limit knowledge growth in intellectual and social aspects (Nissani, 1997). In order to achieve the dynamic development of pedagogical business discourse, there is an urgent need to connect scholars from different disciplinary fields and professionals from business settings to disseminate their professions, instead of researching in isolation. According to Bargiela-Chiappini (2009), the epistemology of business discourse is dynamic and cross-disciplinary, which needs to be acknowledged by “conceptualising it as travelling across disciplines, methods and ‘cultures’, conversing and discussing with the scholars, researchers and practitioners, running to and from challenging established notions and positions; subverting rather than settling, provoking rather than reassuring, and being stimulated by difference rather than aggrieved by it” (p. 10). In this regard,

interdisciplinary knowledge is built based on collaboration which creates mutual benefits for all of the disciplinary fields involved (Bernard-Bonnoni, Stachenko, Bonin, Charette & Rousseau 1995; Flinterman, Teclemariam-Mesbah, Broerse & Bunders, 2001; Rosenfield, 1992)

Even though authenticity may be a challenge, it can be rewarding for students to analyze the specialized genre-specific features and structures in their fields. In Cheng's (2008) investigation on how an L2 business graduate student coped with genre analysis in her research articles (RAs) projects, he discovered that the student was able to distinguish the genre-specific characteristics learned in the class and also recognize the features that were particular in her field. This kind of literacy skill requires L2 writers to have basic genre knowledge to identify the rhetorical traits in academic and professional fields. However, Swales and Lindemann (2002) endorsed the possibility that if second language writers are immersed in genre knowledge and are able to apply their knowledge to analyzing professional writings, they are able to understand the nature of intertextuality. With proper education on genre analysis, L2 writer are able to develop knowledge on interdisciplinarity in academia (Cheng, 2008). According to Ruscio (1986), "we need to reconceptualize our model of disciplinary growth and specialization, adopting a more organic model that accounts for the intricate links among the many specializations" (p. 43-44). Extracting, integrating and generating knowledge is a simultaneous procedure to expand and enrich intellectual growth.

Devitt and Johns also promoted the idea of raising students' awareness of genre-specific constraints in their academic and professional fields, so they are able to extend and build their genre knowledge from their existing generic assets (Belcher, 2006). Devitt (2004) encouraged learner autonomy in the process of learning professional and academic genres, as opposed to directly informing students of genre variations and rhetorical moves, because she believes that

students are able to know how genres are operated with self-awareness, even when new genres appear. Similar to Devitt's self-awareness, Johns' (2001) awareness of literacy genre was further enhanced as she promoted critical self-awareness for students to compile generic elements through their readings and writings. Her promotion of critical awareness can encourage students to understand the dynamics and complexity of workplace literacy practices (Johns, 2001). The promotion of learning autonomy can raise students' awareness of literacy practices and conventional rules in the academic and professional settings, and also reduces the native speaker authority because professionals are not necessarily L1 speakers (Lee & Swales, 2006). Students are able to understand and recognize cross-community and cross-cultural professional discourses.

Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF)

On the one hand, English possesses an important place in the business world and is widely used by international parties, but on the other hand, it is the shared language used by scholars from ESP/ LSP or applied linguistics in business discourse (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007). Through the process of increasing globalization, English is seen as the major language used in or across any disciplinary academia where it dominates the process of knowledge making and distribution (Tietze, 2008). This is true even when scholars are not necessary English speakers. For international academics, conducting research studies in their first languages is rare which leads to the circumstance where publications and knowledge creation are generally done exclusively in English (Tietze, 2008). Due to this use of English in academic and international business settings, "there has been an undeniable bias toward English in the research carried out in business language over the past two decades" (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007, p. 16). This concern corresponds to what Tietze (2008) said about the monolingual English status in business

research, which was that little is known about how diverse languages can affect knowledge construction in the international business world.

Another concern that caught the attention of business discourse researchers is that language practiced in the business environment should be considered situated, which is an essential element to understand the correlation and realization of written and spoken genres that occur in professional contexts (Bargiela-Chiappini et al, 2007). Sonja Vandermeeren (1999) conducted a study on how foreign languages are used in multi-national business activities among corporations in Europe. The results show that even though English is widely used to deal with international business activities within organizations, foreign languages are still regarded as a needed asset for companies to communicate with responding corporations (Vandermeeren, 1999). This research study reveals an interesting interpretation from the data as it posits that by using responding business partner's first language(s), compared with using English as a lingua franca, such use can result in better performance in multi-national business settings.

The most exceptional characteristic of BELF is that it is not owned by any country or ethnic groups, but instead it belongs to the business community where people use English to accomplish individual tasks and the goals of their organizations (Tietze, 2008). Also, the purpose of using BELF in international business contexts is simply to get work done through a mutual language. According to Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2010), to become a member of the BELF community, an individual needs to have the knowledge of rhetorical conventions and social practices because these skills are important in doing business than the accuracy in grammar and idioms. BELF also creates a neutral platform for members to communicate in the business community where no one is recognized as non-native speakers or second language learners (Louhiala-Salminen, Charles & Kankaanranta, 2005).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study aims to define business literacy through the macro and micro perspectives, and investigate how Taiwanese MBA students comprehend and cope with the business literacy practices in their MBA programs. Also, this research project explores their experiences in using their first and second languages to fulfill their programs' literacy requirements and accomplish their goals in the academic contexts.

This chapter contains the methodology for this research project. First, research questions are presented to show what this study intends to investigate. Second, the research design includes the purposes for using qualitative research methods and case studies. Third, descriptions of the settings of this research are provided as well as more about the participants and data collection methods used in this study. Fourth, data analysis is presented to show how data were analyzed after it was collected from interviews and documents.

Research Questions

1. What first language (Chinese) and second language (English) literacy practices are required by a MBA program in Taiwan?
2. What first language (English) and second language (any language) literacy practices are required by three MBA programs in the United States?
3. How do Taiwanese students understand and cope with different genres of writing in their business program?
4. How do Taiwanese study abroad students understand and cope with different genres of writing in their business programs?

5. What are the differences and similarities of literacy practices between these MBA programs?

Research Design

In order to have a thorough comprehension of the relationship between business literacy practice and Taiwanese MBA students' experiences, two types of qualitative methods were primarily chosen. First, intensive interviews were conducted, including two interview sessions with the MBA students and one interview session with MBA faculty members. Second, various textual data was collected, including syllabi from different courses, class assignments, notes and tests. Table 4 summarizes the data collection and data analysis that was used to explore the research questions.

Qualitative Aspects of the Study

The main intention of this study is to describe what business literacy means from the perspectives of Taiwanese MBA students studying overseas and in Taiwan; to detect how Taiwanese MBA students comprehend the business literacy practices which take place in the academic setting; to investigate the strategies they utilize to understand and construct their business knowledge through their first and second languages writings; and to understand how they negotiate among the languages they use to accomplish literacy practices. A detailed investigation is needed to determine how they are personally involved in their knowledge making.

Qualitative research aims at describing and understanding peoples' lives and phenomena in realities with a touch of researchers' interpretations (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) which shape our society. Creswell (1997) expanded the definition of qualitative research later on, in which an authentic context is the key to structure a "complex, holistic picture" of the social and human actions and requires researchers to conduct extensive explorations to reveal multiple perspectives

Table 4

Data Collection and Data Analysis Methods

Research Question	Data Collection	Data Analysis
1. What first language (Chinese) and second language (English) literacy practices are required by a MBA program in Taiwan?	Syllabi Class assignments Notes Tests	Content Analysis
2. What first language (English) and second language (any language) literacy practices are required by three MBA programs in the United States?	Syllabi Class assignments Notes Tests	Content Analysis
3. How do Taiwanese students understand and cope with different genres of writing in their business program?	Open-ended and semi-structured interviews	Content Analysis
4. How do Taiwanese study abroad students understand and cope with different genres of writing in their business program?	Open-ended and semi-structured interviews	Content Analysis
5. What are the differences and similarities of literacy practices between these MBA programs?	Open-ended and semi-structured interviews Syllabi Class assignments Notes Tests	Content Analysis

of an issue (p. 15). Even though qualitative research cannot be generalized, it creates a space for personal interpretations and allows “the integration of questions and context” that multiple dimensions of exploration are conducted (Giarelli and Chambliss, 1988, p. 3).

Qualitative research has the aim at using thorough and extensive explorations at understanding human phenomena and it also “seeks to grasp the processes by which people construct meaning and to describe what those meanings are” (Bogdon and Biklen, 2006, p. 43). It allows the researcher to have the holistic sense of how business literacy practices are

performed by Taiwanese MBA students through their experiences.

Case Studies

In order to carry out this research project, case studies were chosen to explore how Taiwanese MBA students understand and cope with different business genres in academic settings in detail. Merriam (1988) defined case studies as a research design which requires researchers to devote their attention to particular events, describe what procedure is taken by individuals to achieve a certain goal and explore deeper meanings of a selected phenomenon. Yin (1984) also pointed out that “case study is a design particularly suited to situations where it is impossible to separate the phenomenon’s variables from their context” (p. 10). In order to have a holistic exploration of a phenomenon, individuals and contexts should not be separated in any research project.

Case study aims at looking closely at a phenomenon in a natural setting and social interaction within certain contexts. In particular, it is a research design that “portrays ‘what it is like’ to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and ‘thick description’ of participants’ lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for, a situation” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 290). In this study, a total of four research sites were selected to closely investigate the literacy genres introduced in the chosen MBA programs, students’ procedure for conducting literacy practices and their literacy development derived from tackling tasks. With one program located in Taiwan and three in the United States, this study aims to understand the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic business literacy practices.

The Context of the Study

Research Settings

There were four research sites chosen for this study. The first site was a university located

in the mid-west Taiwan. The total population of this university in 2012 academic year was more than 15,000 students. Among the total student population, 376 were international students from 47 countries. This university consists of five colleges which include Foreign Languages and Literature, Humanities and Social Sciences, Sciences, Management and Computing and Informatics. For the MBA students, other than the required and selective courses provided by their MBA program, English/advanced English courses are also implemented to reinforce students' business English and general English ability. Chinese courses are also included to strengthen students' written performance concerning business and industrial documents.

The remaining three research sites were located in the United States. The first chosen school was a university situated in the northeast region. In 2012 academic year, the population of this school was more than 15,000 students, including 649 international students. The education system is made up by eight colleges, which includes Business and Information Technology, Education and Educational Technology, Fine Arts, Health and Human Services, Humanities and Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Graduate Studies and Research, and Continuing Education.

The location of the second selected university was also in the northeastern part of the United States. The total student population of this school was near 17,000 students with 1882 international students coming from 135 different countries. This university includes nine schools, including Liberal Arts, Business, Foreign Service, Arts and Sciences, Law, Medicine, Continuing Studies, Nursing and Health Studies and Public Policy.

The last selected university was located in the north central region with around 2000 students from the United States and 20 other countries. There were 14 undergraduate programs and six graduate programs.

Sampling

Based on the statistics presented in chapter one that indicate that business management is a highly preferred major for both undergraduate and graduate level studies for Taiwanese students, their literacy experiences should be documented in order to understand how they conduct literacy practices in the business academic setting and how second language writers approach literacy tasks within various genres. Non-probability samples were selected, convenience sampling and snowball sampling (Cohen et al., 2011) in particular. Data collection was conducted from April 2013 to November 2013.

The participants in this study were Taiwanese students who were born and have received education in Taiwan. The ages of the participants in this study ranged from 23 years old to 30 years old. The participants were bilingual or multilingual and were capable of writing and speaking in Chinese or English in academic and social settings.

There were two reasons for choosing specific universities for this study. The chosen school in Taiwan has a well known reputation for business. The reason for choosing the specific universities in the United States was based on their ability to enroll a consistent population of Taiwanese students into their MBA programs, as compared with other graduate and doctoral programs from around the country. As there was no personal contact or connections with the participants in Taiwan, a snowball sampling technique was used. Once receiving the MBA director's permission, the secretary forwarded an email to students, including the purpose of the study, the process of completing each stage of data collection, participants' rights for participation and also the investigator's contact information. From there, meeting arrangements were made to conduct the study interviews.

To recruit Taiwanese study abroad students, convenience sampling was used at the initial

stage of the study, followed by the snowball sampling technique. The chair of the Taiwanese Students Association (TSA) at one university was contacted to gain access to Taiwanese MBA students' contact information after receiving their permission. Social networking sites were also used to contact a Taiwanese student and the secretary in other MBA programs to inform them about the study. After receiving permission from the student and secretary, potential participants were emailed about the purpose of the study, the procedure of data collection and also their rights for participation. Then, meetings were arranged through emails.

There was no restriction on the gender of the participants or their previous educational and professional backgrounds. The participants were asked to voluntarily participate in this research study. Their names are kept strictly confidential. The names appearing in this study are pseudonyms. Also, there was no monetary compensation for participation. The participants were informed both in the invitation email and at the beginning of each interview of having the rights to withdraw from the study at anytime and any information collected from them would be deleted.

Participants

There were two groups of participants in this study. In the first group, there were 12 students (See Table 5) pursuing their Master's degrees in Business Administration. Among the 12 students, 5 were enrolled in one MBA program in Taiwan and 7 were enrolled in three different MBA programs in the United States. Chinese and Taiwanese are their first languages. English, Japanese and Korean are included as their second languages. 11 students were second year students and 1 was a first year student. Students came from a variety of educational backgrounds including Global Politics and Economics, Sociology, Agricultural Chemistry, Design, Economics, Animal Science, Biology and Business Administration. All of them received their

bachelor's degrees in Taiwan. Each participant had at least one year or more of work experience.

Table 5
Student Participant Demographic

Name	Gender	Educational Background	Program Location	Future Plan
Gary	M	Business Administration	Taiwan	No specific plan yet
Rick	M	Business Administration	Taiwan	Family shoe business in Taiwan
Sam	M	Biology	Taiwan	Taiwanese-based company
Yamato	M	Business Administration	Taiwan	Human resources or Marketing Management
Chiao Chiao	F	Business Administration	Taiwan	Ph.D. or Family pesticide business in Taiwan
James	M	Sociology	U.S.A.	International company in Taiwan
Ben	M	Agricultural Chemistry	U.S.A.	International company in Taiwan
Kevin	M	Economics	U.S.A.	Sales or auto parts industry in Taiwan or U.S.A.
Jim	M	Animal Science	U.S.A.	Agricultural-related business in Taiwan or U.S.A.
Cindy	F	Design	U.S.A.	Korean company in Taiwan or Korea
Sunny	F	Global Politics & Economics	U.S.A.	Business in Taiwan with the opportunity to speak English
Mike	M	Global Politics & Economics	U.S.A.	No specific plan yet

Prior to entering their universities, they all had received at least six years of English education in academic institutions, as required by the government of Taiwan. Some students attended cram schools for additional or advanced English courses. Some universities require undergraduate students whose majors are not English to take English courses throughout four academic years. Also, for some universities, achieving certain score levels of TOEFL, TOEIC or IELTS test is another requirement for students to graduate.

The second group of participants (See Table 6) included three faculty members teaching in the MBA program in Taiwan and five members in the selected programs in the United States. The chosen faculty members all had experiences with mentoring Taiwanese students academically.

Table 6
Faculty Participant Demographic

Name	Gender	Profession	Program Location	Nationality
Lisa	F	Marketing Research & Consumer Behavior	Taiwan	Taiwan
Gina	F	Human Resources & Organizational Behavior	Taiwan	Taiwan
Elijah	M	Operations & Technology Management	Taiwan	Taiwan
Gwen	F	Information Systems & Decision Sciences	U.S.A.	U.S.A.
Jimusa	M	Information Systems & Decision Sciences	U.S.A.	U.S.A.
Joe	M	Finance & Legal Studies	U.S.A.	U.S.A.
Jezza	M	Accounting	U.S.A.	England
KK15601	M	Marketing	U.S.A.	India
Tim	M	Information Systems & Decision Sciences	U.S.A.	Indonesia

Data Collection

In order to understand and compare how Taiwanese students experience literacy practices with a variety of genres in their MBA programs in Taiwan and the United States, multiple types of data were utilized to describe and discuss what business literacy is within two contexts. There are two sources of data, including documents and interviews which create different perspectives toward the phenomena of business literacy practices. While the textual documents provide solid examples of the required business genres, the interviews include the participants' experiences of fulfilling the literacy requirements.

Documents

There were different types of textual data collected for comparison to illustrate what business genres were used in the chosen MBA programs in Taiwan and the United States. The first document that was selected was the description of the MBA programs in which the nature of the program, values, objectives and requirements were provided. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the collection of documents is "a stable source of information, both in the sense that they may accurately reflect situations" (p. 276-277). The official description provided general information about what MBA students are expected to achieve and the requirements they are required to fulfill from the perspectives of the departments and universities; however, it is not able to capture the nature of business literacy or the essence of students' literacy performance.

In order to truly understand how business genres were put into practice by Taiwanese students, the second collection of documents was the collection of syllabi from different classes, business news articles, journal articles, cases, textbook chapters, journal article syntheses, thesis proposals, quizzes/exams, summaries, magazine/journal article reflections, PowerPoint presentations, individual life plans, personal mission statements, resumes, case/industrial

analyses, issue analysis briefing, metaphor summary and analysis, topic analyses, video case projects, topic summaries and problem exercise sets. Since these documents were relevant to students personally and they experienced the process of completing these tasks, they can represent the nature of literacy practices from the perspectives of second language writers. Documents are significant when they are “contextually relevant and grounded in the context they represent” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 277). With these sets of personal documents and materials, the performances and negotiations through different languages used to accomplish business genres can be viewed. They also are a representation of second language literacy practices in a natural setting.

Interviews

Interviews play an important role in qualitative studies that explore individuals’ perceptions and experiences. It is a means to illustrate the world through individuals’ voices and also provides insight as to how knowledge is constructed based on their intellectual and social interaction. Even though an interview is a conversation between a researcher and an interviewee, it is a purposive conversation with specific goals (Cohen et al., 2011; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). It is not simply a question-and-response interaction, but an active method to conceptualize the hows, whats and whys of interviewees’ lived experiences (Holstein and Gubrium, 2003). It is also a process of generating knowledge through collaboration regarding contextualized and situated matters (Fontana and Frey, 2008; Kvale, 1996) that they experience and reflect upon on a daily basis.

In order to discover how linguistic characteristics play a part in the business academic settings and how individuals’ awareness toward particular reading and written assignments affects their performance, the approach chosen for this study was in-depth interviews. The

purpose of choosing this interview approach was because it tends to look into individuals' voices regarding their feelings, opinions, beliefs and experiences toward specific situations (Cohen et al., 2011). The interview questions were open-ended in design, allowing the participants to describe and conceptualize their experiences in a socially constructed environment (Silverman, 1993). The interview itself was semi-structured. It required the participants' detailed clarification on their experiences which brought "richness, depth of response, comprehensiveness and honesty" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 420).

There were two sets of face-to-face interviews with the MBA students to explore the research questions at several stages. The first interview intended to answer the first and second research questions about students' language usage in the MBA programs in order to conduct literacy tasks. It focused on students' experiences of literacy practices in Chinese and English before and after their enrollment in their programs (See Appendix A), i.e. what literacy practices meant to them; how their previous experiences of learning English went; what they knew about professional literacy in the programs before enrollment; how they understood their programs' literacy requirements and expectations; and what their concerns were before and after enrolling in the programs. This set of questions requires the Taiwanese MBA students to share their previous experiences of coping with any literacy genres and their business literacy practice experiences.

The second interview focused on answering the third, fourth and fifth research questions. Before the interview, I read through the textual documents and created a list of questions based on their written works. The interview questions were text-based, mainly based on the syllabi, papers, research projects and class assignments. The aim of the second interview was to explore the MBA students' experiences of performing business literacy practices (see Appendix B), i.e.

what they knew about the features of each business genre; how they approached reading and written tasks; how their previous literacy experiences influenced their performance; what difficulties and struggles they encountered in their programs, what strategies or solutions were created and what accommodations were made.

There was one face-to-face interview with the MBA faculty members to answer research question one through four. The aim of the interview was to understand their experiences of mentoring the students, their perceptions of business genres and their concerns about students' literacy performance (See Appendix C), i.e. what business literacy means to them in professional and academic settings; what their goals and expectations are for the students; what language usages are preferred; and what they know about the difficulties and successes students have in these academic settings.

Chinese was the main language during the interviews with Taiwanese students and Taiwanese faculty members. Taiwanese and English were also used occasionally. English was used to interview faculty members in the United States. Interview conducted in Chinese were transcribed in Chinese and later translated into English. The interviews with the students lasted approximately 60 to 80 minutes. The interviews with faculty were 20 to 30 minutes in duration. The interviews were conducted individually in order to avoid conflicts or potential suppression within group discussions (Cohen et al., 2011).

Data Analysis

There were three stages in the process of data analysis, including organizing the data, the creation of initial themes, and the expansion on the initial thematic categories. The first stage of data analysis started with organizing documents and transcribing interview conversations. The textual data was collected and arranged in different categories based on the genres. Most of the

conversations were transcribed in Chinese and some in English, depending on who the interviewees were. The interview recordings were saved as digital files on the researcher's computer with each participant's pseudonym as a file title. After each interview, the transcribing process for each file started on the same day. Each file took approximately 5 to 7 days to transcribe. Every interview was listened several times to avoid any inaccuracies in transcription. Once the transcription was completed, data analysis began which is described as the second stage noted below this paragraph. Data analysis was completed using the Chinese transcripts. Participants' quotes from the Chinese transcripts were only translated into English if they were used as supporting evidence. Each translated quote was reviewed by a colleague to verify the accuracy of the translation. Any names mentioned in participants' quotes were replaced with a pseudonym or unidentifiable titles.

The second stage of data analysis began with the initial creation of themes in a code book. At this stage, a short list of themes was created which was based on the interviews, including participants' different stages of literacy experiences, types of genre used in the four academic programs and the participants' conflicts and solutions. The code book also included the definition of each code.

The third stage of data analysis was conducted in a more detailed manner. The interview transcriptions were read several times, underlined or highlighted with different colors. Notes were written alongside the colored sections in order to create and expand thematic categories. Three main categories emerged, including MBA literacy genres, previous literacy experiences and in-school literacy experiences. Quotes from the interviews were carefully selected to be incorporated into the analysis as evidence. The thematic categories and coding system were verified and evaluated by the dissertation advisor.

Content analysis was used during the analysis process. To answer the first and second questions, it was used to analyze how Taiwanese MBA students construct and develop their knowledge in business literacy practices through the negotiations between their first and second languages. For the third, fourth and fifth research questions, it was also used to identify the business genres used in the academic settings in terms of the similarities and differences in literacy practices between two settings.

Validity

Qualitative research involves rigorous and personal participation from both researchers and participants. Also, it requires an intensive process of questioning and responding. The nature of conducting qualitative research is to “strive for ‘understanding’, that deep structure of knowledge that comes from visiting personally with informants, spending extensive time in the field, and probing to obtain detailed meanings” (Creswell, 1998, p. 193). However, the data collected through qualitative methods require intensive human interaction and this may lead to invalid results. In order to secure the validity of the process of conducting qualitative research, it is required to fulfill certain criteria, including “careful audit trails of evidence, member checking/respondent validation (confirmation by participants) when coding or categorizing results, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, ‘structural corroboration’ (triangulation) and ‘referential material adequacy’ (adequate reference to standard materials in the field)” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 181).

As the researcher shares the same linguistic and cultural backgrounds as the participants, there is potential to bring biases toward how Taiwanese student perform literacy practices. Also, the researcher’s experiences and perspectives can influence the interpretation and categorization of the received data. Therefore, through the process of coding and interpreting data, consultation

occurred with the dissertation advisor in order to ensure the validity of this project. In addition, by utilizing particular strategies to ensure the accuracy of the results from the researcher's or participants' viewpoints, it enhances the trustworthiness of the research project and also strengthens the quality of the study (Creswell, 2009).

Summary

The purpose of this study is to explore how Taiwanese and Taiwanese study abroad MBA students cope with the required literacy practices in their programs as well as the negotiations between their L1 and L2 to fulfill academic requirements. It looks specifically at students' experiences of conceptualizing the business genres and their process of conducting literacy tasks so as to investigate the challenges they encounter and the strategic solutions created.

This qualitative study utilizes a case study method to investigate the business literacy practices and students' literacy experiences. Two sources of data were collected, including documents and interviews. The documents represent what business genres are incorporated in each program while the interviews reveal students' personal accounts of literacy experiences. The data is analyzed using a content analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BUSINESS LITERACY PRACTICES IN THE MBA PROGRAM IN TAIWAN

Introduction

The main focus of this chapter is to discuss the business genres used in the chosen MBA program in Taiwan in order to answer the first research question (What first language (Chinese) and second language (English) literacy practices are required by a MBA program in Taiwan?) and the third question (How do Taiwanese students understand and cope with different genres of writing in their business program?). There are two main sections in this chapter. In the first section, the literacy practices are described based on students' experiences, while the second section focuses on professors' perspectives. Both sections describe the reading and writing assignments which students are expected to accomplish.

Business Literacy Practices from Students' Experiences

Before introducing the required business literacy practices, the language ability and literacy performance required by the program is firstly introduced. The program has specific linguistic examination scores and written tasks as the enrollment requirements. The literacy practices section specifically focuses on the reading and writing tasks in the MBA program. The descriptions of their MBA literacy practices include the characteristics and purposes of reading and writing assignments as well as the procedures of conducting each activity. The descriptions also capture the difficulties that emerged during the literacy process and the strategies developed accordingly.

Language and Literacy Requirements before Enrollment

The application procedures and requirements for the selected MBA program in Taiwan require students to demonstrate their language ability, literacy skills and professional knowledge.

Students are expected to be equipped with certain level of English language ability before their enrollment or graduation (See Table 7). Language proficiency tests are regarded as a general indication to determine students' levels of competency and fluency in English. Enrollment examinations can provide an example of students' writing skills regarding their knowledge in specialized fields and their ability to deliver abstract thoughts in a written form.

Table 7

Literacy Requirement before Enrollment

Language & Literacy	Requirements
Language Proficiency Tests	*Before enrollment or graduation TOEFL paper-based: 543 TOEFL Internet-based: 87 TOEIC: 785 IELTS: 5.5 GEPT: high-intermediate
GMAT	—
Writing	Enrollment examination Admission through recommendation

In the selected MBA program in Taiwan, students can either apply to the program by attending an enrollment examination or request the admission through recommendation. The enrollment examination usually includes a Chinese written test regarding a specific subject, such as Management. The test consists of three sections of open-ended questions which are used to evaluate students' professional knowledge and essay writing skills. The admission through recommendation is approached in two stages, document review and oral examination. The documents, if applicable, generally include transcript(s), a study plan, English proficiency test score(s), published/presented written work, thesis, seminar project(s), research/working experience(s) and received award(s). The language proficiency tests are considered as one of the graduation requirement. To be qualified for graduation, students are expected to achieve the

minimum score for one of the following tests: paper-based TOEFL at 543, Internet-based TOEFL at 87, TOEIC at 785, IELTS at 5.5 or GEPT (General English Proficiency Test) at the high intermediate level. Students can also take credited English courses, not included in the MBA credits, in order to graduate.

Literacy Practices in A MBA program in Taiwan

Reading Practices

The first reading task students receive in the program is a syllabus which consists of detailed information about the course requirements required for academic achievement. The other reading tasks range from theory-based to application-based texts (See Table 8). Textbooks and articles are commonly used for theoretical and application purposes. Students are able to experience theoretical and research writing through reading Chinese and English materials. To balance the theoretical content, readings regarding real world applications (both in Chinese and English) are also introduced in class, though case studies (in Chinese) are only assigned in one class. By using both Chinese and English reading materials, the local and international perspectives on business, either theoretical or practical, are included.

Syllabus

Description. A syllabus is a document containing a detailed description of the course and students' academic requirements throughout the whole semester. The document is presented in both text and visuals such as short paragraphs, tables, bullet points and colors. It can also be presented as a paper-based or digital document. The content includes class information, required/optional textbooks and references, quizzes and exams, assignments, academic integrity policies, a course description (in both Chinese and English), goals and objectives, grading methods and ratios, competency indicators and fulfillment, teaching and assessment methods, the

class schedule and the language used in class. While Chinese is the predominant language used in a syllabus, all titles are accompanied by English translations. Some sections may be entirely written in English.

Table 8
MBA Reading Tasks

	Syllabus	Business News Article	Journal Article
Description	1. Course description & academic fulfillment 2. Paper-based or digital 3. Textual & visual 4. Chinese & English	1. Current business info 2. Various themes in sections 3. Text & Visuals 4. Varied lengths	1. Theoretical concepts & real world research 2. Sections of info 3. Quantitative study 4. Text & visuals 5. Varied Lengths
Process	1. Academic records & responsibility	1. Headline selection 2. Read through 3. Translation	1. Non-linear 2. Keyword/title 3. Certain sections 4. Visuals as assistance
Rationale	1. Course info 2. Academic requirement	1. Real world knowledge 2. Connection to world 3. International situations	1. Theoretical framework 2. Research guideline 3. Individual/ group work 4. Discussion 5. English – familiarity
Linguistic Function	—	1. English – completion	1. Chinese – translation & output
Concern	1. Amount of work 2. Required language 3. Quantity of English readings 4. English Material lengths 5. Test language	—	—
Difficulty	—	1. N/A	1. Language barrier 2. Business terminology 3. Paper structure 4. Visual literacy 5. Local job market
Strategy	—	1. Extra research	1. Visual literacy 2. Language switching 3. Note taking 4. Learning community

Process. Syllabus reading procedure mostly depends on individual's academic records and responsibilities. In order to stay on track, students may primarily pay attention to information regarding written assignments, quizzes and exams, weekly readings and oral presentations. Preparing in advance enables students to contribute to class activities and accomplish academic tasks. Students may also place emphasis on information relevant to language used in class or students' academic standings, such as course requirements and assessment methods. These are the elements that may affect students' performance and learning results in the academic setting.

I looked at what the professor wanted us to write each week and which group would be responsible for the presentation.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

I think the testing procedure and the language used for lectures were the most important. I wanted to know if he was going to use Chinese or English. And then, I looked at the percentages in the grading section.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

In order to fulfill students' academic responsibilities, reviewing the syllabus occurs when they need to verify the due dates for assignments or exams. The frequency of reviewing the syllabus depends on courses or individual schedules. The emphasis may be only stressed on specific sections.

Rationale. A syllabus provides students with course information and academic requirements. It helps students to raise their awareness of their work schedule and responsibilities.

Concern. There are four main concerns raised by the students, including the amount of expected work, required language usage, quantity of English readings and the lengthy English materials. First, after reviewing the syllabus, students have a brief understanding of what goals and workload are expected to be accomplished in class. Attention may be drawn to some detailed sections specifically. Regardless of students' previous academic and professional backgrounds,

the advanced course content may require students to conduct in-depth research and spend extended periods of time to develop their intellectual growth.

There is a section where the professor talks about what he expects us to learn. Like, the abilities students need to be equipped with. And, usually those skills were not the ones we had back then, so it sounded really hard to achieve.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Other than the expected amount of work, the remaining concerns are related to the language used for class performance. While Chinese is the dominant language for communication in most classes, some are designed in other ways. Students can select courses based on their preferences. The languages (Chinese and English) used in a syllabus can be an indication of a professor's preferred language usage as well as the assigned tasks in a specific language.

When a professor uses more English in the syllabus, you can generally assume that the chance of using English in the class is higher. If texts are in Chinese, you can guess based on the professor's lectures. As for English...sometimes you are not able to understand what the professor wants to express. So when the readings are in English, it is usually more difficult to understand.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Third, the performance of literacy tasks can be influenced by the language and the amount of reading materials. English textbooks and articles, retrieved from academic journals and news sources, are commonly assigned for students to receive and develop perspectives through various genres. Pressure caused by students' familiarity with the language or background knowledge can be enhanced due to the heavy English reading load. It can also later affect how written assignments are completed.

To be honest with you, English is our biggest problem. The purpose of reading textbooks is for us to learn. But when they are written in English, you would doubt yourself and if you really understood what you read. If you cannot understand or are not able to complete the readings, you would wonder if you are able to achieve the professor's requirements.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

If textbooks are in Chinese, I feel more confident because at least I can understand. But if they are in English, I feel some pressure because it is not a familiar language. It is easy to misunderstand the meanings because of the sentence structures. If you mess up an important key point, your following understandings can be misconceived.

(Sam, personal interview, translated)

Fourth, the length of English materials is another concern. Most students in this group can speak two or more languages and they may use the languages they know as a strategy to comprehend content. This process may require students to find spare time to utilize the language that they feel most comfortable with in order to complete tasks and rearrange sentences in an appropriate way. If the material content is lengthy, the process may take longer.

When I downloaded the articles, I looked at the page numbers to see how many pages were in each one of them...I think one of the articles was more than 20 pages. I was like, "I am dead, so dead." The most ridiculous one was around 45 pages.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

Business News Articles (Wall Street Journal)

Description. Business news articles provide stories and trends about the current business world. A singular theme is usually included in an article with information about its background and present situation. A news article can also include analysis or criticisms regarding specific events. For example, if the topic is about automobiles, relevant information about cars is first introduced to readers. The top ten ranking of automobiles based on consumers' opinions is then presented. Visual information such as pictures and charts can be included. News articles come in various lengths.

Process. Unlike journal articles and textbook chapters, the wording is less academic. However, professional jargon and expressions may require students to do additional research to understand the information. Familiarity with the language and sentence structures may help comprehension. Also, summaries are not included in news articles. Students may start by reading

its headline to see if it is of any interest. Reading through an article can provide a fuller picture of the topic. Translation can be one part of the reading process.

Because this news is shorter and it does not have an abstract, I started reading its title and then went straight into the content. I just read from the beginning to the end.
(Rick, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. Since theory-based textbooks and research articles are frequently used in class as the foundation for knowledge building, business news articles connect students to the real world business environment. News articles also provide students with information about local and international business situations and issues. Professors may use this assignment as a different reading genre to see if students are able to internalize the information and present their understandings.

Linguistic function. The articles are in English, but the language usage is not as difficult as in journal articles. The vocabulary used in business news articles includes more commonly seen words.

Strategy. Since the final goal of reading business news articles is to present them as a PowerPoint project, further research can strengthen students' background knowledge on specific topics and develop a clearer perspective. The research is not limited to certain genres or forms.

I did some research based on the content. There were ten countries in the news that hated the United States, so I did some research on those countries to see the true reasons of why they hated the United States and to see if there was any other related news.
(Rick, personal interview, translated)

Journal Article

Description. A journal article is a research document consisting of a wide range of topics such as business behavior, workplace communication, marketing decisions, consumer motivation and so forth. It provides theoretical concepts used in the business field which can be practically applied to the real world research. Unlike the diverse topics provided in textbooks, a specific

theme or theory is included as the main focus of an article. Articles with similar topics or theories may share keywords. The format of a journal article may include an introduction, literature review, hypothesis, research procedures, discussion/results, limitations, theoretical/practical implications, future research, references and appendices. Within an article, hypotheses can be tested with different variables or models. Results are presented in a quantitative manner. Other than textual information, visuals can be presented as charts, digits, tables, figures, models/formulas, and pictures. The length of a journal articles can be approximately 7-10 pages or 25-45 pages.

I am more familiar with this kind of format which starts with an introduction, a literature review and then methodology. But there is one kind of journal; it probably starts with an introduction. After the introduction, there are study 1, study 2 and study 3.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Process. The reading procedure moves in a non- linear method. The initial step starts by looking at the keywords in titles. That way, students are able to determine if the articles are relevant to their studies or to their interests. The following step is to obtain needed information from certain sections of an article in order to have a general idea of the content. Skipping sections may result in partial understandings or interrupted coherence of the article.

When I look for articles, I am used to looking at titles first. I would see if the title attracts me...like, what is this article about? And then, I looked at the abstract. I read through the abstract to see its results. From the results, you generally can know its research direction. If I am okay with everything, I would read the remaining content from the beginning to the end.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

I skipped the abstract and literature review sections in this article. I looked for its research purpose and methodology first...In the abstract section, it includes the summary of all information...it may skip too fast so I might not understand. As for the literature section, some of the scholars' quotes may appear in the methodology section. So I usually read the research methodology section first.

(Sam, personal interview, translated)

Other than the textual content, students are also required to develop the ability to understand visual information which is commonly seen in business research articles. The textual content may be challenging for comprehension because the language is more formal with professional business terms which requires developed reading skills and background knowledge. Visual information may assist the student in understanding the research studies.

I think the visuals are usually easier to understand. Sometimes the words are very difficult to understand...If they use really difficult words, I would not know what they are talking about. So I would look at the visuals to help me understand.
(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Journal articles can be assigned as an individual or collaborative assignment. Articles can be divided into sections during the reading process, but integration is needed at the end to have a holistic view of the content.

Rationale. The purpose of reading journal articles is for students to understand specific frameworks or theories so they are able to see how real world application can be conducted in the research. It is a guideline for students to know the direction of their assignments or theses. Journal articles can also facilitate individual and collaborative work. Students can use articles to discover research gaps or the possibility to extend studies further. They can be used to promote class discussions and interactions as well. Professors may also use this assignment to encourage students to gain familiarity with English and specialized knowledge.

We had to understand how the research was conducted in the methodology section, the research purpose and business terminology. The professor wanted to see if we were able to present the main points and how much English we learned from the article.
(Yamato, personal interview, translated)

When reading papers, our professor expected us to find the main points. He wanted us to be able to find some aspects to investigate in the specific research field.
(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Linguistic function. Depending on students' linguistic ability, translation (English to Chinese) can be the first step taken during the reading process. The translation amount can be small (vocabulary, phrases, terms) or large (paragraphs, whole article). Chinese is used as a tool to assist students to comprehend materials that are written in English. It is used to transfer theoretical principles from a distant and abstract state to a more familiar linguistic system. Students' familiarity with the topics can also enable them to spot terminology which can avoid altered meanings during translation.

I just tossed the paragraphs into Google Translation... I thought the translated version was pretty clear, but actually I was wrong. When I went back to the translated version, I did not know what it was talking about.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

Basically I translated English into Chinese to understand the article. Chinese became a tool to help me comprehend.

(Yamato, personal interview, translated)

Other than transferring abstract input, Chinese is also used to produce constructive output, including individual's understandings and provides quick access to needed sections or information. Individual understandings can be written down as brief notes or keywords, serving as a reminder of the main point of each section in a research article.

After the article was translated into Chinese, I read faster because I was able to find the main points and the article content was in Chinese. I can quickly understand through Chinese, and can understand what this article has mentioned and what this article is about.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Difficulty. The challenges students encounter can be divided into four categories. Language is the first challenge that students need to address when reading English materials. Journal articles may contain more sophisticated writing structures and a professional usage of vocabulary. However, linguistic challenges can also be caused by students' familiarity with

specific topics. Comprehension can be influenced by how experienced students are with the material content and this type of reading materials.

At that time, I was really frustrated. I almost cried every day. I just could not understand. They were like cryptic books and it was really difficult to understand. I really hated it when scholars used inversion in sentences. I had to check a lot of words, and then I needed to guess the meanings in each paragraph.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

I think some journal articles do not look like journal articles. They are more like English literature because the authors like to use very long sentences to embellish other smaller sentences. Or they use really long sentences to describe one simple thing. When I read them, sometimes I did not know where the main points were.

(Sam, personal interview, translated)

Recognizing specialized terms and vocabulary is a required step to develop the coherence of a study. The business terminology needs to be treated differently from other words in the texts during the translation process. Also, without a unified translated version for business terminology, words can be translated in various ways.

This article's structure was not very clear in that it did not show the variables directly. I should say it mentioned the variables, but not in an obvious way. So it turned into the situation that I had to differentiate its variables from other words. So I think this can make the translation difficult.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

I think the most difficult part was because it was in English. I had to translate it into Chinese. The translation seemed correct but those words were terminology so the translation always looked weird... Finding the correct translation for business terminology was more challenging.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

The familiarity with formats can also affect how students find specific information in an article. There are various ways to present research studies; therefore, locating needed information can be challenging for novice readers. Reading challenges are not necessarily connected to students' language abilities because they may go beyond simply textual information as journal articles contain different modes to convey research studies.

Even though most sections in a journal article are presented with text, visuals may be used to summarize information for readers to locate a direct and quick image of the topic. Each visual symbol represents the textual information in an abstract way.

Sometimes there are a lot of variables in one research graph. If there are only x axis and y axis, it is very easy. But when one xy axis is added to that graph with another axis and different colors, there would be a lot of variables. I would need a lot of time to understand the graph.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

While most difficulties in reading journal articles seem to be content or language related, practical application is another challenge that students may face in the job market in the near future. Business terminology and theories are introduced to students via English journal articles which are commonly used in courses as required readings or resources for their theses. However, the language may not be commonly used in the workplace environment in Taiwan. Real world application can become challenging due to terminology used in different settings. This situation may encourage students to research what and how terminology is used in various contexts in order to increase their knowledge and adapt their terminology usage for different purposes.

I think if this thing exists in English, it should exist in Chinese as well. It may not be translated literally though. Then I may think there is no such thing in Chinese or this term does not exist in Taiwan. This can affect how we work in the specialized field because we may not understand what our colleagues say (in Chinese), even though those words in Chinese and English mean the same thing.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. Visual literacy comprehension may be achieved through experience accumulation. It can be challenging for novice readers to extract information from abstract visuals, such as tables and figures.

Slow and consistent practice is needed. We did not understand those visuals. At the beginning, we did not know what we were doing. We usually skipped them, but those were actually the important sections.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Paying attention to the structure and format of articles can help understand the different writing fashions. This experience can later accelerate the reading pace to locate proper nouns or specific information. However, reading journal articles still requires students to memorize terms and vocabulary commonly used in the business fields in order to shorten the time spent on translation.

When there were words I did not understand, I checked them all. I would patiently read through the articles myself...Translation was for me to understand so I had 3 online translation sites ready on my computer at the same time. I used Google, Baidu and Dr. Eye.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

On the content level, notes taking can help students keep track of what they have read and the theme of each section. Notes can be written in the form of vocabulary or short phrases depending on the students' familiarity with the language or content.

Finally, since the learning community shares the same language, the difficulties in cross-linguistic communication can be avoided. While some clarifications may be delivered directly, some are indirect in order to guide the students to practice in action.

I usually ask people whose English is better than mine. If my understandings are the same as theirs, then I am good to go...After finishing reading, I would discuss with my classmates because I may learn more from discussing with my peers.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

I asked my professor how to read the article. What she told me was that things may be interpreted differently in different fields and she did not tell me why. She just told me the paper format in a general way and how I should complete this paper.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Writing Practices

The written practices can be divided into three categories (See Table 9) based on their themes or genres. While some written tasks consist of text mostly, some are heavily visual-based or the combination of both. The written assignments are mostly done in Chinese due to students'

language ability, but the composing language is not restrictedly to Chinese only. Students are able to choose the written language based on their preferences.

Table 9

Written Assignment Category

Category	Assignment
Theoretical development	1. Journal article synthesis 2. Thesis proposal 3. Quiz & exam
Summary & reflection	1. Summary 2. Magazine reflection 3. Journal article reflection
Textual & visual	1. PowerPoint project

Theoretical Development

In the theoretical development category (See Table 10), assignments and tasks are mostly written based on theoretical sources such as textbooks and journal articles. The written tasks are not solely relying on English materials, but also Chinese ones. This way, students can receive local and international perspectives regarding business situations. Students are expected to contribute their internalized understandings in a written form. Reading Chinese and English texts is always the first step taken to complete written tasks. Both Chinese and English are used during the writing process.

***Journal Article Synthesis* 期刊論文摘要整理**

Description. The journal article synthesis is a two page assignment which requires students to read four Chinese and four English journal articles in order to find a theory or theme of interests. The synthesis is divided into two sections. In the first section, students are expected to include a brief definition of the chosen theory and its application. In the application part, paraphrased quotes, individual opinions and examples can be included. The second section follows the same structure as the first section. This assignment is written individually.

Table 10

Theoretical Development

	Journal Article Synthesis	Thesis Proposal	Quiz & Exam
Description	1. Chinese & English articles 2. Def. & application 3. 2 pages 4. Individual work	1. Chinese & English articles 2. 5 sections of info 3. Academic formal/ APA format 4. Visual info 5. 10 plus pages	1. Open-ended questions 2. Chinese/ English questions 3. Chinese answers 4. 2-3 pages
Process	1. Thorough reading & translation 2. Titles/ keywords 3. Examples 4. Practical application	1. Individual assignment 2. Research 3. Keywords/ outline 4. Linear/non-linear writing 5. Visual info	1. In-class test 2. Collaborative prep. 3. Individual test 4. Review questions first
Rationale	1. Theory & application 2. English familiarity	1. Thesis development	1. Evaluation 2. Language development
Linguistic Function	1. Chinese – completion 2. English – verification	1. Chinese – completion & translation 2. English – verification	1. Chinese – Q & A 2. English – Q 3. No dictionaries
Difficulty	1. English sentence/voc 2. Business terminology	1. Linguistic transition 2. Translated versions 3. Writing fashions 4. Business jargons	1. English questions 2. Vocabulary
Strategy	1. Practices 2. Original terminology	1. Writing imitation 2. Academic language 3. Proof reading	1. Time management 2. Non-linear method

Process. Students are expected to relate theories discussed in journal articles to activities or events that have happened in the real world environment. They are required to read thoroughly at the initial stage to be able to select a specific theory to use in their synthesis. The first step in the writing procedure is to start creating each section with a keyword (theory or theme). Once the direction is established, an elaboration on the theory is needed. Any personal statements have to be supported by quotations from the scholarly articles. Students are expected to end a synthesis with a real world application based on the chosen theory.

Based on the articles, I needed to write down what the scholars wanted to express. Also, I had to apply what the scholars have said to the real world setting and give examples. This

was pretty much what I did for this paper.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

Since the assignment is done in Chinese, a translation process is involved. The translated content cannot be directly used in this synthesis assignment due to the differences in linguistic structures in Chinese and English. An additional step is taken to transfer abstract ideas extracted from English materials into a proper Chinese written form.

Rationale. A synthesis is designed to help students build their theoretical knowledge and further extend this assignment into a larger project. They are expected to develop this synthesis into a thesis proposal at the end of the class. Also, building familiarity with English and academic language usage is another aim of the project.

Linguistic function. This assignment is written in Chinese. If the theories or business terminology are quoted or paraphrased from the English articles, the original terms are attached to the translated versions. The authors' names are also kept in their original spelling (English). Students may translate terms from their understandings or experiences, but additional research on the translated terms are conducted to determine if their versions are consistent with the majority in the field. That way, the translation would not be distant from what most professionals use in the industry.

What I find important is that after we learn the English version, we should learn the Chinese one to see if there are similar ideas. I think this is what graduate students should do. We cannot just focus on either English or Chinese.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Difficulty. Writing this assignment requires students to have a full understanding of the content; however, sentence structures, vocabulary, business terminology and writing fashions may influence how synthesis is written. Also, visual information and familiarity with the topics are other elements that can influence how students interpret the content. Students may need to

develop the ability to comprehend information presented in different modes in order to integrate it into their writing. Transforming thoughts into words is another step to complete written tasks. Even though Chinese is all of the students' first language, writing professionally requires training.

As for writing assignments in Chinese, everybody has different interpretations. The assignment can be in better shape if your English is good so the original meanings stay the same. If your English is not good, then the original ideas can be changed.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

I can read Chinese from the beginning to the end, but there is inversion in English so I have to keep reading (going back and forth). I think it is difficult to find out the hidden meanings. Sometimes I have trouble expressing the ideas to the fullest.

(Yamato, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. It takes time to become accustomed to the academic language used in research articles. The linguistic knowledge in the specialized field can be accumulated through experiences. Additional research on business terminology or theories may strengthen the background knowledge on specific subject matter.

Also, there are various ways to translate and interpret business terminology. In order to reduce confusion caused by translation, students may incorporate the original terminology in their assignments. Incorporating the original terms in their paper is a way to constantly refresh their memories of the concepts.

I thought I needed to be more professional with those words. So I attached the original terms (English) to my translated version. Also, those terms can be found in other English articles. To me, it is another way to memorize them. So I attached those original terms to my translation.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

Some of them were business terminology, but they turned weird after translation. I thought the professor might not understand what I was talking about. I attached the original terms to my paper so I could prevent the professor from getting confused.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Thesis Proposal

Description. A thesis proposal requires students to synthesis 15 journal articles (Chinese and English), find a research direction and develop a research procedure. A proposal starts with an abstract, followed by an introduction, literature review, research framework and ends with a reference list. In the introduction section, a brief theoretical statement and a real world justification are included. The disciplinary principles and concepts from the 15 articles are synthesized into the literature review section with hypotheses created accordingly. The language has to be academic formal and the paper structure has to follow the APA format. A proposal is more than ten pages long. Visual components can also be included.

Process. This assignment is done as an individual project and students are expected to do paper-based (library) or online research to find journal articles relevant to their research interests. Keywords can be used to outline the main direction of a proposal and avoid digression. Detailed information can be later distributed to each section.

I set up the main direction first and then wrote the paper in detail. I entitled the main sections first in a word file. After that, I started writing under each section so I could make sure of what I wanted to write.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Students can also choose a non-linear writing procedure. Starting from the literature review section at an initial stage can clarify the theoretical background in order to develop the hypotheses as the research theme. The research gap that emerged from the literature review may help students connect the research procedure with the theoretical background.

Because at that time I did not figure out how I should write my methodology section, I started with the literature review to establish my hypotheses, followed by the introduction and ended it with my methodology.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

Among the textual content, visual information is also included in the proposal. Visual aids can be inserted into the paper after each section is completed. It creates the shortest path for readers to understand the theme of the research study.

Rationale. Professors may use this assignment to evaluate students to see if their theoretical framework and research procedure can be later developed into a thesis project.

Linguistic function. The chosen articles can be in Chinese and English. There is no restriction on the written language, either. Most students choose Chinese over English because they are familiar with and have control over their L1.

I think English is an unfamiliar language so if I cannot manage to use it, it becomes a burden. We all decided to use Chinese to write at the end because we were too unfamiliar with English.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Also, the translation is not restricted to a certain way. Additional research on specific translated words or phrases may be needed. For example, students may need to translate a scholar's names or business terminology themselves if the unified translated version cannot be found. The original terms can be attached to the translated ones.

There are many schools in academia so the translation can differ. I would just find one translated version that is commonly seen, but I always attach the original ones (in English). So I can make sure that readers can understand the English version even if they do not agree with my translated terms.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Difficulty. Unlike the PowerPoint project, synthesized information in a proposal needs to be properly transformed from English to Chinese if using English articles. Sentence structures and vocabulary need to be reorganized and rearranged due to the linguistic differences, various translation versions and writing fashions. The difficulty level of transferring content from one language to another may be influenced by students' reading and writing experiences in their L1

and L2. It can also be impacted by how much non-textual content students utilize to facilitate comprehension.

After reading so many English articles, the writing styles I received have always been the English ones. If you look at the Chinese literature review, its writing style is different from the one in English articles...I do not know how to write an introduction in Chinese. It is really difficult to start writing.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Our papers are all written in Chinese. It is easier to understand through Chinese. But when the articles are in English, actually it is harder to comprehend...So after reading English, it is not that easy to write papers in Chinese.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

Another difficulty is to find a proper translation for business terminology, since there is not a unified vocabulary bank for business jargons in Chinese. Depending on students' academic and professional backgrounds, their translated versions may not necessarily correspond to what the majority uses.

I do not think there is a common and unified translated word bank, but there is one in China. But their word usage is different from ours. So in Taiwan, we do not have a word bank.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. Writing a thesis proposal is different from writing summaries or reflections. This assignment requires formal language usage and a solid theoretical framework. To deliver thoughts in a professional format, students may need to conduct small research on the structure of a proposal or thesis in order to see how they can modify and apply what they discover to their own study. Other than finding a proper proposal layout, formal and academic wording is required. Text written in this assignment needs to be clear and straightforward.

So far I have collected a lot of articles with structures that are similar to my thesis. My current method is to imitate the structure...For example, what they include in the first paragraph is what I would include in mine.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

The written assignments have to be very formal which means the writing format has to be

appropriate and the content has to be clear...The wording has to be formal so readers can understand what you try to express.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

I would try to avoid vernacular wording...Thesis writing is more serious so it is inappropriate to use vernacular words.

(Sam, personal interview, translated)

When the assignment is written in Chinese, proofreading the translated terms and phrases can improve how information is presented.

After translating articles, I always tried to write my assignment with my own words. I would not use words directly from the translation. Even if I reorganized and rearranged the translated, they still sounded unnatural...So I usually tried to understand them first and then use my own words.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Quizzes & Exams

Description. The tests are usually two to three pages in length including both multiple choice and open-ended questions. Students are expected to comprehend the questions fully in order to construct appropriate responses. They may answer questions using their open books and notes, but dictionaries are prohibited. The questions may include definitions of business terminology, business problems and solutions, real world applications as well as clarifications on theories and the literature review. Questions can be in either Chinese or English. The answers are always written in Chinese.

Process. If the tests are in English, students may be able to translate them at home. However, the tests are always taken in class, either paper-based or on the interactive learning platform. Students can prepare as a group prior to the test date, but collaboration during the test is not permitted. Notes are not allowed to be brought to the test. Glancing through questions before answering can help sort out questions that students feel confident in answering.

I looked through the questions first and then started with the simple ones. Do not waste time on those questions that you do not understand or need more time to think about at the

beginning.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. Tests can take place during the middle and at the end of a semester. Professors may use tests as a tool to evaluate students regarding the professional knowledge covered in class, their problem solving skills and their ability to practically apply knowledge to real world situations. Also, strengthening the linguistic ability can be another requirement.

The professor's idea was that "why reading Chinese in graduate schools?" He thought that we should definitely be able to know those English words. Of course, it would be difficult for us to write in English, so he did not demand it. But at least we needed to be able to read English materials. He thought graduate students should be equipped with this ability.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Linguistic function. The questions can be in Chinese or English; however, the responses are usually written in Chinese. Students are expected to understand the questions regardless of the language.

Difficulty. The difficulty is not so much focused on the written response portion since students can prepare ahead of time individually or collaboratively. They may brainstorm and speculate questions based on textbooks or from journal articles or cases covered in class and create responses accordingly. However, if the English questions contain vocabulary not coming from those documents given above, it can influence how students respond to the questions.

When I saw the questions, I could only grasp the keywords. But I still cannot completely understand what the questions mean... Usually it turned into the situation where the professor asked one thing, we answered another. Linguistic ability can affect how I understand the questions and the final grades.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

I felt that I was done for when I got the test because there were 4 or 5 terms that looked really similar. For example, the prefixes or suffixes were the same but ended differently. If the first and second questions look similar and you somehow confuse those two terms, you can answer those two questions wrong. The score can be really low.

(Sam, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. Time management is important when taking a test. Open-ended questions require students to elaborate on their answers in paragraphs which can take up more time than multiple choice questions. The order of their responses may be rearranged based on the difficulty of the questions.

Summary and Reflection

In the summary and reflection section (See Table 11), students need to thoroughly read theory-based or real world related articles before writing. The chosen texts can be in Chinese or English. However the written products are always completed in Chinese since it is students' first language. Students are expected to develop the ability to grasp the main ideas from the texts. Also, they are expected to practically apply concepts and principles covered in class to real world situations.

Summary

Description. Summary is commonly assigned in the MBA courses. It can be seen as a condensed version of a journal article. Students need to have a full comprehension of the content and extract the main points from the texts. They do not need to provide their interpretations or analyses. A short paragraph of reflection may be presented at the end in order to show their understanding. Within a summary, each section can be entitled with the same titles and subtitles in the article. Main points from each section can be written in short paragraphs or with bullet points. The length of a summary is two to three pages. This assignment is done individually.

Process. When writing a summary, students need to read the journal article closely to understand the content of each section and how they are tied together. Translation can go simultaneously with the reading process. If the article is translated word by word, the content has

Table 11

Summary & Reflection

	Summary	Magazine Reflection	Journal Article Reflection
Description	1. Main points in sections 2. Paragraphs or bullet Points 3. 2-3 pages 4. Individual assignment	1. 2 sections: brief summary, individual comments & perspectives 2. 2 pages 3. Individual assignment	1. Individual's ideas, feedback & viewpoints 2. No specific format or length 3. Individual assignment
Process	1. Thorough reading 2. Translation 3. Keywords/ phrases	1. Main points in sections 2. Analysis on current issues 3. Comments	1. Thorough reading 2. Personal perspectives 3. Practical application
Rationale	1. Evaluation on reading 2. Reading skills	1. Theory & real world 2. Individual opinions	1. Assessment on reading 2. Practical application
Linguistic Function	1. Chinese – completion & translation 2. English – reading & verification	1. Chinese – reading & completion	1. Chinese – completion, translation & note taking 2. English – reading & note taking
Difficulty	1. Language usage 2. Translation	1. Unfamiliar information	1. Translation
Strategy	1. Differentiate words 2. Original terminology	1. Reading relevant information	1. Keywords & outlines

to be reorganized in order to be comprehensible. Keywords or phrases can be listed as a reminder of main points in each section to avoid skipping relevant information.

Rationale. In the first year of the MBA courses, summary is frequently assigned by professors. Professors may use this assignment to measure students' understandings of the texts. This assignment may also assist students to develop reading skills through organizing text, detecting keywords and grasping main points.

Linguistic function. Even though the articles read are in English, this assignment is mostly completed in Chinese. Titles and subtitles are written in English in order to have separated and organized sections. There is not a specific way to regulate the translation of

business terms. To prevent meaning loss, the other role of English is to maintain the original meanings of business terminology. Chinese is used to understand and present translated content.

Difficulty. This assignment does not require students to do additional research or analysis on the content. The language used in journal articles is academic and professional. Also, the articles contain vocabulary and terminology which are frequently used in theoretical texts and the business field. Without background knowledge or experiences with business-related literacy practices, it can be challenging for students whose L1 is not English. The nature of a summary is to condense textual and non-textual information from a journal article into a 2-3 page long documents containing mostly words with a small portion of symbols or numerical information. Students' L1 writing training and preparation can also influence how well they summarize articles. Also, the ability to detect inverted sentences or specialized terms can avoid altered meanings when using translation as a tactic.

The main thing is that I am not familiar with English and if certain business terminology only appears in some journal articles, then I would not understand those terms. How am I able to write summaries? Situations like this happen sometimes.

(Sam, personal interview, translated)

Even if the English texts are translated into Chinese and if I do not understand the research background, I would not know what I am writing about. The writing can be difficult. When I organized information for my summary, I may or may not catch the main points.

(Yamato, personal interview, translated)

Another difficulty is that there is no united way to translate proper nouns. The translation may come from students' experiences or other related research (Chinese).

Actually I am not even sure if I should translate this term "purchase requirement" as "kuo-mai-yao-chiu 購買要求". I am pretty sure I have the correct original English term...It can be translated into another version, but the English term is the same...As for the Chinese version, like these words, I translated them all, but I am not sure if the translation is right or not.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. To prevent confusion caused by translation, the first step is to differentiate business terminology in sentences. Also, attaching the original business terms (English) to the students' translated versions (Chinese) can reduce the disarrayed versions of the terms.

Many professors said that if we were not able or did not know how to translate; we could just use the original English words. We would not make any mistakes with the English terms.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Magazine Reflection

Description. A magazine reflection is usually a two page document and is written as an individual assignment. There are two sections. In the first section, students are expected to write a brief summary of the assigned document. In the second section, students need to give their comments and perspectives as their reflection on the real world business situation included in the magazine article.

Process. The summary section is not restricted to any format. Students are supposed to identify the main points in different sections in a magazine article and organize them into their summary part accordingly. When writing the reflection, the summary is used as the basis to analyze the current business situation. A reflection usually ends with students' comments or recommendations regarding the business condition for the near future. Theories covered in class can be used to support students' analysis and reflection.

In the first section, I wrote a summary. I outlined the summary first and then divided it into 4 sections based on the article. And then, I wrote my reflection and analysis in accordance to the problems and situations. I ended this assignment with a conclusion.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. The aim of this assignment is to connect the theories to real world settings. In the reflection section, students can apply business principles and concepts to business situations. Students can also offer their understandings and comments in their reflection.

Linguistic function. Chinese is the main language used to complete this assignment, including the reading and writing processes. In order to keep the original terms and meanings, some English words are incorporated into this assignment as the same way presented in the magazine.

Difficulty. The reading material is in Chinese so students can write down the summary and reflection without going through the language transition stage. Even though the language used in the magazine is less academic and easier to understand, it still contains information that students are not familiar with. It can be challenging to relate translated terms directly back to the original English ones. This can be caused by a lack of background knowledge.

Strategy. Even though this assignment does not require students to do research work, students can have a deeper insight and broaden perspectives about the subject matter by looking into other sources for information relevant to the chosen topic.

Journal Article Reflection

Description. A journal article reflection is written as an individual assignment which is around one page long. A reflection can be done in short paragraphs, but it is not restricted to a specified format or length. This assignment includes statements about students' ideas, feedback or viewpoints regarding a journal article.

Process. Students are expected to read a journal article thoroughly with a systematic approach in order to link all information together. Skipping any section may lead to incomplete comprehension of the study. As opposed to summarizing the article, students are supposed to produce a reflection based on what they have learned in class.

Rationale. Professors may use this assignment as one of the criteria to assess students' ability to develop a coherent statement from their perspectives after reading the journal articles.

Students are encouraged to apply what they learn in class to their reflection in order to create a connection between theories and real world application.

Linguistic function. This assignment is completed in Chinese, while the journal articles are in English. Translation and note taking are including in the reading and writing processes. The languages used for note taking depend on students' familiarity with the topics and their confidence with the language.

Chinese was used to translate and write notes. If I need to write a lot of notes, I would use Chinese so I could understand later... Unless, I can recognize the article, I use English because English words have less strokes and I can also use abbreviations.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

Difficulty. Writing a reflection requires students to understand the material content and connect readings to supporting evidence. Comprehension of a journal article can be influenced by how well students understand textual and non-textual information. When a journal article is written in English, the ability to recognize terminology and sentence structures is required in order to avoid confusion or meaning loss when translating English materials into Chinese. Students' L1 ability can influence the quality of their reflection by their selection of appropriate vocabulary in Chinese to correspond to English words.

Strategy. A journal articles contains a variety of information that requires students to perform attentive reading. A summary of an article is not necessary. Keywords and an outline can direct students to stay on their topic.

I prefer to make an outline to see what I need to write. I do not like to write a whole lot at once because my thoughts might be jumpy and that could influence the content. The professor might not understand what I am talking about. It could be less logical.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

Textual and Visual

PowerPoint project (See Table 12) is included in the textual and visual category due to its content. PowerPoint is a commonly used presentation device to deliver individual or collaborative projects. Students are expected to internalize Chinese or English readings and convert their understandings into a concrete and presentable form. The learning environment is designed to be student-centered. The written language can be either Chinese or English, but the verbal language is always Chinese.

PowerPoint Project

Description. The PowerPoint presentation is a project that requires students to use succinct and clear language to report their understanding of a journal article, a textbook chapter, a news article and so forth. It also trains students to pick up the structure of a paper and develop reading skills. The length of a PowerPoint project can be up to more than 40 pages with keywords, phrases, sentences or short paragraphs. The textual information presented in a project can be Chinese, English, or both. Other than text, visuals such as pictures, numbers, tables, charts, diagrams and colors are used to attract attention. The layout of a PowerPoint project follows the structure of the document being presented. While some slides provide more textual information, some solely present non-linguistic information.

Process. The first step in designing a PowerPoint project is a thorough understanding of the document which can be done individually or as a group. The reading procedure can be approached differently. When it is regarded as an individual assignment, students are expected to read from the start to the end in a linear fashion. When the project is done as a group, the textual document can be divided into sections to distribute workload. Group meetings and discussions are used to integrate all information and raise questions or personal opinions.

Table 12

Textual & Visual

Power Point Presentation	
Description	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Main points from various documents 2. Keywords, phrases, paragraphs 3. Varied lengths 4. Text & visuals
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thorough reading 2. Individual or collaborative 3. Extracting main points 4. Slide contents
Rationale	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systematic reading 2. Critical thinking 3. Presentation Skills
Linguistic Function	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chinese – completion, presentation, scripts 2. English – completion & verification
Difficulty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language usage in documents 2. Translation 3. Extracting main points 4. Real world application
Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading skills 2. Slide contents

The following step is to extract focal points from the document. The extracted text may be presented with headings, keywords and boldface to make sure that each slide contains specific information. Other than textual information, slides usually include visuals to attract the audience's attention. The textual information can be orally presented so the text should be short and precise.

The professor told us not to put many text, but visuals...because if I had too many text, then I could have just printed them out. People would not need to listen to me.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. PowerPoint projects are designed for students to grow familiarity with the language used in the academic setting and further develop skills in systematic reading and critical thinking. Students are expected to grasp needed information from a variety of texts and organize it to a presentable state. This project also gives students a chance to practice verbal communication and presentation skills which commonly occur in the workplace environment.

The professor wanted us to practice English and learn to extract main points...She also expected us to practice our oral presentation skills. We had to train ourselves to see how we could present our project in a better way.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

Linguistic function. Students present their projects in Chinese, even though the articles can be in Chinese or English. If the article is in English, depending on students' language skills, they may paraphrase the sentences, retrieve needed text or copy the original information. The PowerPoint projects are all entitled with the reference of the document on the first slide.

Some of my classmates were better in English, they used their own words. I usually just grabbed some paragraphs and threw them on the PowerPoint slides.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

The professor did not demand that we use our own words. I tried that before and I only grasped keywords, but the professor thought I skipped a lot of main points. So I decided that I would rather copy more text than skipping them.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

When the written language is Chinese, the original English business terms are attached to the translated version in order to prevent meaning loss. English provides clarification in this case. Students are allowed to bring their Chinese scripts or notes on stage when the slides consist of English content. The scripts may remind students of the themes of each slide or what they want to express during their presentation.

Difficulty. One of the challenges students face is the language in the textual documents. The vocabulary, terminology, content, structures and writing fashions may require a higher level

of development in reading and familiarity with the language usage. Other than those textual elements, students' understanding of non-textual elements can also affect the information integrated into their presentation slides and their oral presentations. Language transition (translation) can also affect how students perceive and present content. Since the PowerPoint projects aim to create a student-centered learning environment, students are expected to deliver lessons from their understanding.

At the beginning, there were not many words that I could recognize. So I had to check pretty much every word. But after translation, here came the problem. I still was not sure what the article was about after I organized the translated text.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Some students may use translation as an approach to understand the content. However, depending on their experiences of switching between languages, reading certain documents and preparing presentation slides, extracting and finding important points in the texts may be challenging. Students may wallow in unnecessary information due to their uncertainty about the language and the content. Irrelevant text might be incorporated into the PowerPoint projects.

I think I still put too many things on my PowerPoint slides...I think the quality of a PowerPoint project is evaluated based on the main points. Unnecessary information should not be included. But my ability to filter through the information is still not that good.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

If the article was in Chinese, I could easily select the main points. But I was not familiar with English. So the sentences I chose were longer. Anything about the main points and description were put on the PowerPoint slides.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

Apart from the linguistic challenges, real world application can be difficult. The article content may include information that is distant from students' backgrounds or the state of our current society. The transition in business environments or workplace cultures across countries

can also influence how students use theories to explain what causes business crisis, how to solve problems or to give strategic recommendations for future development.

This theory is rarely heard. Another thing is that this article is actually pretty old. When comparing that era with the current time, I found it difficult to apply it to the current workplace environment, like how is it going to help an industry?

(Yamato, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. Reading skills can be improved by putting effort in learning the writing fashions and the professional and academic languages in the textual documents. Linguistic and specialized knowledge can be accumulated through the repetition of reading a variety of texts. Also, by seeking help from faculty, students can receive direct advice on tackling problems during the reading process. However, students still need to put the suggestions into practice in order to obtain improvement in their work.

The information incorporated in each slide needs to be relevant to the topic or theme being presented. The language used in the slides should be succinct. Irrelevant information should be removed. Slides overloaded with text should be exchanged with visuals as students can present details in a simplified or condensed form.

You should try to use visuals to present. Do not use too many words because it is not professional. If you have too many words on the screen, it is like you are reading a script.

(Yamato, personal interview, translated)

In the business field, we put more emphasis on analysis. If you want people to understand your analysis, visuals are easier and more precise.

(Sam, personal interview, translated)

Business Literacy Practices from Professors' Perspectives

In addition to students' literacy practices in their MBA program, this section focuses on what business literacy practices are like from the professors' perspectives. The rationales behind assigning particular reading and writing activities are included as well as how they evaluate students' literacy performance. The academic performance section unveils students' literacy

successes and struggles from the professors' observations. Based on students' literacy performance, recommendations are also given accordingly.

Reading Practices

Textbooks and articles are common reading materials (See Table 13) used in MBA courses. Both materials are meant to strengthen students' business knowledge. Also, they help students to see the real business world through both a theoretical and a practical lens. Textbooks may solely focus on particular information or subjects; however, each chapter proceeds in a sequential way leading students to build their knowledge. When dealing with academic or practical tasks, students are able to reinforce ideas and perspectives with evidence and concepts. Depending on the genres, some articles are more research driven and some emphasize the application aspect of business. Articles used in class can come from digital or paper-based sources such as academic journals, news, magazines and the Internet. Textbooks and articles may be used for different purposes in class, but they both are important tools in the training process.

Table 13

Reading Practices

	Books	Articles
Content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Theory-based 2. Application examples 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research articles 2. Case studies 3. Business situations
Description	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic knowledge readings 2. Theoretical concepts & principles 3. Application skills development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current business trends 2. Academic & professional perspectives 3. Research & practical application

Books

The student population enrolling in the MBA programs may consist of various educational and professional backgrounds which are not related to business. In this case, they

may not be equipped with business-related knowledge. Textbooks provide students with information such as definitions, concepts and application examples regarding particular topics or themes. The theoretical frameworks are established as the basis for other application assignments, whether they are research-related or analysis-based. Textbooks are usually assigned as take-home reading materials which require students to read so as to be prepared prior to each class session. The content can be used later to promote in-class discussions and collaborative learning. Both Chinese and English textbooks are used in class.

Some students might not have taken related courses, so textbooks gave them a more complete understanding of the subject. They would have basic knowledge of what they need to learn in the class.

(Gina, personal interview, translated)

Articles

Textbook chapters are designed to help students establish a basic understanding of business through theoretical concepts and principles. To further develop their autonomous learning and practical skills, articles are frequently introduced in class to broaden students' perspectives toward the business environment and academic research community. Articles are not limited to specific genres such as research, application, reports and news. They also bring students closer to current trends in business. The articles can be in Chinese and English.

Incorporating articles in MBA courses can be understood from two perspectives. First, it is necessary to connect theory to reality. Textbook chapters and journal articles offer theoretical perspectives and conceptual explanations regarding business issues, but they may not necessarily provide for how problems are handled in the workplace environment. Articles published in business-related magazines, newspapers or websites bring real applications into the classroom setting. In this case, students are able to see what cause current business problems and how

solutions are sought. This may also stimulate students to think about what they would do if they were in the same situation.

Second, students are expected to develop their skills to apply the knowledge covered in class to other subject matter. While some articles show the practical aspects of business fields, some demonstrate business issues through academic perspectives. When the application is for research purposes, the ability to identify proper materials and sources is crucial.

Because they needed to write a thesis in order to graduate, I wanted them to know the potential structure of a thesis and related themes. For example, we get to see what business situations can happen in a real world environment and how problems and cases can be solved. But when coming back to the academic environment, we get to see how they would look at the problem, if they are just simply doing research.

(Gina, personal interview, translated)

When application is for practical purposes, students need to develop the ability to determine what theories can be utilized to solve problems. Real world business situations may require solutions that are integrated from various sources. Innovation and creativity can be stimulated through analyzing articles.

Pedagogical Rationale

The assigned reading materials are usually inseparable from written assignments or verbal presentations. Students are expected to develop approaches and skills that can be used to tackle a variety of genres. To see if they are able to comprehend reading materials, students can be evaluated based on their ability to incorporate information and develop coherent content in their written assignments and also by how they report their findings in their presentations. Student performance can also be evaluated at different stages during their learning process (See Table 14).

Table 14
Pedagogical Rationale

	Measuring Standard	Levels of Completion
Description	1. Written & verbal performance 2. Application skills	1. Understanding the content 2. Individual statement & interpretation

Measuring Standard

Due to the fact that students may come from different professions and educational backgrounds, the MBA courses are designed to build students' fundamental knowledge and simultaneously train their professional skills. Even though it is not required to submit applicable linguistic examination scores, students should be capable of reading materials such as textbooks, cases and articles in Chinese and English. The academic performance is usually conducted in their first language, yet they are expected to produce written work, deliver verbal presentations and participate in collaborative learning based on English materials. The assigned readings function as guidelines for students to strengthen intellectual growth and develop applied skills accordingly. Students can be evaluated based on their ability to accomplish required assignments or apply research methods to conduct research projects. In terms of application, the readings ought to be used as supporting evidence. Students are expected to develop application skills that are necessary for current academic performance and potential job markets.

Students were required to do presentations so that I could evaluate them based on their presentations and the interactions that occurred during Q &A.

(Elijah, personal interview, translated)

All of the students needed to do presentations. Each person was responsible for one chapter. Basically when they were presenting, I knew if they were on the right track.

(Gina, personal interview, translated)

Levels of Completion

The reading assignments can be in different languages and genres which may require additional effort and different approaches to accomplish tasks. Technical terms and theoretical

concepts can be written differently in Chinese and English due to the vocabulary usage and sentence structures. In addition to linguistic elements, students' experiences with a variety of reading materials can result in varied levels of understanding. The comprehension of reading materials can be influenced by students' language ability, background knowledge, different modes of information presented and connection with the materials. Understanding reading materials is a must before students can participate in class discussions or complete other related assignments. Along the way, linguistic and professional challenges may occur. Depending on how well students understand the chosen subject, genres or the language usage in the readings, thorough or skimmed reading can happen. Extra steps may also be taken, including translation. Students may be able to use assigned readings to incorporate textual content into their written tasks or stimulate verbal interaction in the class.

In a real workplace environment, practical application and creativity may be required to solve problems or generate innovative plans. Within the academic setting, students are expected to demonstrate their capability of tying theories to the real world. Individual statements and interpretations contributed in class can be creative, but should be supported by facts.

After they understood the content, they could develop their own thoughts and participate in discussions.

(Lisa, personal interview, translated)

Academic Performance

In order to complete reading assignments, students need to be equipped with language skills and background knowledge (See Table 15). These two factors can influence the quality of students' literacy practices. For example, reading materials are usually accompanied with written and verbal assignments. If students are not able to completely comprehend the textual materials, their performance may not reach professors' expectations.

Table 15
Academic performance

	Success	Struggle
Description	1. Language ability 2. Comprehension (individual case)	1. Understanding materials 2. Language ability 3. Vocabulary

Success

Students' reading assignments can be evaluated based on discussions, individual or collaborative written projects, verbal presentations and interactions in class. Their academic performance can also be influenced by the material content, languages, work experiences, background knowledge, environment, individual efforts and so forth. The practice and training completed in MBA courses are for students to fulfill their academic responsibility and designed as preparation for the future job market.

For Taiwanese MBA students, the reading materials can come in two different languages concerning business subject matter in the local (Taiwan) and international environment.

Individuals' language ability and comprehension of the material content are the two elements that influence the reading process and the outcome of literacy practices.

Definitely there were students who could read smoothly, but not so many in my class, maybe one or two. They probably did not have much trouble in comprehension which meant they were headed in the right direction, but the reading pace was not too fast.

(Gina, personal interview, translated)

Struggle

The reading materials assigned can be in Chinese and English, but students can choose their first language to conduct other academic performances. This academic environment reduces the challenges of expressing ideas and delivering presentations in a second language. Even though they can use Chinese to perform written and verbal communication, they still need to

overcome the difficulties in understanding textual materials. Successful reading practice requires knowledge about the subject, comprehension of the written languages and non-textual elements, turning words into meanings and searching for additional information for clarification.

Understanding textual materials involves familiarity with the language, vocabulary sufficiency and constant practices.

If you are saying they can completely understand the content, it is very rare. For most students, they have difficulties in reading.

(Elijah, personal interview, translated)

Once they enter the field, they can slowly at least learn more vocabulary...At first they definitely would feel unclear and confused. Language is definitely an issue.

(Lisa, personal interview, translated)

I think not everyone, but a lot of students' business groundwork is weak. They are also not used to reading English, so the reading pace is slower and their comprehension is weaker too.

(Gina, personal interview, translated)

Recommendations

Materials read in MBA courses vary in languages, genres and topics so students can experience using different approaches to handle those readings. Those materials may consist of unfamiliar content distant from students' backgrounds. However, searching for additional materials in Chinese can supplement their understanding of the presented subject matter. The English materials in particular may increase the challenges in comprehension due to students' language ability. Therefore, numerous reading practices may help students gain familiarity with English words and increase their understanding of how meanings can be constructed. Those practice materials should not be limited to specific genres.

I told them to read more. Any genre is good because they usually complain about not having enough vocabulary. So I think if that is what they are lacking of, of course, they should just read more. You can build up your vocabulary bank during the reading process. It does not matter what they read, any genre is good. But I would recommend them to

read something they are interested in so the process can be easier.
(Elijah, personal interview, translated)

I think they just need to keep practicing, just keep reading the materials assigned by professors... They need to practice on the regular basis and find something they are interested in, such as magazines. If this is the case, they should just find the topic, novel or fiction that they are interested in.
(Lisa, personal interview, translated)

They probably can start reading stories, if the students really want to increase their English reading ability. They need to find the materials that they like.
(Gina, personal interview, translated)

Written Practices

The written assignments (See Table 16) can vary in genres based on different educational purposes and the nature of MBA courses. Research-oriented assignments may include research papers, synthesis and thesis proposals. Deeper insights, the ability to sort through materials and data processing should be developed along the research process. Application-based written tasks are meant to develop students' problem solving skills and stimulate their creativity. Completing a written task usually involves numerous reading materials and verbal presentations. Students are expected to process various textual materials and transform their abstract thoughts into words. They are also expected to report their findings so as to promote in-class discussions. Verbal and written communication is both emphasized.

Table 16
Written Practices

	Research Paper	Power Point Presentation	Test
Content	1. Business-related journal articles	1. Reading & Written assignments 2. Textual & visual	1. Multiple choice & open-ended questions
Description	1. Understandings toward selected topics & procedures 2. Application skills to different tasks	1. Visual communication skills & performance 2. Detecting main ideas 3. Presenting understandings	1. Demonstrating 2. Problem solving skills 3. Practical application

Research Paper

Writing a research paper requires a thorough investigation into a particular theme or topic. Evidence and facts used to support students' findings, statements and analyses come from Chinese and English academic journals. During the research process, students are expected to synthesize and connect the selected materials to demonstrate their understanding of their topic of interest. In addition to textual information, understanding visual content is another crucial element. The business field emphasizes quantitative methods to analyze and solve problems. Students are expected to understand how methodological approaches are utilized and how quantitative results are presented within studies. Both textual and visual information are important when reading and writing. This written assignment also strengthens students' application skills. The concepts and principles included in this assignment need to be based on how students want to approach their projects, how they will seek to answer their research questions and how they will select methodologies to solve presented problems.

I want them to learn how research papers are written in this field and how research is conducted. Then, students can see if they learn the research methods and are able to apply the same methodology to conduct their own research.

(Elijah, personal interview, translated)

They needed to find a theme and collect relevant materials. After understanding the selected theme, they needed to figure out potential solutions to the problems derived from the readings.

(Gina, personal interview, translated)

The majority of this assignment is textual. Chinese and English are the languages used in this assignment. In order to express abstract thoughts through words precisely, this assignment is written in a language with which students are able to elaborate their statements or create arguments. Chinese is the main language used during the composing process.

PowerPoint Presentation

Within MBA courses, a PowerPoint presentation is commonly used for students to present their reading or written assignments. If the presentation is based on journal articles, textbook chapters or students' written assignments, there can be pages of text that need to be compressed in order to deliver main ideas in a deliberate manner. Text on PowerPoint slides only serve as a reminder during the presentation. Therefore, the quality of a presentation relies on students' verbal communication skills to deliver detailed information. Whether the presentation is designed based on an article or a written assignment, there can be sections of textual information and visual representation of data in those materials. Students are expected to extract main points and organize them. The chosen vocabulary, sentences and visual information for each slide should represent specific ideas or themes. The language used for the PowerPoint slides can depend on the materials, including Chinese and English. Professors may use this assignment to evaluate students based on how they integrate information into their projects, how students deliver textual information and if they can lead or participate in discussions.

If the materials they read are in English, they should just use English for their slides. So they can avoid wasting too much time or creating inconsistency in content between the materials and the slides.

(Lisa, personal interview, translated)

Tests

Tests may contain questions regarding theoretical concepts covered in class, information retrieved from discussions and applications for business scenarios. The questions can be in the form of both multiple choice and open-ended questions. Students are expected to utilize concepts and principles learned in class to demonstrate their understanding and their ability to solve problems. When approaching open-ended questions, students' answers must be supported by facts that come from their reading materials. Depending on the professor's preferences, the

questions can be written in Chinese or English. Students are not restricted to respond to the questions in accordance with the language used in writing the questions. Chinese is commonly used by students when they need to write using paragraphs.

Pedagogical Rationale

The written tasks are designed to encourage students to integrate textual materials from different sources into their written assignments (See Table 17). They are also expected to develop application skills to complete tasks. The written assignments are designed to stimulate students' creativity and originality in their thoughts and skills, rather than simply paraphrasing other's quotes.

Table 17

Pedagogical Rationale

	Measuring Standards	Levels of Completion
Description	1. Ability to transfer thoughts & ideas into words 2. Practical application 3. Language ability & writing skills	1. Following conventional methods 2. Associating concepts to tasks 3. Problem solving & deliberation skills

Measuring Standards

Similar to the evaluation method for reading assignments, students are expected to demonstrate their understanding and application through their writing, whether the chosen materials are in Chinese or English. Assigning written tasks is a method for professors to evaluate students' learning results, their insights toward chosen topics and originality in their perception. It is an opportunity for students to practice academic and professional languages to organize their thoughts in written forms. Other than for the purpose of evaluation, written tasks can also be used to train students to become familiar with diverse genres which can occur in various work settings.

I generally looked at their research structure first, followed by the format and then the content.

(Elijah, personal interview, translated)

I wanted to see if students were on the right track. And then, I evaluated their assignments based on their personal perspectives. I think this is more important.

(Gina, personal interview, translated)

Occasionally, a small amount of content may be composed in English so the textual information remains authentic to the original materials. The majority of written assignments are completed in Chinese. Students' language ability and comprehension can influence the precision of their thoughts and the quality of their written assignments.

There can be inconsistency between their written works and the English articles...Students have to translate the technical terms themselves for their Chinese paper. Everybody has different translated versions.

(Lisa, personal interview, translated)

Comprehension is a problem. I think this can happen, whether it is during their reading process or when they refer to English materials in their writing. It is possible that their English comprehension influences their accuracy or smoothness in writing. But if they use Chinese materials, this problem might not happen.

(Gina, personal interview, translated)

Levels of Completion

Both verbal and written communication skills are included in the training practices. The written tasks are usually composed based on reading materials with various genres. The materials can be relevant to current market situations, research studies or business cases. At the very least, students need to be able to understand and synthesize information from reading materials. Students may be evaluated based on how they can deliver their thoughts through text precisely and clearly.

The next stage is that they can demonstrate their ability to associate conceptual materials to their tasks, whether the task is writing a research paper, analyzing a business case or taking an

examination. Problem solving and deliberation skills can be developed and stimulated during this process.

Students needed to use what they learned in class and applied their knowledge to solve problems. Of course, I wanted to see them successfully applying professional knowledge in the field to answer the questions I raised.

(Elijah, personal interview, translated)

I wanted them to have deeper insights toward the questions that were raised. I found that some students organized the information that they had searched for on the Internet and then turned in their assignments. They did not really have their own perspectives. Taiwanese students tend to have this problem.

(Gina, personal interview, translated)

Academic Performance

The quality of students' written work can be influenced by how much they understand the subject matter in certain fields, if they can comprehend textual and visual materials in a second language and how well they can perform literacy practices in their first language (See Table 18). Whether the literacy practices are done in students' first or second language, they need to be trained to reach the literacy requirements. Their performance can be evaluated based on how well they can professionally deliver their abstract thoughts in words and if they can support their ideas with facts.

Table 18

Academic Performance

	Success	Struggle
Specific (Taiwanese)	1. Following specific instruction	1. Vocabulary 2. Academic & professional language usage 3. Background & professional knowledge

Success

In order to complete written assignments, it is necessary to read materials from various sources and conduct additional research regarding specific topics or themes. Before students start

composing, there are things that may be expected such as thorough reading, understanding the subject, connecting the content, developing individual statements, fulfilling the requirements and familiarizing themselves with the academic and professional genres. Different approaches can be taken based on assignment genres. In this case, specific and direct writing instruction is preferred by Taiwanese students.

When I give students a particular research structure, they can just follow it. It is easier to succeed, but the assignments would lack creativity. But it is easier for students to complete their assignments.

(Lisa, personal interview, translated)

Struggle

The majority of the written assignments are completed in Chinese, except some PowerPoint slides. Students are more familiar with their first language and can express their thoughts precisely. When composing in a second language, students face many challenges, including word selection, developing sentence structures, and following grammatical rules. It can be considered advantageous to write in their first language. However, written assignments in MBA courses are designed to prepare students for the future job market. It is necessary to receive training to perform academic and professional literacy practices, even tasks are completed in a student's first language. When the reading materials are in English, additional steps can be taken to incorporate information into their Chinese writing. Also, they need to figure out how to express their thoughts without sounding foreign in their Chinese writing when using English materials. Students may spend more time on understanding an article due to the lack of vocabulary.

It is difficult to turn abstract thoughts into words. When we speak, we can clearly explain ourselves with other visual or textual aids, so the communication is easy. But when it comes to writing, we can only use words to explain without other types of assistance. So this written communication becomes more challenging.

(Lisa, personal interview, translated)

Now a lot of students are not good at using the language to convey or express their ideas precisely. Their Chinese ability is actually not as good.

(Gina, personal interview, translated)

Another challenge Taiwanese students may have is an insufficiency in background or professional knowledge of the subject matter and technical terms. Background knowledge can be used to build the foundation of their discussion and analysis in their writing. However, without proper knowledge or experience, it can be difficult to achieve within their academic performance, especially when students are expected to elaborate their thoughts and develop deeper insights in writing.

There is a Human Resource Management class and we just call it HR. So how would the online translation translate HR? Home run? One student just used home run in his assignment. So I am not sure if it was because of the student lacked background knowledge or his English was not good. If you are in this field, you would not translate HR as home run. Or if you just believe what the translation says, then it becomes that. I don't know what to say about that.

(Elijah, personal interview, translated)

When they were doing discussions, they tended to discuss the problems on the surface level, rather than discovering deeper insights or other hidden issues.

(Gina, personal interview, translated)

Recommendation

Since most of the written assignments are composed in Chinese, one of the challenges that students have is transferring information from English materials to their Chinese written work. During the process of transfer, their English ability and background knowledge can influence how they comprehend the content and develop their thoughts. In addition, students' Chinese writing ability is another important element that affects the quality of their written work. Performing academic and professional writing for MBA courses requires proper word selection, knowledge about diverse genres, sophisticated sentence structures and so forth. Therefore,

finding additional materials from different sources may reinforce their familiarity with particular skills which can be acquired through regular practice.

Read more. They just need to find readings of good quality so they can modify their written work. Just find out the things they need and that should be easy.

(Lisa, personal interview, translated)

As for writing, you can only write more. There is no other option. Read more and write more.

(Gina, personal interview, translated)

Summary

This chapter discussed the literacy practices in an MBA program in Taiwan. The program's linguistic and literacy requirements were introduced to show what skills and knowledge are expected from students to function in the academic context. The reading and written assignments were described. In particular, the written assignments were grouped into categories based on their genres. Other than the description of each literacy task, the procedure taken to complete assignments, the purpose of the literacy task, what and how languages were used during the process, the challenges encountered and the strategic solutions sought were included.

The literacy practices conducted in the program were research and application based to familiarize students with academic and professional perspectives regarding business situations. Students were expected to experience a variety of literacy genres. Student-centered environments and autonomous learning were used to encourage students to explore the structure of genres which were new to them, to generate approaches to complete literacy tasks and to stimulate interactive discussions on literacy performance.

A significant amount of literacy and verbal performance was conducted in Chinese, while English business materials were commonly included for class projects and assignments. Both

Chinese and English business tasks were introduced within the class to broaden students' business perspectives regarding local and international workplace environments. They were also used to raise students' awareness of the similarities and differences that exist within L1 and L2 literacy materials. Students were expected to develop their written and verbal communication skills.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDENTS' LITERACY HISTORIES IN TAIWAN

Introduction

The MBA students' current literacy skills were developed from their prior experiences, which included activities both inside and outside of the academic environment. Students may develop and apply these skills to their current literacy activities accordingly. Students' literacy experiences are categorized into two sections: literacy experiences prior to MBA enrollment and in-school literacy experiences. Literacy experiences prior to MBA enrollment include students' experiences of literacy practices in Chinese and English in Taiwan. Their previous literacy practices are separated into two categories, including regular and university level. The regular category focuses on the literacy tasks that students did regularly. The university level category describes the literacy tasks students did in their schools. In-school literacy experiences include students' expectations, MBA experiences and literacy transfer.

Literacy Experiences Prior to MBA Enrollment

Regular Reading

In the regular literacy practices category (See Table 19), reading and writing activities in Chinese and English are described based on the themes as well as the procedures. The activities are mostly related to academic tasks or personal interests. How students acquired those literacy skills are also included. Students' Chinese literacy processes are more systematic and mature while their English literacy skills are at a developmental level. Students' reading, writing and learning processes can also influence their general literacy practices.

Table 19

Regular Literacy Practices

	Regular Reading		Regular Writing	
	<u>Chinese (L1)</u>	<u>English (L2)</u>	<u>Chinese (L1)</u>	<u>(English L2)</u>
Description	1. Textual 2. Recreational	1. Language development 2. Leisure	1. Academic 2. Personal interests 3. Practical application	1. Text-driven 2. Class activity
Process	1. Interest driven 2. Specific info 3. Thorough reading	1. Translation 2. Interest driven 3. Specific info	1. Organized structure 2. Sequential writing	1. Grammar & structure
Pedagogical Process	1. Vague instruction 2. Passive learning 3. Specific instruction 4. Self learning	1. Test driven	1. 起承轉合 (chi-cheng-chuan-ho) 2. Vague instruction	1. Vague instruction
Process Influence (L1→L2) (L2→L2)	1. L1 application to L2 2. Differed L1 & L2 methods	1. Smoother process 2. Limited influence	1. Differed L1 & L2 methods 2. L1 application to L2	1. Limited influence

Chinese Reading

Description. The reading materials can be categorized into intellectual and recreational groups. Some materials require readers to pay more attention toward the literary devices and the transition in content, including fiction, novels and Chinese literature (vernacular and classic Chinese versions). Some materials consist of up-to-date information and intellectual development, including newspapers, science magazines, business publications, magazines and books regarding enterprise, innovation and logical thinking. The visual materials contain less linguistic components and are for recreational purposes, including comic books and animation.

Process. Reading approaches are approached differently according to a variety of genres. The material content, the organization of the content and readers' priority are the causes of the

assorted reading procedures. Since Chinese is the first language of the students within the study, the reading process can be easier and quicker. Less attention is paid to disassembling sentence structures. At the initial stage of selecting reading materials, students may be able to determine if it is of interest to them based on a small amount of information. Individual interest is the motivating factor that triggers dedicated and continuous development of literacy practices.

In general, I look at the book's front cover or back cover first. Then, I read the preface either written by the author or others. Usually the preface talks about what this book is trying to convey. There are many book titles that do not match the content. So I usually look through all the things I mentioned and then take a look at the title. If it is interesting, I would start reading.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

When I read the newspaper, I grasp the titles first because I only read the sections that I am interested in. So titles are very important.

(Sam, personal interview, translated)

Their reading process may follow a non-linear or linear fashion. A non-linear fashion is a strategy to quickly pick up needed information and to avoid spending time on unwanted information. If students have background knowledge or are familiar with the genres, skipping through sections may not cause incoherence. Locating specific vocabulary, phrases or paragraphs may help guide them to the right direction. However, depending on the reading purposes and habits, students may choose a more linear method if they need to understand and incorporate information as a whole.

Pedagogical process. The reading instruction is not always given in a clear step-by-step procedure, nor guiding students to explore or experiment with diverse reading techniques. Students are not encouraged to discuss the structure of reading materials, sentence structures or the meanings. The procedure may only focus on specific aspects. The class environment is teacher-centered and is constructed with a passive learning style.

It was probably in elementary school that the teacher asked us to read out loud with her. At that time, the teacher did not seem to care too much if we could truly understand the meanings or not. We just needed to read with the teacher.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Due to the fact that students are expected to take the entrance exams in order to extend their education, specific instruction is implemented in Chinese courses. In particular, a variety of genres and Chinese rhetoric are introduced in class which requires additional instruction and explanations to understand.

In junior high school, the teachers stressed more focus on sentence structures. He told us how to disassemble a sentence into sections or differentiate part of speech. In high school, the teacher started to teach us classic Chinese. He also taught us how to disassemble sentences.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

The instruction given in school is designed to cope with exam questions, so it can be limited to approach specific genres. Also, depending on the purposes of reading, students may seek specialized techniques that fit into the context or the activity that they are trying to pursue.

The teacher did not teach us. I had to learn specialized reading procedures outside of school and online. There are some management magazines teaching you how to cut through a lot of text with specific methods to get the information needed. It is like you have to speed read.

(Yamato, personal interview, translated)

Processes influence. There are a variety of reading methods that students use when tackling Chinese readings. Their reading experiences have accumulated over many years so they can quickly pick up keywords, specific information and skim through texts. However, it can take a long time to acquire the same level of mature reading skills in a second language. Students may seek help from their habitual Chinese reading techniques and translation to accommodate more difficult English materials and aid in comprehension.

Language is pretty much an obstacle when I need to read and understand English materials. I have to translate them into Chinese first and then read them as Chinese

materials.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

English Reading

Description. The reading materials can be divided into two categories, language development and leisure. Other than English textbooks, some students are required to read English magazines while listening to interactive learning programs on the radio as a supplementary English material. When the reading is for leisure purposes, the chosen materials have a less complicated structure or are of personal interest, including online news, columns, CNN, blogs and comics.

Process. There are more steps taken when reading in English. Vocabulary is the most basic component of reading comprehension. It helps to find specific information if students also have the knowledge of the specialized fields or tasks. The reading time is then able to be shortened. However, not having enough vocabulary is a barrier for L2 readers. Translation can be used as a tool to solve this problem. It can take more time to have full comprehension. For novice readers, translation is the first step taken. Therefore, finding reading materials that are of an individual's own interests may allow for more motivation, excitement and patience.

I do not have sufficient English vocabulary, so there are a lot of words I do not know when I read. Basically I need to memorize words as I read them. It is like I have to keep checking the dictionary, so I spend more time on this part.

(Sam, personal interview, translated)

I circle the words I do not know and then check the dictionary. I write down all the vocabulary in Chinese and then read through the text.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

For experienced readers, their memories may provide them with necessary information regarding genres, structures, vocabulary and formats of materials. Sufficient background knowledge can also accelerate the reading process and the ability to sift out relevant content.

Pedagogical process. The focus of English reading is stressed when solving reading tasks because this training leads to higher scores for midterms and finals or on the College Entrance Exams. The teaching environment is teacher-centered and the instruction on reading tasks is explicit. Students are expected to memorize vocabulary, grammar and sentence structures. Students are not encouraged to develop active reading procedures or stimulate their personal interests in reading.

In junior high school, the teacher mainly taught us how to answer questions. I think it was the same in my high school. But high school teachers taught us more advanced grammar because there were more grammatical structures for us to learn. The teacher specifically taught us how to disassemble sentences and part of speech. We were also asked to memorize the morphological changes of words.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

The teacher asked us to go home and memorize the vocabulary without teaching us. I always found it bizarre that the teacher did not teach us first. This would have made our learning easier. The teacher always asked us to memorize the words at home and then we had a test. After that, she taught us those words.

(Yamato, personal interview, translated)

Processes influence. The explicit instruction on grammar and sentence structures becomes the linguistic foundation that students may later utilize when reading more complicated academic and professional texts. Students may retrieve grammatical structures from their memory so less time is then spent on taking additional steps to complete the reading materials.

However, without continuous practices during the learning process, learning how to operate the task solving strategies may not necessarily help students understand the content.

We had to memorize English words and sentence structures for high school and college entrance exams...but if you do not use English continuously, you can easily forget about it within 2 or 3 months. I think it seems unnecessary to learn daily use English if you do not use it often.

(Sam, personal interview, translated)

Regular Writing

Chinese Writing

Description. Composition is a requisite activity in Chinese class from elementary school to high school. Cram schools are another option to receive intensive education and learning more about variations of writing styles. Chinese writing is not only limited to academic settings. It can be for leisure and for professional purposes as well. Since Chinese is the students' first language, writing may extend from personal interests to practical application. Novels, blogs and food critics are included in the personal interest category. Practical application consists of proposals (organization & contest) and funding applications.

Process. The writing procedure can be influenced by the composition instruction receiving in school settings which starts with an introduction, elaboration on themes, transition to another point of view and then a conclusion (起承轉合 chi-cheng-chuan-ho). However, if students further their education, this basic writing format is not sufficient for the demands that academic and professional writing require. Student may develop other writing methods to fit the written tasks. For example, outlines and keywords can avoid digression from themes or intended directions for the written text.

Basically I still follow what I learned in elementary school (起承轉合 chi-cheng-chuan-ho), but after a while, I realize that this writing format is not sufficient for my academic needs...I would, for example, briefly list what I want to say in the paragraphs...or I would outline my ideas item by item.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Some students may choose a linear writing method starting with an introduction and developing the following paragraphs accordingly. Editing can take place along the writing process.

Pedagogical Process: The basic format of Chinese composition has four steps, including an introduction, elaboration on themes, transition to another point of view, and conclusion (起承轉合 chi-cheng-chuan-ho). Every paragraph has a specific purpose. This basic writing procedure is thoroughly introduced in class collocating with different topics as practice. These practice writings are designed to prepare students for the entrance exams, which include a section devoted to composition.

This is what the teacher taught us. He did not explain too much to us. Basically we just needed to apply the writing format he gave us. He told us what we needed to put in the first, second and third paragraphs and how we should conclude our writing.
(Gary, personal interview, translated)

I did ask the teacher how I should write certain assignments. The teacher just said that I should follow the format of 起承轉合 (chi-cheng-chuan-ho). After a while, I realized how I should write the assignment.
(Yamato, personal interview, translated)

Chinese writing can also be taught implicitly wherein the writing process may not be divided into stages. Attention may only be given to specific aspects of writing.

Process Influence: Students are able to recognize the differences in grammar and sentence structures in Chinese and English composition. However, when students are uncertain and not skilled in English writing, they may retrieve the writing structure from Chinese writing.

I can recognize that English writing is different from Chinese writing. In Chinese, we usually divide the writing into four sections (起承轉合 chi-cheng-chuan-ho), but you cannot write English in the same way.
(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Chinese grammar is more straightforward, but English writing can include some inverted sentences. It is more difficult.
(Rick, personal interview, translated)

English Writing

Description. Unlike English reading, students seem to have fewer interests in exploring a variety of writing activities. If the writing can be done in any language, students would simply

select Chinese since they have more confidence with using their first language. English writing falls into the testing category in that students would rarely write in English for their own interests. Occasionally, simple structured activities may be introduced in class, such as English letters.

Process. Since students do not have many writing experiences, their procedure leans toward a simplified writing structure which then may focus more on using accurate grammar and forming simple sentences.

Pedagogical process. English writing taught in school settings focuses more on elements such as vocabulary, phrases, grammar and sentence structures since composition only makes up a small percentage of the English exam within the College Entrance Exams. Those elements can be easily tested through cloze or multiple choice questions. Specific writing techniques are taught in English cram schools. Memorization as a pedagogical method is used in both settings.

Basically, teachers did not teach writing in school so we went to cram schools for more instruction...The teachers there provided us with models for us to memorize. We just had to change words based on the given essay subject and turn it in as an essay...The teachers also taught us some word usage that we did not even understand. But they just told us to memorize them and then apply them to the writing models.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Process influence: Since practical application of English writing is explicitly taught, the influences from students' previous experiences might be scarce. Students may utilize the techniques from their memorization.

Before attending university, I only had a continuous three years of English writing experience in high school. Now I am used to writing with a model. So I always try to find one from my teachers or from online. I would just change words and make it my own.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

University Level Reading

At the university level (See Table 20), the reading and writing activities seem to be more related to academic and professional settings. The procedures are developed based on different

tasks that require more attention to specific information or format to fulfill academic requirements.

Table 20
Literacy Practices at the University Level

University Level Reading		University Level Writing		
	<u>Chinese (L1)</u>	<u>English (L2)</u>	<u>Chinese (L1)</u>	<u>(English L2)</u>
Description	1. Academic 2. Personal interests	1. Language & professional development 2. Test driven	1. Academic 2. Practical application	1. Language learning
Process	1. Reading in order 2. Specific info	1. Reading in order 2. Test driven	1. Less structured	1. Less structured structure

Chinese Reading

Description. For academic purposes, textbooks, journal articles and translated editions of English textbooks are commonly used in class. Students also choose materials that are of personal interest or contain current and professional information, including magazines, novels, comic books, news, Internet articles, critiques, innovative websites, business books and business weekly publications.

Process. When reading is treated as a class assignment, reading in sequence leads to complete comprehension which enables students to perform in class through such things as presentations, exams or class discussions. The advantage of reading Chinese academic materials is that students can scan and easily spot keywords, specialized terminology and needed information. Some information inside the materials can be skipped. Confusion and incoherence may occur due to skipping, instead of language transition.

English Reading

Description. Reading English outside of class is a rare activity so the reading materials are usually related to language or professional knowledge development. Textbooks, language learning materials, TOEFL and TOEIC are included.

Process. Since English is the students' second language, students choose to read texts in order and from the beginning so they can have a coherent understanding. Otherwise, reading focuses may be concentrated on specific aspects, such as vocabulary. A sufficient quantity of vocabulary is the key to testing.

University Level Writing

Chinese Writing

Description. Most written work done in class is in Chinese, including papers, reflections, summaries and tests. Visual elements are also included in assignments, such as PowerPoint presentations and lab reports. While the majority of the writing practices done at the university level are academically based, practical applications such as school activity proposals, research proposals for the National Science Council and certificates are also included.

Process. Reflections and summaries are commonly introduced in class. These written tasks are completed in a less structured format. Students are expected to read a document and write down their understanding. There are also written tasks that require specific formats. Researching on the proper writing fashion is the first step for this type of assignment.

The certificate test usually has a specific writing fashion. So I always remind myself to follow it because it is better...As for the thesis, basically I just kept checking online to see how other people construct them so I can follow their formats.

(Yamato, personal interview, translated)

English Writing

Description. Students are not required to write their assignments in English in most of their classes, unless the class is dedicated to language learning. Students may be expected to take credited courses in English (language learning) or language proficiency tests. Within the language courses, assignments are completed in English.

Process. English writing is not focused on completing an essay or guiding students to construct a structured document.

English writing at university was kind of like writing in junior or senior high school. We were taught to write sentences based on the words and grammar we learned in class and then we were evaluated through our midterm and final exams.

(Sam, personal interview, translated)

In-school MBA Literacy Experiences in Taiwan

Even though the MBA program only provides small opportunities to create and engage in English speaking environments, the amount of English readings and the school's language policy create an imagined community where students envision improvement of their English abilities. General information about the MBA courses is listed on the school's website; however, it does not provide detailed descriptions of specific assignments. After enrollment, the literacy practices may go beyond students' expectations. Students' learning experiences are categorized into verbal interaction and pedagogical focus which show how knowledge is constructed in this MBA program (See Table 21).

The Imagined Community

Prior Expectations

The MBA program can be constructed as an imagined community when students come into the program with different language abilities, educational backgrounds and working

experiences. They are expected to expand their academic and professional knowledge in this community. Even though the program is not situated in an English-speaking setting, the educational environment (with an emphasis on language) influences the image of the community.

Table 21

MBA Experiences in Taiwan

	Prior MBA	Posterior MBA
Expectation	1. Language improvement 2. Professional knowledge expansion	1. Linguistic growth 2. Academic & professional development
Literacy Practices	1. Uncertainty about reading 2. Uncertainty about writing	1. Reading challenges 2. Theory & application 3. Professional writing development
Learning & adjustments	—	<u>Verbal Interaction</u> 1. Hierarchical environment 2. Peer pressure 3. Active Participation
	—	<u>Pedagogical Focus</u> 1. Theoretical foundation 2. Practical application

Students associate language improvement with the environment that linguistic, academic and professional growth can all be achieved within this imagined community.

Before enrolling, I had heard that this school emphasizes English and its English department requires a certain college entrance exam score. So I thought other departments would probably follow this requirement as well.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

Literacy Practices

Even though general information about courses can be found on the school's website or from other sources, elaboration of their literacy practices isn't clear. A large reading load is expected, but might go beyond students' expectations. Since the program is located in a Chinese speaking environment, students might ideally think that learning is mostly done in their L1. In

addition to linguistic difficulties, material content, a variety of modes of literacy practice and reading genres may be challenging as well.

Actually, I did not know, or I should say all my classmates did not know. At that time, I just thought, “ah, I just need to finish a thesis and then I can graduate.” But I did not think there would be so much reading.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

I did not know that we needed to read English articles. I thought we might just read Chinese ones because when I was working on my university thesis, I only read Chinese articles.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

Before their enrollment, thesis completion as a graduation requirement is anticipated.

Other than this requirement, details about assignment types, writing procedures, the quantity of materials and language usage are not defined. Due to this lack of explanation of expectations, students may anticipate challenges.

I did not think too much about the assignments. I just thought maybe we would have some presentations. I thought we would have more presentations than written assignments. I knew about the thesis so I was prepared for it.

(Yamato, personal interview, translated)

When I was in the university, my PowerPoint projects were done in Chinese. I knew if I came here, I might need to use English. I was afraid that I needed to use English for my PowerPoint projects because the grammar could be a real problem.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

The Reality

Posterior Expectations

Chinese written assignments (summary, reflection, synthesis and thesis) are usually inseparable from English reading materials. A great deal of time is spent retrieving needed information, increasing the students' familiarity with English. The reinforcement of English materials engages students in the process of familiarizing themselves with the language, developing theoretical foundations from original sources and creating real world applications.

With improved linguistic abilities, the focus can transition to academic and professional development.

When I just started the program, there were assignments for every course. At that time, we complained about it and compared with other schools. We realized that students from other schools did not have that many tests or presentations. They were not forced to read English articles either.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

What I learned in the university was only the surface level. After I was enrolled in the MBA program, I not only needed to learn from textbooks, but I also needed to understand foreign scholars' new perspectives on current issues through their articles.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

Literacy Practices

The content and reading load seem to be the two factors that concern students the least. What strikes students the most is the amount of required English materials when comparing with their previous reading experiences in their universities. If students have limited English reading experience, their reading process can be challenging. Additional time and effort can be spent on understanding vocabulary, business terminology, grammatical rules and sentence structures before they can truly comprehend the content.

I realized that I needed to read so much before I could start my thesis. When I first came here, I had trouble getting used to it. I wondered, why can't I just only read textbooks? Is it okay if I need to read more Chinese books? But the professors said that I needed to start from the original sources. So it was pretty painful, especially when the articles were older than me. Sometimes I had trouble understanding the words.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Before coming here, I thought English might be just a bit challenging. But after coming here, I realized that it is super difficult. It went beyond my imagination...I think the business terminology was pretty difficult to understand. Other than that, some authors made their sentences very long or they extended the sentences with commas or they inserted a lot of inversed sentences. This made readings difficult to understand.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

Other than textbooks, journal articles are frequently assigned in class covering different themes or topics. The stages of constructing theoretical foundations are explicitly taught through

reading research articles. Students are also guided to understand theories and research procedures through individual or collaborative assignments. Their understandings are finalized in their PowerPoint projects. However, students may find this theory and research based training distant from the current business environment.

The professors focus more on theories. Basically we need to have a stronger theoretical background more than practical skills. The professors want us to have a higher level of management skills and knowledge. After a while, I think the professors are correct because we will solve problems in the industry in the future, which is not something that everybody knows how to do.

(Yamato, personal interview, translated)

Originally I thought this MBA program is leaning towards teaching us how to manage a company, or manage positions or personnel. But what we learned seems to be distant from what I expected. So my working experiences and the program seem to be on different tracks.

(Sam, personal interview, translated)

Students' intellectual and linguistic growth result from their autonomous learning and significant training within class. Since students' written assignments require them to go through linguistic conversion from English to Chinese, online or library searches are necessary for their writing development.

From Amateur to Professional

Students' Chinese literacy education starts ahead of their English literacy education, which provides them with the benefits of better control over their Chinese language usage in academic and professional performances. Based on their memories of various types of reading and written practices in Chinese, students are able to apply or modify skills gained from previous experiences to English literacy practices in the MBA program (See Table 22). Since literacy skills are developed over a long period of time, students' previous English literacy experiences do not seem to provide sufficient preparation for the advanced English literacy practices in their MBA programs.

Reading

Students' previous reading experiences are for educational purposes or for pursuing personal interests. The content is presented in different genres and with set levels of language use. Chinese (L1) is the preferred language to English (L2) when it comes to selecting reading materials. In students' MBA programs, both Chinese and English materials are introduced in the class. While students are encouraged to increase familiarity with English and also develop their reading skills in English, translation and sentence rearrangement (after translation) are used during the reading process. Even though these two procedures slow the reading process, they help students understand the content. Translation is used when they need to complete English readings, including journal articles or textbook chapters, because their academic

Table 22

Previous Literacy Influence

	Current MBA Reading	Current MBA Writing
Description	1. Chinese/English materials 2. Translation procedure 3. Concerns for translated text	1. Chinese – completion, note taking, translation & keywords 2. English – completion, note taking, Keywords & verification
Previous L1 Influence	1. L1 application to L2 reading 2. Differed sentence structures 3. Incomprehension	1. L1 application to L1 writing 2. Modification on L1 application
Previous L2 Influence	1. Familiarity with the language 2. Recognition from experiences 3. Practical application	1. N/A

fulfillment (PowerPoint presentations, written assignments and class discussions) relies on their performance.

When I read, I was not able to absorb what I was supposed to comprehend. Like, I translated the whole article into Chinese, but I did not know what it was talking about after reading through it (my translated version).

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

I can read straightforward in Chinese, but English has inverted sentences so I have to keep reading and reading. I think the difficult part was to catch the hidden meanings. Sometimes I was not able to understand precisely...It was like I was not able to catch the main points, and then I digressed from the original direction to something else.

(Yamato, personal interview, translated)

Influence from L1

When students are not able to decode the English content, they rely on approaches from their Chinese reading procedure. Students may also use translation as a strategy; however, this strategy requires students to pay attention to technical terms and sentence structures. Unlike Chinese grammar, English sentences can include relative clauses or be inversely constructed which can be complicated to understand. Especially when students are not aware of the inversion, the translated sentences can be difficult to understand.

Chinese grammar is more straightforward. As for English grammar, I need to pay attention to see if the sentences are inversed, like I need to read the second part of the sentence first and then the first part. This is a big difference...It is not easy to read inversed sentences.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

I may be able to read straightforward with just six or seven words in a sentence and understand it. But if the author adds an adjective clause to describe a word and within that clause, he might add another clause to describe another word, it can be really confusing.

(Sam, personal interview, translated)

Influence from L2

The reading materials received in the MBA program may differ from the readings students have had before. Their previous English experiences can more or less stimulate comprehension and quicken the pace during the reading process. Background knowledge and familiarity with English is accumulated through experiences and time. Students may be able to recognize specific vocabulary, phrases, grammar and sentence structures from their previous experiences and apply them to their current reading materials.

If I see words that I do not know how to explain in one sentence, I would suddenly think, “eh, did not I learn some English phrases in the past?” So the biggest influence from my high school English class is that I consciously memorize the phrases and words. So now in the MBA program, if I read something I do not know, I can suddenly recall from my past experiences.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

I think the more you read, the faster the reading process is. The reading process can be quicker. But English is still a barrier to me because it is not my first language so the process is not that smooth.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

Writing

Most of the students’ writing experiences in the past were done in Chinese, regardless of the purposes (academic or leisure). Only in language learning class would they write in English. In their MBA program, a large amount of written assignments are completed in Chinese. PowerPoint projects can be either in Chinese or English. The languages used for keywords and note taking are both Chinese and English, depending on how familiar the students are with the subjects or the amount of writing. English is also used to specify business terminology in the writing.

I think translated text can be very different. There is a business term called FIT. Based on Taiwanese scholars, they might translate it as ‘契合度’ (chi-ho-tu) or ‘合適性’ (ho-shih-hsing). It is commonly known as suitable. One word can be translated in different ways, but sometimes I am not very sure which translated version to use.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

Influence from L1

Not every writing strategy learned from the past works for the written assignments in the MBA program. Some skills may be still in use or students may develop new writing patterns accordingly. The ultimate goal is to clearly and coherently present their thoughts.

Learning and Adjustments

Verbal Interactions

Even though lectures are still delivered in class, a student-centered environment is created to encourage active learning and stimulate class discussions with peers and professors. For example, PowerPoint projects are commonly used as an assignment for students to develop their ability to properly deliver knowledge and refine their verbal and presentation skills. Chinese is the language used in class, but a lot of students' readings are in English, including journal articles, business articles and textbooks. Unlike the Taiwanese students in the United States, verbal language is not an obstacle that would deter students from actively participating in class. However, the lack of confidence in public speaking can make it intimidating to raise questions, share personal perspectives or present academic or professional projects in front of professors, even if the spoken language is the students' L1. A teacher-centered setting is the educational norm in Taiwan, which may create a hierarchical environment (See Table 21). Teachers are regarded as the authority to accurately deliver knowledge.

I feel pressured to raise my hand in class...Some professors may guide us to say something. Because they are very familiar with their expertise, their one question can easily crush us, even if we are right...I think our confidence is lower in front of the professors...When the professors asks questions, they always sound like the authority. When they ask me questions, I feel like I am definitely wrong. I am not sure if I should say it is the image they give us or my reading is not thorough enough. Maybe I just lack confidence in my own comprehension.

(Gary, personal interview, translated)

Another reason that students hesitate to actively participate in class is the peer pressure. Raising questions regarding presented projects can be seen as giving a hard time to others and deteriorating the quality of their projects. Inarticulate presentations may be caused by linguistic barriers (a student not fully understanding English text) or limited verbal skills.

Sometimes I would control how much I interact with the professors in class because I think if I talk too much, it might create a negative relationship with my classmates. They might think I just want to show off. So I would try to make sure that my frequency of answering questions is just right, not too much and not too little.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

After the professor's response, I asked a follow-up question. After she elaborated on that issue, I wanted to ask another question. But my classmate sitting beside me said, "Eh, can you just stop asking questions? Do not ask more questions okay?" It also happened after my classmate's presentation and there was always a Q&A section. I kept asking questions until I understood. The reason why I asked questions was because I did not understand. But my classmate would say to me, "Eh, stop that. You look like you are trying to put our classmate in a really bad spot."

(Yamato, personal interview, translated)

However, personal interests or advanced knowledge on certain issues can encourage students to lead discussions, deliver personal opinions, assert opposite perspectives or generate questions in order to make learning personal and autonomous.

I think students need to interact with professors. If we all participate actively, something new can be stimulated. If the professor just lectures in class, it can be very boring. I probably would fall asleep...If the lecture is really interesting, I would keep raising my hand...I just think if I can speak up, then I should speak up more in class.

(Chiao Chiao, personal interview, translated)

We not only interact with professors, but also with our classmates. If classmate A makes a statement and we disagree with him, the professor would ask us if we have a different view...I think Taiwanese professors like it when students take the initiative to ask questions. It does not matter if the questions are stupid; they would listen and give you feedback.

(Rick, personal interview, translated)

Pedagogical Focus

Textbooks and journal articles are commonly used in class to strengthen the theoretical foundation. Journal articles are used to assist students to understand how theoretical concepts and principles can be applied to research with data collected from the real world. Students also frequently utilize these two materials to complete their written assignments. Significant amounts of research based materials are introduced in class.

Also, students are expected to be able to reflect and raise practical questions based on the theories or concepts covered in class. Current news or magazine articles are integrated into course assignments. It is a way to balance theory learning and practical application.

Summary

In the previous chapter, linguistic and literacy requirements were discussed as well as the literacy practices completed in the program from students' experiences and professors' perspectives. In this chapter, the focus was to understand about how students' previous literacy skills were developed and how their previous literacy experiences influenced their in-school literacy tasks. This chapter aimed to identify if students retrieve and use knowledge from their literacy memories.

Students' Chinese literacy practices completed prior to their MBA enrollment were mostly related to academic, professional or personal interests. Chinese was the common language used to develop intellectual growth in educational settings. As for students' previous English literacy practices, the focus was to study for exams. The attention was not paid to strengthen students' linguistic skills or encourage them to explore different genres.

Since students have better control over their first language, more literacy practices were conducted in the past which offered them more options to modify and adjust their experiences to satisfy the MBA literacy requirements. However, the lack of experiences in English literacy practices left students with limited influences and resources to retrieve knowledge from.

CHAPTER SIX

THE BUSINESS LITERACY PRACTICES IN THREE MBA PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

Introduction

The aims of this chapter include discussing the literacy requirements that Taiwanese study abroad students are expected to achieve as well as to analyze the reading and writing genres that are introduced to students within three MBA programs in the United States. The analysis of both types of literacy practices will provide insights into the second research question (What first language (English) and second language (any language) literacy practices are required by three MBA program in the United States?) and the fourth research question (How do Taiwanese study abroad students understand and cope with different genres of writing in their business programs?). Descriptive analysis regarding students' experiences of performing business literacy tasks is first introduced. The following section includes professors' perspectives on business literacy and their observations of students' literacy performance.

Business Literacy Practices from Students' Experiences

The description of the literacy practices in the selected MBA programs include students' understandings of the assignments, the purposes of the activities from the students' perspectives and how they approach different tasks. The struggles encountered during the literacy process are described as well as students' strategies. In addition to the programs' literacy requirements, students are expected to be equipped with certain language and literacy skills prior to enrollment.

Language and Literacy Requirement before Enrollment

Upon students' arrival at the MBA programs, students need to demonstrate their language skills by submitting their language proficiency test scores (See Table 23). Language proficiency

tests are used to evaluate international students to determine if they are capable of using the general verbal and literacy communication skills commonly occurring throughout the programs.

Advanced language tests such as the GMAT require maturity in literacy practices and a sufficiency of vocabulary. MBA programs may use either or both types of language tests to evaluate students' qualifications in regards to their language performance and capacity. Essay writing can provide an example of students' writing skills regarding their justifications, knowledge and their potential contributions to the MBA community.

Table 23

Literacy Requirement before Enrollment

	School 1 (US)	School 2 (US)	School 3 (US)
Language Test	1. TOEFL Paper-based: 540 Computer-based: 207 Internet-based: 76 2. IELTS: 6.0 or higher	1. TOEFL Paper-based: 600 Computer-based: 250 Internet-based: 100 2. IELTS: 7.5 3. PTE: 68	1. If applicable
GMAT	1. Minimum: 450	1. Average in 2013: 680 Mid 80% range: 649-730	1. No required
Writing	1. 1-3 pages goal statement (1) Motivation & rationales (2) Academic/career goals	1. 3 essays (1) Academic/ career goals (2) Challenge & career or personal/ professional contribution (3) Rationale 2. Optional essay	1. Personal essay

The three selected MBA programs in the United States use language tests at the initial stage to determine international students' qualification for the programs. Their general application documents for international students include an application form, transcript(s), TOEFL score, GMAT/GRE score, recommendation letters (from faculty or employee), current

resume and essay(s). The essay(s) can be used to determine applicants' proficiency in English writing.

The first MBA program selected for this study requires a minimum score from the following language proficiency tests: paper-based TOEFL at 540, computer-based at 207, Internet-based TOEFL at 76 and IELTS at 6.0 or higher. As for GMAT, the minimum score for this program is 450. It also requires students to submit a one to three page goal statement regarding their motivations and rationale for pursuing a MBA degree and further discuss their academic and career goals.

In order to determine students' English proficiency, the second MBA program demands a minimum score from any of the following language proficiency tests: paper-based TOEFL at 600, computer-based TOEFL at 250, Internet-based TOEFL at 100, IELTS at 7.5 and PTE (Pearson Test of English) at 68. Students can either submit their GRE or GMAT score. Students are required to submit three essays. The first essay consists of two sections, including their short-term academic goals and long-term career goals. The second essay consists of two sections which connect a global challenge to the students' post-MBA career and students' academic/professional contributions to the MBA community. In this essay, students are able to choose either section to elaborate on their thoughts. In essay three, students are expected to justify their reasons for attending this program by using a format similar to Twitter, including tweets. There is an optional essay choice if students are not currently employed, where they need to specify their current activities. In the optional essay, students can provide any information that can strengthen their application.

The third MBA program did not specify the minimum score for TOEFL test or any other language proficiency tests; however, students can submit the score if it is applicable. GMAT or

GRE is not required in the application process. Students are required to elaborate on their academic and professional goals in their personal essay.

Literacy Practices in Three MBA programs in the United States

Reading Practices

There is a lot of information embedded in a syllabus that students need to learn to locate necessary information to fulfill the academic requirements. Business knowledge is built from the theoretical concepts and principles derived from textbooks and other theoretical texts. Reading materials relevant to real world situations and applications are also commonly seen in these MBA programs, including articles from economics and financial magazines and business news sites (i.e. The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg). Materials like case studies provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge learned from class to business situations in order to develop their problem detecting and solving skills. This way, theories and real world settings are bridged together through practical application (See Table 24).

Syllabus

Description. There are different types of arrangements for a syllabus. Some are paper-based and some are uploaded to online interactive learning platforms. They usually contain class descriptions and objectives, class schedules, required reading materials, required technologies, grading, assignments, quizzes and exams, paper formats, class policies and an academic integrity statement. Some syllabi also include student profile sheets, class preparation notes, language requirements, learning strategies and information regarding the writing center. Tables and bullet points are used.

Table 24

MBA Reading Tasks

	Syllabus	Case Study	Textbook
Description	1. Academic requirement & fulfillment 2. Paper-based/ digital 3. Textual & visual	1. Description of a situation 2. Conclusion & discussion 3. Textual & visual	1. Theoretical principles & 2. Textual & visual
Process	1. Group or individual 2. Academic requirement & fulfillment	1. Textual info – description 2. Visual info – data	1. Straightforward 2. Time consuming 3. Visual aid
Rationale	1. Academic standings 2. Academic conducts	1. Theoretical framework 2. Practical application	1. Intro & guideline 2. Theoretical/practical
Linguistic Function	—	1. English: note taking, keywords, reading 2. Chinese: verification	1. English: reading 2. Chinese: verification
Concern	1. The quantity 2. The content 3. Language requirement	—	—
Difficulty	—	1. Language 2. Content 3. Terminology 4. Length	1. Language 2. Content
Strategy	—	1. Non-linear reading 2. Learning community	1. Repetition 2. Accumulation

Process. During the process of reading a syllabus, the professor may lead the whole class through the administration information and the outline of the syllabus, while at other times, students read through the syllabus on their own selectively. For example, in order to keep up with the class schedule, students may choose to read detailed class schedules, the grading system, exam information, or assignment related information over other sections of information, including class descriptions and objectives, or academic integrity policies.

Because Taiwanese place utmost importance on grades, I had to know how he would evaluate us, what his evaluation standards were and what assignments and tests were included or if he would take attendance.

(Mike, personal interview, translated)

A syllabus serves as the reminder of students' responsibilities in the class. So the frequency of reviewing the syllabus mostly depends on students' academic standings and their academic fulfillment. Even though the review may not occur constantly or thoroughly, the frequency changes based on the academic requirements.

Just when I thought about grades, probably during the midterm, I took a look to see where I was at. When a big assignment just came to an end, I would check to understand my academic standing and to see what my grade status was.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

At least once every week, just before class each week... So I could make sure what would be covered the next week, what homework needed to be turned in. Just to make sure that I was on track.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. Syllabi are used to help students keep track of their reading and written assignments and their quizzes or exams. They also contain quick access to information dealing with appropriate academic conduct.

Concern. There are three main concerns, including the reading load, the material content and the language requirements. The reading materials used in the programs are all printed in English. When reviewing a syllabus, students may pay attention to what academic goals are expected to be completed. Regardless of the reading load and material length, the materials are designed to develop students' intellectual and professional growth. However, the reading process can be complicated by students' reading experiences, language ability, educational backgrounds and comprehension ability. Reading in a second language requires multiple stages to fully comprehend the content.

The reason why I felt a bit worried at the beginning was because his required reading amount was vast...so at the beginning I felt worried. I worried about the large reading amount, but then it was okay.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Other than the reading load, the material content can be distant from students' academic, professional and cultural backgrounds. The assigned materials are used to build students' business knowledge foundation. They can also be used to promote class discussions and complete written and verbal projects. How students conceptualize the reading materials to a degree can influence the quality of their academic performance and academic standing.

The cases in that class were harder to read. There was a lot of calculation. Within this case, there were a lot of complicated formulas. The part that made me nervous was that I had trouble understanding the case.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Even though this was a comptroller class, there was a lot of accounting calculation practices. I was not familiar with it so sometimes I did not understand what the exam questions were about.

(Cindy, personal interview, translated)

When conducting verbal and written performances, it is inevitable to make grammatical and linguistic mistakes in a second language. The language requirement serves as a reminder of the students' responsibilities to function professionally in the academic and workplace environment. However, it can be intimidating to know their literacy tasks may be measured based on their language ability.

At that time, I was stunned by that line (in the syllabus). After a while, I don't think he gave us lower grades because of our grammar or punctuation. I think his main concern was still about our concepts. Of course, we might make some grammatical mistakes. But overall, I do not think that was his concern.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Case Study

Description. Within a case study, an authentic report about a company, a business event and finance environment is presented with text and visuals. The length of a case can be around

one to five pages or 20-30 pages. The themes are about managerial or financial situations. Within a report, a situation is staged initially, followed by background information, problems and current conditions. A case usually ends with a conclusion with questions embedded for students to generate solutions accordingly. Data can also be presented in a non-textual way. Numbers, tables and charts appear mostly after textual information.

There is a simple description of the case. The followings may be the background of a company, the person in charge and what the case is all about. But they usually start by presenting the summary at the beginning. It includes some tables, but sometimes the tables take a lot of space. So the actual text part is only seven to eight pages. At the end, it is all about tables.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Process. The process of reading a case can be divided into two stages. First, the textual information gives an overview of a case. There are sections in a case, including information and numerical data about the situation. Some can be irrelevant and digress from the main focus of a case, so students need to develop reading skills to sort through all of the presented information.

A case usually has a long background introduction at the beginning. So when reading a case, I read through the beginning really fast. The emphases are usually located on the last three or four pages.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Second, visual literacy can be heavily embedded in a case. Case studies do not directly disclose textual clues or hints. Other than using the textual information, students need non-textual data, including numbers, tables and charts in order to support their analysis or solutions. Non-textual data does not provide exact answers either. Students need to constantly go back and forth between textual and non-textual information to look for hidden information. Case studies can be analyzed individually or as group work ranging in size from three to five students.

If it is talking about a company, like the reason why he uses this strategy and what his transitions are, we just need to take a look at his financial statement. Sometimes those things (tables) are more useful than the text. We can, based on those things, accurately point out, “see, this supports my argument”, “this analysis is correct”. This part gives a

lot of things, like the gold price, or stock market price. These are used to support our arguments. So the information in the back, on the contrary, is sometimes more important than the beginning.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. The purpose for reading cases is to create an atmosphere where theoretical aspects from textbooks can be intertwined with the real business world contexts. For example, how to make financial plans or how to make financial decisions based on market needs. With this in mind, students can understand the financial environment by familiarizing themselves with the case content.

Linguistic function. The chosen case studies are in English. Chinese and English are both utilized by students in the process of reading, but they have different functions in decoding cases. Chinese is mainly used to better understand the content. Students use it to look up words in a dictionary. It functions to convey linguistic and knowledge input into a more understandable state. English is predominately used to enable students to output their thoughts, such as writing notes or keywords.

I write key points in English because I think this is more logical. Like using English to explain English sounds more accurate. Even though I use Chinese logic to comprehend, I still think that after translating English to Chinese, the meanings are different. So if possible, I always use English to write key points down.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

If it was the vocabulary I did not understand, I wrote in Chinese. If it was something that I thought was important, then I wrote in English so I could avoid writing it again. Sometimes I combined Chinese and English together.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Difficulty. Students may find it difficult to understand cases due to writing styles, chosen vocabulary and business terminology in specialized contexts. The format of a case study is different from journal articles and each section may contain irrelevant information pushing students to the wrong direction. Also, the vocabulary usage and specialized terms may reflect

how professionals communicate in English speaking business settings. Due to students' various educational and professional backgrounds, they might not be familiar with the business terminology enclosed in cases.

The readings used more daily use English, so I found it more difficult to understand. I think the daily use English and academic language are different. I can handle the academic English, but not the daily English.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

The difficult part was that it was more tedious. Because I was not from a finance background, I had trouble understanding it. I did not know what they (words/terms) stood for. This part was more challenging.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

The challenges students face when reading cases may not always be tied solely to linguistics. Instead, the content can be distant from students' educational or professional backgrounds which can create a gap between the text and the information that the authors want to convey. For example, culture-based content may not be comprehended through linguistic components.

It was just those things that relate to cultures. The parts that talk about their customs and traditions. So the difficult part was not the language. It was the content.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

The quality of individual or collaborative projects and class participation is based on how well students comprehend cases. The length and the amount of cases can be daunting for students to handle while they learn to sort through the content. They may lose track due to the lengthy content and excessive information.

Sometimes I was afraid that I spent too much time reading, but still could not catch the key points and possibly wrote the homework in the wrong direction. We had a lot of team projects. I was very afraid if I could not totally understand the readings, I could not contribute to the team. That was the part I was afraid of because Americans may not tolerate us as international students. They would think we need to contribute. Sometimes I was more concerned about these kinds of things.

(James, personal interview, translated)

I was afraid to get called on in class and could not say a word. I was just worried that I could not grab the main points which meant that I did not learn much from my readings. The reading load was too large so it was hard to decide what to read and what not to read.
(Ben, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. The reading process is set in two stages, but they are not in sequence. Since the challenges are not always related to linguistics, the non-linear reading manner may stimulate students to sort through information and stay on track.

Usually we would first look at the questions. For example, if I wanted to know whether his budget is problematic, I would look into the chart to find items related to the budget. But I would not read from the beginning to the end. I only look for things that I want.
(Ben, personal interview, translated)

In order to avoid imbalanced time spent on reading and knowledge building, the same-culture community may provide a comfortable environment for cognitive resonance.

Just try your best to read. Before the group discussion, talk about the content with other Taiwanese classmates. Brainstorm some main points to feel better and more settled.
(James, personal interview, translated)

Textbook

Description. Textbooks provide the theoretical basis for building cognitive knowledge. Textual and visual components are both included in textbooks. Also, the principles and concepts used in the business environment establish the foundation for practical application. Each section in the textbook chapters connects and proceeds sequentially guiding students from simply perceiving the content to developing interpretation and application skills. The focuses of textbooks can be on developing written and verbal communication skills based on local or international business situations, strategic decisions and business behavior.

Process. The textbook reading process is more straightforward and is mostly completed at home because it requires students to understand the conceptual content. Textbooks are more theoretical than case studies and require students to read in sequence to build knowledge. It may

take more time to finish reading chapters. Boldface and fonts indicate the emphases in textbook chapters which are accompanied by examples to illustrate abstract business terminology and concepts.

The keywords are bold-faced so it is actually pretty easy to read. After the bold-faced keywords, definitions and explanations are provided with some examples.
(Mike, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. Textbooks offer introductory information and are regarded as the foundation for students to support and extend their interpretation and analysis of business situations. They bridge theories and real world application. Professors can also observe and evaluate students' learning outcomes through individual or collaborative projects and class participation.

His purpose was for us to use the theories in the textbook and connect them to our experiences in order to answer questions. He hoped to see if we could use the textbook to elaborate on the answers. Other than elaborating, we had to be able to solve problems.
(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

After he finished his lecture, he would have a topic in mind. Then he put students in pairs, but sometimes he split the class into two parts. So there were actually a lot of chances to see student interactions. They would perform simulated business negotiations.
(Ben, personal interview, translated)

Linguistic function. Textbooks used in the MBA programs are in English. Chinese is used to translate vocabulary or sentences.

Difficulty. Unlike case studies, the language and explanations used in textbooks may be more abstract and complicated to understand which require sophisticated reading skills, background knowledge and vocabulary. In addition to the linguistic component, comprehension can also be affected by students' reading experiences, generic structures, non-textual content, familiarity with the topics and if students can build connections to the content.

I think the vocabulary was a problem. So I felt difficulty when reading and probably did not understand completely after reading.
(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Theoretical stuff and vocabulary were very difficult. When comparing with cases, there was a difference, but I tried to read them all.

(Cindy, personal interview, translated)

Some readings may go beyond students' comprehension resulting from the gap between text and abstract concepts, especially when reading culturally oriented materials.

Some of those things were actually not what we would come across on a daily basis, such as race and culture problems, American and British lifestyles and the way they think. Who would touch on these things on a daily basis? These cultural things are not understandable even if you finish reading the book. You need to interact with these people to have some kind of understanding. If you never interact with them, it is useless.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. Textual components such as vocabulary, sentence structures and business terminology can be absorbed after repeatedly reading or through the accumulation of experience. Students may be able to eventually overcome the linguistic barriers; however, they can still struggle with culture-based content that may not be completely understood through text.

Writing Practices

Four categories (See Table 25) are created based on the assignment genres. While some assignments require analysis of individual's professional development or business situations, some stress emphasis on developing the skills to extract main points from visual or textual information. The assignment types mentioned above are mostly completed with text. It is necessary to pay more attention to the sentence structures, grammar and word selection in order to achieve up to the professors' expectations. There are also assignments containing visual components. All assignments are completed in English; however, during the writing process, Chinese may be used for translation (vocabulary) and drafting purposes.

Table 25

Written Assignment Category

Category	Assignment
Professional development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual life plan (final report) 2. Personal mission statement 3. Resume
Analysis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Case study analysis 2. Take home final (Case study) 3. Issue analysis briefing 4. Metaphor summary & analysis 5. Industry case analysis 6. Topic analysis
Summary & reflection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Video case project 2. Topic summary
Textual & visual	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PowerPoint project 2. Problem exercise set

Professional Development

In the professional development category (See Table 26), students are expected to analyze their past and current academic and professional experiences in order to complete their assignments. Assignments in this category do not require students to do additional research, but to scrutinize personal academic and career developments. The assignments are completed in English, but during the drafting process, the language usage is not limited to English.

Individual Life Plan (Final Report)

Description. Final Report can be defined as a reflection report which requires students to closely inspect personal internal growths and one's professional journey. Students also need to think about the potential development and challenges that lie ahead based on what they learn from visiting speakers who are successful entrepreneurs or business venturists. This report is approximately four single-spaced pages in length and the format is informal. Within a report,

there are four themes and each of them is elaborated upon with examples coming from students' present and future perspectives and plans.

Table 26

Professional Development

	Individual Life Plan	Personal Mission Statement	Resume
Description	1. Self reflection 2. Present & future Perspectives & plans 3. 4 pages	1. Current & past, academic & professional development 2. Sections: analysis & results 3. 3 pages	1. Educational & professional info 2. 3 sections 3. Bullet point with Examples & dates 4. 2 pages
Process	1. Personal & professional development 2. 4 themes categories 3. keywords & sentences	1. Personal experiences 2. 4-step analysis guideline with examples 3. Synthesis in paragraphs	1. Appropriate template 2. Language editing 3. Written tone
Rationale	1. Speech reflection/recap 2. Individual viewpoints	1. Self exploration 2. Professional development	1. Market demands 2. Textual presentation of self 3. Constant revision
Linguistic Function	1. English – completion 2. Language switching negative impact 3. Grading criteria	1. English – completion 2. Chinese – verification	1. English – completion
Difficulty	1. List of development 2. Page requirement	1. List of experiences	1. Format 2. Language usage
Strategy	1. Keywords 2. Examples	1. Examples	1. Clear organization 2. Professional language

Process. When writing a final report, students need to look closely at their personal and professional lives in order to categorize them into four themes based on the professor's guidelines. It requires an extensive self-observation. Keywords and short sentences are written as a reminder of what each theme should include. Before completing the report, a series of writing and editing is involved.

I typed one line to tell myself the theme for each paragraph. And then, I started writing the whole paper...It was possible that those lines did not appear in my finished paper at the end, but I would know what I needed to write in each paragraph.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. The professor uses this assignment to see if students can recap and retrieve main points from visiting speakers' speeches in order to incorporate them into their life plan report for their future plans. Also, it is for students to express their viewpoints and perspectives toward their personal and professional lives.

Linguistic function. The language used for writing this assignment is English. Even though students may be equipped with sophisticated L1 writing skills, they might choose to draft their assignment in English in order to avoid an additional process or altered meanings during translation.

When writing an English report and mixing Chinese in it, I think it is very inappropriate. I don't know. Maybe this is my writing habit. I just used English to write my summary because I thought this was more appropriate. It was easier for me to write up the whole thing.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

Other than the content of the report, the regulation of grammar and language usage can be used as grading criteria.

When writing this kind of report, it should be about our perspectives, like what the content is and what we want to express, instead of the accuracy of our grammar. But the professor focused a lot on the grammar. We more or less made some grammatical mistakes...Americans may need to think twice when reading our writings.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

Difficulty. This assignment requires a conscientious observation and thorough understanding of one's self. The difficulty of this assignment may not be related to linguistic components. Instead, generating ideas and examples can be challenging while fulfilling the required amount of content.

I had trouble making things up. At that time, I just put together my main points and stuff, but my paper did not reach the required page number. So I had to think about what I needed to write more or where I could squeeze in another example. It was really annoying.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. In order to avoid digressing from the main themes, keywords can be a strategic tool. They represent the potential emphasis and example of each theme. Also, the student's living experiences can be convincing and can be used to support to students' statements.

Personal Mission Statement

Description. The statement is a three page long document which requires students to reflect upon their past and current academic experiences and/or professional development. The statement is divided into two sections, including the analysis of an individual's skills and abilities, and the results of the analysis. There are four steps to complete the analysis which includes successful experiences from the past, personal values, and potential personal contributions and aims (current and future).

Process. To write a personal mission statement, students are to follow the instructions given by the professor. Within the four-step analysis, students need to list their personal experiences in bullet points with examples. In the following section, students need to synthesize their analysis and put their results in paragraphs.

Rationale. The purposes of this assignment are twofold, including self exploration and professional development. It is for students to consider how their knowledge and skills can be applied as a bonus to their future career. Also, this personal mission statement is meant to be continuously revised and updated.

Linguistic function. During the process of completing this assignment, English and Chinese are both used. While English is used to construct the meanings, Chinese plays a supporting role. The end product is completely written in English.

I had sentences in mind, but did not how to put them into English. So I used Chinese to check the vocabulary to make sure I was using the right words.

(Jim, personal interview, translated)

Difficulty. This assignment does not require extra research work. However, students need to retrieve and analyze information from their past experiences and memories. The difficulty can stem from their ability to precisely select personal experiences qualified for the analysis.

Strategy. Since the written instruction is given at the initial stage, students need to pay attention to their previous professional experiences and development in order to have substantial information for analysis.

Resume

Description. The format of a resume is a two page long document with individuals' educational, occupational and professional information. It starts with brief personal contact information, followed by objectives, education, work experience and other information. A timeline for each item is included. In the education section, a short report on personal performance is accompanied by graduation year. In the work experience section, a significant emphasis is put on individual's achievements to strengthen personal skills and abilities. It also includes the beginning and ending timeline for each position. In the other section, additional specialized skills are included as well. Active voice in vocabulary and sentence structures brings a positive tone. Also, mistakes in word selection and grammar must be avoided.

Process. The first step to write a resume is to look for a template which is appropriate for the business environment. Constant editing of vocabulary, grammar and sentence structures is

required. The tone in the resume should be positive and enthusiastic in order to show individual's enthusiasm towards the career opportunity.

You need to make it sound like you are enthusiastic about receiving this job opportunity. You need to use a positive tone and active words...After all, a resume is the only thing for the HR office to know about you before interviews. So you need to think about how you can leave a great impression on people with your resume.

(Jim, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. Professor may use this resume to acknowledge demands in the job market.

When writing a resume, students need to pay more attention to polishing their wording, presenting their personal image and demonstrating specialized skills. Constant revision is needed.

Linguistic function. This assignment is completed in English. Chinese is used to look for appropriate vocabulary.

Difficulty. Since there are certain writing fashions and specific requirements when writing a resume, it can be challenging for students who are not familiar with the format and language usage, in terms of either succinct or professional writing. Students are able to complete their resume in Chinese and they are more familiar with the appropriate words that can fit into a resume. However, L2 writing experiences and training may affect how students complete their resume. For example, word selection can be difficult for second language writers.

I exchanged words for their synonyms, but the professor changed my words to the ones with stronger tone with the same meanings. He changed that for me to make my experiences sound more meaningful.

(Jim, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. From the content perspective, the ability to list and organize information is needed to convey individual achievements which are valuable to potential employers in a clear and categorized manner. From the linguistic perspective, business-professional language usage can amplify a convincing tone in a resume.

Analysis

In the analysis category (See Table 27), the assignments are written in an essay format. Students are expected to answer questions or elaborate on their thoughts and perspectives with complete sentences and clear organization. All analysis assignments require thorough reading. The reading materials can be case reports, textbook chapters, news articles or journal articles. The assignments are not necessarily theory-based, but do require that students apply concepts that were covered in class into their writing.

Case Study Analysis

Description. Within a case study analysis, students are asked to analyze a business situation, an organization's technical procedures, business communication and a company's or a business executive's decision. A case analysis usually starts with a summary, followed by an analysis, and ends with recommendations. The summary is a brief report of the case. It can be written in paragraphs or with bullet points. An analysis can be done in the form of a Q&A or three to four main points about a struggling business situation. The recommendations, strategic tactics and actions are provided by students as if they are putting themselves in the company's position. A case study analysis can be three to four pages long.

Process. There can be two different ways to analyze case studies. First, students are asked to follow a specific method to analyze cases. For example, students may need to select particular theories to apply to their analysis and support their statements. A complete comprehension of the theories and case study is necessary.

I wrote a summary and then I used, for example, some theories from that book...UN, PDI and Uncertainty. I also used organizational culture to describe these things.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Second, students may be asked to analyze cases without specific instructions. They need to analyze cases based on what was covered in class and from their own experiences. Reading thoroughly through the case is the initial step so that the integrity of the subject matter can be fully understood. At the analysis stage, students need to find out both obvious and hidden problems, accompanied by solutions or recommendations.

I had to read through the case first. I circled the parts that were important. There were three to four main points that I thought were important and I definitely had to talk about. When I elaborated these points, there was a general procedure – I firstly talked about this company, including the original problems and I applied the concepts covered in class to determine why this company had those problems.

(James, personal interview, translated)

First, I had to review this case and then looked for this company's background and specific products within this case. I analyzed the company's situation in the market and its target customers. I ended the analysis with a conclusion.

(Jim, personal interview, translated)

I read the case first and then solved the problems. Like here, it is talking about which is more important, business development or environment? I generated solutions based on the problems and the recommendations should be more practical.

(Cindy, personal interview, translated)

Whether students are explicitly instructed to investigate a case study, their analysis always ends with their recommendations and strategies based on the business situations with explanations. It can be completed by individuals or as a collaborative project.

Rationale. A case study analysis is structured to help students construct their ability to discover and solve problems by applying what they learn in class and from their additional research. Also, they are expected to have the ability to create arguments and provide elaborations along with theories.

Linguistic function. The analysis is completed in English. Chinese is used to find the proper words. Drafts may be completed in the languages that the students feel most comfortable

with. Some may draft in Chinese because they have better control of the language, but some may draft in English to avoid altered meanings during translation.

When I was reading, I used English all the time. So when writing or thinking, I would rather use English, otherwise I had to switch back and forth. It was actually pretty tiring. If I initially draft things in Chinese, but write up the paper in English later, it means I need to then translate. I might misuse the words or express ideas unclearly.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Difficulty. The case study and textbook used to conduct analysis may heavily focus on local or world business cultures which can be distant from students' backgrounds. Culture-based cases can be too abstract to fully understand. However, students need to comprehend the material content in order to integrate information into their analysis projects.

If you want to write it perfectly, I guess you might need to check the French culture and its etiquette. For example, what gift should be given to the hostess? If you want to write it well, you can use that as an example.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Selecting appropriate words can be challenging when writing in a second language. A Chinese-English dictionary may only provide a general translation. Students may have stronger lexicon sensitivity toward their L1. Based on the translation from the Chinese-English dictionary, students may potentially choose words that do not precisely express themselves. This may hinder students' original thoughts. Also, students' L2 lexical resource can be accumulated over a period of time.

Chinese was used to check vocabulary. Sometimes I wondered if it was appropriate to use certain words. The words I knew would be exhausted really fast. Also I could not use words with a negative tone, but I only knew so many positive words.

(Cindy, personal interview, translated)

Table 27 *Analysis*

	Case Study Analysis	Take Home Final (Case)	Issue Analysis Briefing	Metaphor Summary & Analysis	Industry Analysis	Topic Analysis
Description	1. Securitizing a problem 2. 3 main sections 3. Bullet points & paragraphs 4. 3-4 pages	1. 2 cases analysis 2. 2-3 pages each 3. Specific questions given	1. 700 – 1000 words 2. Certain format 3. Experience, analysis & result 4. Strategies	1. 2 sections: summaries & analysis 2. Theories from textbooks 3. 4 pages	1. Text-based 2. Summary, assessment & strategy 3. 15 plus pages	1. Group project 2. Background, theory & prospect 3. APA format
Process	1. Specific analysis method 2. Without specific analysis method 3. Recommendations & Strategies	1. Attentive reading 2. Finding business problems 3. Recommendations 4. deadline 2-3 days	1. A personal experience 3. Finding problems & solutions 4. Strategies	1. Read 2 textbooks (culture & theory) 2. Summarize, compare & analyze 1 chapter	1. Group project 2. Industry selection 3. Research & outline 4. Work distribution	1. Background research 2. Analysis & synthesis 3. Various sources of info 4. Group meetings
Rationale	1. Discover & solve problems 2. Real world application	1. Practical application 2. Finding problems 3. Problem solving	1. Theory & real world application 3. Problem solving skills	1. Understand metaphor usage & meanings	1. Opinion development 2. Real world application	1. Real world research 2. Work collaboration
Linguistic Function	1. English – completion 2. Chinese – voc checking	1. English – completion 2. Chinese – voc checking 3. No grammar requirement	1. English – completion 2. Chinese – draft 3. No grammar requirement	1. English – Completion	1. English – Draft & completion 2. No grammar requirement	1. English – completion
Difficulty	1. Culturally distant contents 2. Lack of voc	1. Insufficient information given 2. Creativity & originality	1. Connection b/t experience & textbook 2. Analysis	1. Culturally distant contents 2. Connection b/t culture & theory	1. Giving tactics 2. Theory & application	1. Coordination on contents 2. Group communication
Strategy	1. Linguistic level 2. Content level	1. Practical application 2. Attentive reading	1. Finding correlation 2. Follow instruction & questions	1. Thorough reading	1. Details about the industry 2. Theoretical & practical	1. Complete sentences 2. APA style

Strategy. There are two main approaches to take on case analysis assignments. Precisely expressing thoughts in a second language can be challenging for international students. This can be influenced by their familiarity with the target language, general and specialized vocabulary and background knowledge. On the linguistic level, it is important to deliver meanings in a simple but clear manner, whether the language usage is business professional or not.

My strategy was to use the words the professor used in class as much as possible. For example, he used “variability” a lot in class. So at the recommendation part, we intentionally made it as one of the main points. That word did not appear in the case, but in his lecture.

(James, personal interview, translated)

I would rather write it in a simple way than writing something that seems complicated but wrong. So I picked something that I felt confident of writing.

(Cindy, personal interview, translated)

On a content level, students should avoid digression caused by the irrelevant information provided within a case. Practical application is preferred. Providing examples from professional experiences gives the analysis a personal interaction with theoretical subject matter.

We kept going back to the questions the professor raised to make sure we adequately answered them. Also, we used the information he discussed in class to prove that we certainly paid attention in class and applied his lecture to the case.

(James, personal interview, translated)

(Swapping this assignment with another classmate) My classmate could make things up and finish this kind of personal opinion assignment really fast. And the professor even considered it as a well-written product and thought he had creative ideas.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

Take Home Final (Case Analysis)

Description. This Take Home Final Analysis covered two cases. Each case is one page long. The analysis of each case is two to three pages. This assignment is completed individually. The professor has a structured approach and direction to analyze the cases by giving specific questions. Students are expected to answer questions like: What are the major risks? How to

alleviate risks? Who should be invited as shareholders? What are the criteria for alternative helps? Also, students need to provide recommendations accordingly.

Process. This is a take home exam. Students need to complete it in a time frame of two or three days. When analyzing the case, attentive reading is the initial step in order to find out potential business problems that the companies are struggling with. Keywords can be helpful in the process of expanding ideas and thoughts. When the analysis is completed, students need to come up with recommendations to solve issues within the current business situations.

After reading the cases, I tried to find a variety of risks and wrote them down. For example, in the first case, I wrote down political, operating, market and others. And then, I wrote down some keywords. When writing up the paper, I just followed these bullet points to write in sequence. During the writing process, I went back to the cases to see the original content and then paraphrased some sentences because I cannot just copy and paste. After paraphrasing, I did some analysis and provided some recommendations.
(James, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. The professor may use this assignment to evaluate students to see if they are able to apply the subject matter covered in class and discover the hidden problems embedded in a case. Also, it can be used to evaluate students' problem solving skills.

I mentioned about political risk, operating risk, and market risk. If you can think of a variety of risks, the professor would be more satisfied. The professor would think if you are able to sense these problems, you are half way to success.
(James, personal interview, translated)

Linguistic function. Even though the balance of using Chinese and English is uneven, they play different roles in completing this analysis project. English is considered as the vehicle to formulate and construct ideas into words. Chinese is used to verify English words. It is used in the writing process to search for appropriate English words.

I think there was no benefit to use Chinese to write this paper. It was faster to use English entirely to think and write. If there were words in the case that I did not understand, I looked them up in the dictionary. Or when I wanted to use some words but did not know them in English, I used Chinese to look up the English words.
(James, personal interview, translated)

Spending time on content building and originality development is more important than focusing on the grammar and language usage.

I remember he (the professor) did not have many demands on our writing or word selection. His comments were mostly on concepts instead of the writing. He did not care much about grammar and writing.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Difficulty. The positive side of a shorter case is that students can finish reading it in a short amount of time. The negative side of the short length provides insufficient information. Also, cases do not provide direct answers to the questions proposed on the last page or guide students to certain direction. It requires students' creativity and original ideas to analyze the business situation given in the case.

Because the case was only a page long, I had to try to envision many things. I remember the case was really short, like only a page long, so I needed some imagination to generate more possibilities.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. The ability to apply theories and professional knowledge practically is important. At the same time, students need to know how to appropriately correspond strategic tactics to certain business situations. Also, attentive reading is required when studying more concise cases.

I tried to calm myself down and then read the cases. At that moment, I turned off the music. It was better when it was quiet so I could think about the problems in the cases. It would be clearer.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Issue Analysis Briefing (Individual Project)

Description. This assignment has to be completed individually without collaborating with other students. This project has to be written using 700 to 1000 words and following an appropriate format, including title page, references and quotations. Students are expected to describe their experiences, specify the issues, elaborate on the problems, connect to theories in

textbook chapters, evaluate the chosen strategic tactics and finally give recommendations in order to solve problems.

Process. The first step is to pick a specific personal experience relating to an organizational problem which can be tied to textbook chapters. Students need to think about the significance of the issues, look for solutions and justify their recommendations based on theories and the situation.

My process was to state the questions first. Those were extracted from my experiences. And then, I looked for the leadership styles. I gave some recommendations. I just gave examples showing the leadership styles and what theory corresponded to the situation.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. This assignment is used to evaluate students to see how they are able to connect theories to real world situations. Practical applications and recommendations require problem solving skills.

Linguistic function. The assignment is completed in English. Chinese is used during the drafting process. It can be helpful to shape the concept and develop the layout of the project. The requirement of grammar and language usage is not specified by the professor, but leaving it as the graduate students' responsibility before turning in their assignments.

I asked a tutor to proofread for me. I think the professor was not picky about business language. As for grammar, I always asked someone to fix it for me, either word selection or writing.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Difficulty. Unlike the case analysis, this assignment requires students to connect their personal experiences and opinions to textbook chapters. A significant amount of the analysis relies on students' professional experiences. It may seem easier to complete, however, it still requires significant amount of efforts. Without writing down keywords or creating an outline the

process can slow down or stall the overall assignment progress. Constant and diligent effort is necessary.

I think sometimes I wanted to elaborate more, but I felt lazy and I did not want to elaborate too many things. I finished one part and then the rest the next day. Sometimes I had to think about the links between paragraphs and how to connect them together. I had thought about something, but I just reached to the point where I did not want to write anymore. So I decided to take a break first, but then, I just forgot my ideas. The muse was gone.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. Since this assignment is more reflective, the ability to find the correlation between students' professional experiences and theories is crucial. Also, a syllabus contains instructions on how students should complete this assignment and the information they need to include. Therefore, following the professor's instructions in the syllabus is another strategy. Besides, writing down answers in correspondence to proposed questions creates a more systematic structure for the audience to read.

Metaphor Summary and Analysis (Individual Country Metaphor Analysis)

Description. This assignment contains two parts. The first part of this assignment includes a summary of a country's culture chosen by a student and he/she needs to compare it with two other cultures. The cultural information comes from textbook chapters. For example, if the chosen country is the United States, he/she has to compare the United States with two other countries. The second part includes the analysis of the events happening in the United States. Within the summary and culture analysis, students need to apply theories from the assigned textbook to support the content. This assignment is four pages in length.

Process. In order to complete this assignment, students need to carefully read two textbooks. Students are expected to summarize the chapter (culture) they pick from the first textbook, compare cultures, and analyze the current events happening in the United States. The

comparison and analysis need to be conducted based on the second assigned textbook which is theory-based. This is an individual assignment.

I had to finish reading the first textbook. That textbook had a lot of descriptions about different countries. I started with a summary and then discussed what I saw from the textbook. After that, the professor wanted us to compare countries, including Taiwan, the US and the United Kingdom. I just used the information from the textbook to compare. The ending section has to be about current events.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. The intention of this analysis assignment is for students to understand how metaphors can be used to represent a country and also for them to develop the ability to understand figurative language.

He just wanted us to know how to use metaphors to describe a country's culture and the meanings behind them. He wanted us to see the hidden meanings.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Linguistic Function: This assignment is completed in English.

Difficulty. The challenge for this assignment can go beyond textual or other multimodal elements. One of the textbook read for this assignment is culture-based. This analysis requires significant understanding of the local or world cultures. It can be challenging for students to elaborate on the metaphorical meanings and build connections with theories if they are not familiar with the cultures.

This assignment was really difficult to write. It was not easy because of the metaphors. It is like when people ask you what represents a country and ask you to write more about it. I had to elaborate what could be linked to TBI and Uncertainty. I had to come up with something and then created some examples.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. Comprehension and practical application are the key elements to this assignment. Students need to fully understand the theories covered in this class and also comprehend the assigned metaphor chapters.

First, I had to finish reading the assigned metaphor chapters. Second, I had to have a certain understanding of Hofstede's book so I could write the paper. If not, it would not be easy to write.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Industry Case Analysis (The New York Times Case Analysis)

Description. This assignment is a text-based paper and should be more than 15 pages in length. Students are expected to include their assessment and justification on an industry's proposal, students' solutions to the current situation and their response regarding the industry's future (by answering questions). Within the analysis, there are two summaries regarding the overview of the industry and its current situation, an assessment on the industry's proposal, recommendations, opinions upon the future direction of the industry and a conclusion.

Process. This assignment is done as a group project so each group needs to pick an industry listed in the syllabus. Students are expected to do research on the selected industry. After reading, the outline of the analysis is created. An overview, problem identification and recommendations are included. The project can be divided into two parts and each student is responsible for their own assigned section.

I collaborated with another classmate. We had a discussion first and then we generated a general framework. We needed to collect a lot of information that talked about The New York Times and its problems. So we collected a lot of articles in this area. And then, we started creating an outline. The outline had an overview, problem identification and recommendations at the end. We split the paper in half. I was responsible for the first half.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. It is a chance for students to develop their skills in giving opinions based on evidence from various sources. Students are expected to apply their specialized knowledge to real world business situations.

Linguistic function. The drafts and finished assignment are done in English. English is predominantly used to find relevant reading materials, construct meanings, jot down keywords and integrate ideas. Chinese is used to look words up in the dictionary.

Difficulty. The challenge for this analysis can go beyond the linguistic aspect. Giving strategic tactics requires not only a full understanding of an industry and its overall conditions, but also students' application skills. Strong recommendations require creativity and originality.

I think the difficult part was that basically The New York Times had a lot of smart people working in the newspaper office already. They were smart enough but still could not figure out a reasonable solution. "How are we able to find something that was better than what they currently have?" We just felt like there was not much space for us to bring in our full potential. It was too difficult to generate a really creative solution that could bring them out of their troubles.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. A full understanding of the chosen industry and its problems is the first key to completing this assignment. Also, theoretical and practical knowledge covered in class can be helpful.

Mainly we had to let the professor sense that we were paying attention in his class. During class, he mentioned about the situation of NYT. When he was mentioning relevant information, we took some notes.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Topic Analysis

Description. A topic analysis is more than 15 pages long and it is done as a group project. Each student in a group is responsible for the assigned section of the project. The project includes an introduction, a definition of the chosen topic, the products and their factors, a theoretical review of the topic, and the industry's prospects. APA formatting is required for this assignment. This project is later transformed into a PowerPoint presentation.

Process. This assignment requires students to do thorough research on the selected topic. Students are expected to analyze the materials retrieved from digital or paper-based sources. The

material content is not limited to specific genres. The sources include journal articles, book chapters, cases and industry websites. Students are expected to synthesize textual information and provide examples. A final group meeting is needed to assemble all sections.

I started with the definition part and just generally talked about the categories. I had to make sure every sentence was complete and polished. And then, I had to integrate my part into my group members' written parts.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. The purposes of this assignment are to train students to generate a written project with professional formatting, to analyze a large amount of documents and to collaborate with group members. Within this assignment, students learn the real-world industry and products from conducting research. They also need to actively participate in group work which is commonly seen in the workplace environment. Both written and verbal communication is included.

Difficulty. Students need to learn how to coordinate with group members. Coordination skills may reduce the chance of sacrificing each member's work during the editing process. Communication skills play an important role in the process of completing group projects.

The person who seemed to be the leader in our group kept deleting other people's written work, but overall it was not difficult to write. I actually finished my part really fast, but my group members took forever.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. Unlike the PowerPoint version of this assignment, sentences are composed with proper structures and grammar. Other than making sure every passage is composed with complete sentences, following specific writing formatting can avoid plagiarism.

We had to make sure that we did not copy and paste from the Internet. We definitely had to cite the sources. If we quoted from someone, we clearly mention it in the references. So when I was writing the paper, I paid more attention to it. I cited where the quotations were from or I paraphrased the sentences with my own words.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

Summary & Reflection

The information used for summary assignments is not necessarily textual. These two assignments (See Table 28) all require students to be able to grasp main points from the materials and reflect based on their experiences or principles covered in class. English and Chinese are involved in the writing process, but the assignments are completed in English.

Video Case Project

Description. A video case project includes two sections, including reflection and analysis. Within the reflection section, students are asked to summarize the focal points from a six minute video and provide their reflection which focused on solving and avoiding accounting problems. The analysis section includes the application based on students' experiences and individual opinions which focuses on questions like: Why does fraud occur? How to reduce fraud in business? What should be included in an anti-fraud mechanism? The video case project is two double-spaced pages in length and is written individually.

Process. Before writing a video case project, a complete understanding of the video content is needed. In the reflection section, students need to briefly address the criminal's biography, past fraud crimes and the fraud cases solved by the FBI. In the analysis section, the writing should be aiming at how business fraud can be avoided. Students are encouraged to provide their solutions based on their working experiences.

Rationale. The intention of this assignment is to raise students' awareness of fraudulent approaches in the business world. This assignment is designed to determine if students can use accounting concepts as precautions against business fraudulence.

He (the professor) probably wanted to see some personal thoughts. Something regarding accounting, especially how we can avoid or inspect financial fraud. He hoped we could have our own opinions.

(Jim, personal interview, translated)

Table 28

Summary & Reflection

	Video Case Summary	Topic Summary
Description	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summary & reflection 2. Analysis of business problems 3. 2 pages 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Topic definition 2. Summary & examples 3. Conclusion/ reflection 4. 1 page
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Video viewing 2. Brief description 3. Options & solutions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of Power Point presentations, book chapters & notes 2. Brief topic explanation 3. Delivery of main points
Rationale	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raising awareness 2. Practical application 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Synthesis of sources 2. Study guide
Linguistic Function	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. English – completion 2. Chinese – outline & verification 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. English – completion
Difficulty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audio inputs 2. Vocabulary 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Summary format
Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repetition 2. Revision 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-class preparation 2. Review of Power Point presentations

Linguistic function. This assignment is completed in English. The outline is drafted in Chinese because it is the students' first language and can be helpful to integrate information. It is also a tool to look up proper words.

Difficulty. The audio content can be challenging to comprehend. There is specialized language usage and also potentially difficult vocabulary in the video. What this assignment requires from students is not only professional background knowledge, but also their experiences in multimodal learning. If students have limited experiences in multimodal learning, they may find this assignment challenging. Full comprehension of the video is critical to being able to complete this project.

There were parts that I really could not understand. I had to keep guessing and guessing because I was not sure if those parts consisted of main points.

(Jim, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. Video content can be understood eventually with repetitive listening sessions. A series of editing drafts can be helpful for the end product. Also, students may consider taking their finished assignment to the Writing Center to receive suggestions regarding their writing.

Topic Summary

Description. There are various topics included in this type of assignment, mainly regarding Management Information System (MIS). It is a summary of textbook chapters, topics presented by students and discussions led by the professor in class. The topics may cover, for example, security regarding an organization's computing defenses and cloud computing as remote services in the Information Technology (IT) space. The length of a summary is one single-spaced page long with three to four paragraphs, but the format is not specified. The first paragraph covers the definition of the topic. The second paragraph summarizes students' presentations with examples. The third or fourth paragraphs include a conclusion. The conclusion should include a brief reflection.

Process. To generate an overview of the topic, students need to review their classmate's PowerPoint presentation, a textbook chapter and their notes taken during the class discussion. The format of a summary can be done with bullet points or in paragraphs. Students may briefly describe the topic and then present the focal points they grasped from the presentation.

I think a summary should consist of paragraphs. I usually just wrote three to four paragraphs within an A4 size sheet of paper. At the beginning, I summarized the topic and thought about what this group included in their presentation. I ended the summary with a conclusion.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. The design of this assignment is for students to synthesize textbook chapters, presentations and discussions into a piece of coherent summary. Students are expected to learn to organize and select from abundant information. The summaries are used as the students' study guide for their exams.

Linguistic function. Since each topic summary only contains three to four paragraphs, English is used to draft and complete this assignment. Chinese is used to look for words or synonyms when students run short on vocabulary.

Difficulty. Finding the right summary format can be challenging for novice writers, especially when there is no explicit instruction from the professor and there are different versions (bullet points and paragraphs) used by fellow students.

At the beginning, I did not know the required format. The professor did not mention it in a clear way so I was not sure what a summary should look like.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. Reading textbook chapters ahead of the presentations can provide clarification and strengthen students' understandings of selected topics. Repeatedly reviewing the PowerPoint slides can refresh the main points mentioned during presentations.

Textual & Visual

In the textual and visual category (See Table 29), the role of visuals is more emphasized than other assignments in previous categories. Visual aids provide assistance in comprehension. For example, students may use tables or pictures to show abstract information directly. Formulas and calculations are used to obtain numerical results.

Table 29

Textual & Visual

	Power Point Project	Problem Exercise Set
Description	1. Textual & visual information 2. Professional language 3. Succinct wording	1. Business situation 2. Statistical tools & analytical result 3. Description of calculation, procedure & numerical result 4. Textual & visual components
Process	1. Group discussion 2. Paper-based & online research 3. Bullet point & visuals	1. Video reviews 2. Calculation process 3. Textual & visual presentation of results 4. Business decision
Rationale	1. Professional presentation 2. Preparation procedure 3. Verbal communication skills 4. Student-centered	1. Computer-assisted analytical tools 2. Practical application
Linguistic Function	1. English – completion & draft 2. Proofreading	1. English – completion 2. Chinese – verification
Difficulty	1. Group coordination	1. Language usage in questions 2. Visual symbols
Strategy	1. Clear subject & research 2. Precise & simplified wording	1. Group discussion

PowerPoint Project

Description. Within a PowerPoint project, there are textual and non-textual components. Textual information can include titles/subtitles, quotes, clarifications, descriptions, examples and notes. Non-textual information includes varied colors, pictures, tables, charts, figures and numbers. The purpose of mixing textual and non-textual information is to draw audience's attention and report the analysis or results. Some slides can be heavily concentrated on non-textual information, while others can be more text driven.

Putting so many tables and pictures was to make the PowerPoint very colorful. The reason was because this (PowerPoint project) was expected to be presented. We hoped

what people saw was something worth seeing so they would conscientiously look at the content we created.

(Ben , personal interview, translated)

The language used in a PowerPoint project is distinct from other business assignments.

Sentences are written in the business fashion. Findings should be composed in a simple but clear way for the audience to see.

This writing fashion was business style and was meant to be presented to others. So the writing was very succinct and simple. The way we used words was different from how we used in other assignments.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

I wanted the audience to understand. When you present, you should know what you are talking about. But the audience needs to understand the PowerPoint slides. They need to understand what the presenter is doing.

(Cindy, personal interview, translated)

Process. At the initial stage of creating a PowerPoint project, students meet as a group to agree on a specific direction, establish a potential project scheme, clarify questions, distribute individual workload, and to conduct research. It is necessary to conduct paper-based or online research to find out relevant information for the project.

We looked for some technology news and some reports on marketing surveys. For example, their fixed price is the same as Apple, and what does the market perceive of it? What do the consumers think? And what kinds of commercial proposals are they doing? These were the things we looked at.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

The PowerPoint slides are written with bullet points with visual components to attract audience. The sentences written are concise and usually are combined with visual content. Non-textual information can weigh heavily in a PowerPoint project.

People catch pictures with their eyes, so we wanted to put more pictures and tables to present our arguments. On page seven, there was a title called Segment Recommendations. Even though there were only text on that page, we used an arrow to show that this was our perspectives.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

The professor expected the content to be rich with visual elements. I had to incorporate something special so when people see them, they may find it interesting.
(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. PowerPoint projects are used as a tool for students to report their analysis in an academic professional setting. In the process of creating a PowerPoint project, students learn to refine their skills of organizing information, extracting important points and demonstrating findings in a condensed structure. It is also an opportunity for students to practice their verbal communication skills. The class is more student-centered because students are in charge of knowledge building that occurs as opposed to lectures mainly from a professor.

Linguistic function. English is the language used to complete this project. During the drafting process, English is used in order to accelerate the process without consuming time with translating back and forth. Each member of the group is responsible for different tasks. The responsibility of proofreading falls on the one person in the group who is most competent in English.

Difficulty. Since PowerPoint projects can be designed heavily based on visual information, the written language used on each slide is more succinct than with other assignments. The challenge of completing this project can be during the collaboration process where it requires stages of tedious decision making, direction adjusting, information analyzing and text/non-text editing. Students' experiences with verbal interactions and collaboration may influence how they interact with their fellow classmates.

The more time-consuming part was the first discussion. At that time, each of us had a different product to discuss its issues and problems. So we spent a lot of time initially and decided to work on a Surface product. After we decided on using Surface, we spent a lot of time on making sure the problems we wanted to focus on.
(Ben, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. In order to complete a PowerPoint project, there are two potential strategies. First, the subject matter has to be clear. Thorough research and analysis are needed. Second, the sentences have to be simplified and precise. Too much textual information on the PowerPoint slides may distract the audience's attention.

Be clear when pointing out a problem. Do a thorough analysis and give recommendations based on the analysis. Our strategic approach was pretty obvious.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

It is like how we were taught in Taiwan. We were taught that the content on each PowerPoint page should not exceed 8 lines. Or you should only put main points.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

Problem Exercise Set

Description. A problem exercise set is designed for students to solve mathematical problems. This exercise starts with a business scenario. Students are expected to run the given data through specific statistical tools (computer-assisted techniques) to generate analytical results. During the calculation process, the scenario may be situated as: how to reach the maximum benefit through stages of production process? How to finish the final product after the division of labor and time in each department? What are the quantities of employees and time needed in order to manufacture a product? The exercise ends with a description of the calculating procedure and an explanation of the numerical result. This assignment includes both textual and visual components.

Process. There are a series of video links listed in the syllabus where students are expected to review and familiarize themselves with the calculating formulas. Students are supposed to identify the variables within the situated scenarios, locate the proper computer-assisted formula, arrange the formula setting, present results in tables, provide their interpretations and then explain the outcome with a business decision.

We had to retrieve data from the I drive online and then run the data. And then, we had to arrange the software setting and make tables and charts. We had to follow each step in the professor's video, not a step fewer or we could make a mistake.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

We had to set a type for my company and the professor asked us to list a timeline. We could, during different timelines, modify our investment. So we could do some analysis to see why the increase of certain things led to a decreased profit in another department in our company.

(Mike, personal interview, translated)

Rationale. This assignment is used to familiarize students with the computer-assisted analytical tools to see how organizations make decisions. It also allows students to determine and identify how managerial policies are made based on specific situations via quantitative models.

Linguistic function. The first section of this assignment consists of visual literacy. The second section requires students to explain the numerical information and interpret the outcomes. When composing the second section, students may consult a dictionary to find proper words that can precisely express their thoughts and explanations.

I would see if I could think of an alternative word in English. I may just skip it or try to avoid using that word. If I really could not think of any other words, then I would look it up in a dictionary.

(Mike, personal interview, translated)

While the calculation process is important, the quality of this assignment is not solely judged by numerical results. English grammar can be one of the grading criteria.

This professor paid attention to grammar. I remember there was one time, my answers were all correct. I just used an extra 'which' in my description part, and the professor put an X on it. He still gave me 100, but he probably thought the way I wrote was weird? That was a grammatical mistake.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

He was not picky with homework, but he emphasized correct grammar on tests. Maybe tests were more formal? If I use correct answers for my homework, he probably just thinks, 'okay you understand this thing'.

(Mike, personal interview, translated)

Difficulty. The ability to comprehend both textual and visual information is important to locate questions and variables embedded in the business situations. It can be challenging for international students to fully understand the questions due to the language usage, question formation, technical terms and visual symbols.

There were questions that I had trouble understanding. The questions were actually pretty clear about what they were asking, but they were not written in my first language. So when we read it, we may not be able to catch their points or grasp the main points.

(Mike, personal interview, translated)

I did not know any of these symbols because I had never learned it before so I pretty much had to learn from the start.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

Strategy. In the MBA programs, students are equipped with different levels of language ability and background knowledge. Discussing with peers can be helpful in order to clarify the uncertainty or misunderstandings.

I questioned myself if my thoughts were on the right direction because sometimes the assignments consisted of scenarios different from the content learned in class. So I asked my classmates for clarification.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

Business Literacy Practices from the Professors' perspectives

Besides students' MBA literacy experiences, the nature of business literacy derived from professors' teaching experiences are also included. Their rationale behind assigning a variety of reading and written tasks is incorporated with their evaluation standard. Under the measurement of professors' evaluation standard, students' success and struggles during their literacy process are disclosed. Recommendations are also given to help improve students' literacy skills.

Reading Practices

The major reading assignments are textbooks and articles (See Table 30). Textbooks are mostly on the theoretical side, while articles bring in realistic situations and practical applications

that students need to understand to better prepare themselves for the future job market.

Textbooks provide students with fundamental knowledge about particular subjects. As opposed to solely theory-based content, some books may include examples of business cases. The chosen articles are commonly retrieved from business-related news, textbook chapters, academic journals, magazines and so forth. The content of articles may include current business situations, case studies, research articles or news reports. Assigning various readings is meant to construct students' business knowledge. The ultimate goal is for students to be able to practically apply their knowledge to analyze situations and solve problems that happen in real world settings.

Table 30

Reading Practices

	Book	Article
Content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Theory-oriented 2. Case samples 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business situations 2. Case studies 3. Research articles 4. Commentary
Description	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fundamental sources of theoretical & conceptual info 2. Professional & practical development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current business research gap 2. Realistic perspectives & examples 3. Practical application 4. Domestic & international business situations

Books

Textbooks are commonly used in classroom as the fundamental source to solve statistical problems, analyze business situations or develop innovative plans. Textbook content contains theoretical and conceptual information. Real world examples or created scenarios may be integrated to explain principles and definitions. On the one hand, intellectual growth can be further developed through textbook chapters which are usually assigned as take-home assignments.

To give them something in writing which basically repeats what I am saying in the classroom, but also may give them a little bit deeper insights to what we discuss in the classroom.

(Gwen, personal interview)

So they can understand the material. Because Finance is quantitative, and for them to understand it, they really have to read it and also make notes on the margin to understand what the text and the authors are trying to say.

(Joe, personal interview)

On the other hand, professional development and practical skills are advanced through collaborative learning where group discussions and projects are commonly incorporated. Therefore, the nature of textbooks is for students to construct sufficient knowledge of each subject that is relevant in the business world.

The students have to know the theory. They have to know what everybody else in the world knows about Information System and quantitative method, but they have to be able to apply.

(Jimusa, personal interview)

Articles

Other than theory-based materials, articles are also frequently used as a supplement to demonstrate how practical applications and techniques can be utilized in academic research studies and the current business environment. In addition, with the current business situations and research gaps that exist, students can demonstrate how theories can be applied to analyze and interpret different cases and research themes as well as to create strategic approaches in both conventional and creative ways to solve business problems.

The rationale of using articles in class can be evaluated from four perspectives, but they are all interconnected. First, articles published in journals, newsletters or magazines tend to be more up to date when compared with textbooks. They keep students sharp at the local (western) and international business situations. Articles also demonstrate the current trends in research.

Because computer technology, of course, moves very fast, it is a very dynamic field. So I am constantly looking for new news items for articles. Anything I can find that is very current that managers have to deal with right now. And I bring that into the classroom so that my students are more current than their textbooks.

(Gwen, personal interview)

The purpose of reading the articles is to get information about recent research as well as application in the area.

(KK15701, personal interview)

Second, business articles give students a more realistic perspective on what circumstances can create business crises, how decisions and strategies are chosen based on certain conditions, where business problems are occurring and the people who are responsible for business successes and failures. Basically, students can use articles as examples that come directly from the real world.

The purpose of reading case studies is to analyze the content of the article and to see if there is any managerial methodology that comes out of it or if there is an approach to costing products or an approach to budgeting that we might not have covered in class.

(Jezza, personal interview)

Third, articles not only bring real world situations to the classroom setting, but also recreate scenarios for application. In this way, theoretical concepts and principles can be used to evaluate business situations and find suitable solutions to certain problems. Also, these realistic examples demonstrate how business industries deal with struggles, while the students are given the opportunities to analyze the situations and develop new plans.

Fourth, whether the business events discussed in articles are situated in local (western) or international markets, learning is not limited to outdated or fictional scenarios in textbooks. How business is conducted in industrial/departmental organizations or countries may reveal the similarities and differences in business customs. It also shows how these customs can influence the successes, failures and compromises when different cultures meet.

Reading case studies is to give them so many different kinds of situations of real business in the real world. And also, for different perspectives from different countries. So they

will have so many different kind of idea of the business cases. So therefore they will be ready to the real world. Hopefully.

(Tim, personal interview)

In this day, it's more easy because we have a global market place. So when we talk about marketing campaigns of Apple, or marketing campaigns of Coca-Cola, uhm, everybody from you know Beijing to Bangkok to Dubois they understand those campaigns. They are universal products. But if you mention about something about old American products and the campaigns, they may not understand that that well. They may not understand some of the cultural dimensions which are underneath the marketing part in some of these.

(KK15701, personal interview)

Pedagogical Rationale

The reading materials used in the MBA programs are designed to develop students' theoretical foundation in business and guide them to sharpen their verbal and written communication skills (See Table 31). The reading practices are not limited to the completion of academic work only. Instead, students are expected to learn and evolve their knowledge from the reading process so as to connect theory to application.

Table 31

Pedagogical Rationale

	Measuring Standards	Levels of Completion
Description	1. Same standards to all MBA students	1. Reading completion 2. Internalization
	2. Reading & presentation	3. Practical application

Measuring Standards

While some readings contain theoretical and technical terms that can be acquired through memorization, some may require students to obtain the professional language usage through practices and experiences. Given the linguistic examinations as the basic measurement for enrollment, the prospective MBA students are supposed to be equipped with sufficient linguistic skills to cope with literacy practices assigned in their programs. All students, coming from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the United States are expected to perform the same amount of

work and be evaluated using the same standards. Also, the literacy trainings are considered as preparation for the future job market. As opposed to making mistakes in presenting assigned readings in the academic setting, students are expected to accurately and professionally report their findings in the workplace environment in the future. Therefore, the expectations and evaluation standards apply to all MBA students, and Taiwanese students are no exceptions.

I do not hold them to any different standard than I do any other students. So I assume that if they are here, they have passed the required test thing to make sure that they understand English. And I just expect the same out of my students.
(Gwen, personal interview)

Well I don't make any distinctions between Taiwanese students or any other students... Namely all students' expectations are the same.
(KK15701, personal interview)

My expectation to Taiwanese students is the same as any other students, not to discriminate another kid really or what their racial background is.
(Jezza, personal interview)

Levels of Completion

The assigned readings come from a variety of sources. Reading approaches may differ based on the materials. The completion of each reading assignment is required to be able to complete written projects or participate in class discussions. However, there are different levels of completion. First, finishing assigned readings is a students' basic responsibility and also the first step to achieve academic fulfillment. A syllabus includes the expected reading load to be completed each week. Students are expected to understand and connect the content through their readings.

When they read a textbook chapter, they should know the material, the definitions, the concepts, the applications and the analysis. When they read the articles, they should understand the main KEY points in the article.
(KK15701, personal interview)

Second, internalization is the next step to strengthen the ideas and concepts embedded in reading materials. The process of reading and analyzing may go back and forth so as to discover

unfamiliar notions or come up with their own interpretations. Group discussions may stimulate deeper and broader insights regarding the selected topics or issues, while students can always return to their readings to reinforce what they have discussed in class or search for additional explanations.

Third, practical application demonstrates the connection between theory and reality. This process trains students to find the proper facts and data to verify and support their ideas. The analysis and interpretation should always be made based on evidence, either from students' working experiences, theories covered in class or additional research findings.

I am very open because their interpretations may be different than mine, as long as they can back it up. And they have a good scientific proof or method behind their process and it is logical, then I'm happy.

(Jimusa, personal interview)

Academic Performance

Reading materials are used to develop students' intellectual growth and also develop other skills. Since the evaluation standards apply to local and international students, they are expected to do the same amount of work. Students' language ability can influence how they understand textual content. Their reading performance can also be influenced by their educational and professional backgrounds. During the process of completing tasks, their strengths and weaknesses can be observed by professors (See Table 32). These observations can be both general and specific.

Table 32
Academic Performance

	Success	Struggle
General (international)	1. No difference in grades 2. Hard working	1. Language ability 2. Grammar, vocabulary
Specific (Taiwanese)	1. Intellectual & linguistic assets	1. Communication skills 2. Language ability

Success

To be fair during the evaluation process and results, the standard applies to all students without exceptions, regardless of students' nationalities, ethnicities, cultures or spoken languages. While some professors share more general comments about international students' academic performance, some are able to distinguish Taiwanese MBA students from others. In general, the positive academic performance may result from international students' conscientious attitude toward their goals, including receiving a MBA degree and finding employment in the business industry.

I have not seen any difference in grades for any of my international students... I don't see a difference because of the lack of understanding. I see a difference because of the lack of work.

(Gwen, personal interview)

To be more specific, Taiwanese MBA students are able to apply their intellectual or linguistic assets in order to complete assigned tasks. For example, as they are coming from a country where English is spoken as a second language, students may face linguistic challenges in the academic setting in the United States. However, these challenges can be overcome through their literacy and verbal practices.

When I compared the grades, I wouldn't see that there would be a peer-wise comparison difference, significant difference between the Taiwanese or anyone else... They are not at the disadvantage and in fact, I would say they tend to do better. They are more dedicated.

(Jimusa, personal interview)

They are ready for that. Of course, they talk in Chinese English. But everybody accepts that right now... Everybody has their own way to speak English. It is the same English. So you cannot say that this is the perfect English that you have to follow. Everybody has their own dialect, their home expressions to speak in English. They are good.

(Jim, personal interview)

Struggle

In general, language ability can influence international students' participation in class and in their literacy performance. Other than applying grammatical rules to construct proper sentences, vocabulary is the basic element used to create meanings. A sufficiency of daily and professional vocabulary helps students function in the social and academic environments. The culture embedded in the academic setting is another complexity that international students come across. Coming from another educational environment, students may not recognize proper academic conduct in the United States.

The only time that they don't do well is when they copy off each other. So when they do that, they get zero. And when they do copy off each other, it's very easy to tell coz the whole paragraph is the same as one of their friends.

(Jezza, personal interview)

The challenges Taiwanese MBA students may encounter are divided into two categories, which are communication skills and linguistic ability. The categories are connected to the students' familiarity with the language so as to be able to produce meaningful output.

Communication skills. Discussions and presentations are common activities that require the students' full participation to integrate ideas from diverse perspectives. Students can agree or contradict with each other's opinions as long as they can support their claims with facts. Students' own experiences, their research projects and assigned reading materials are used to promote discussions. This verbal performance is conducted in English, which may be challenging for second language speakers. Even though students' first languages may come in handy when receiving clarification from textual materials or their learning community, English is the main language when class and group discussions occur.

I understand that they might not be able to express themselves as well either in class or on paper...I can understand that they might be a little frightened to ask a question.

(Jezza, personal interview)

As for Taiwanese students, in order to be able to function in the academic setting they need to develop both academic and professional languages. Students may also struggle when trying to adapt to the student-centered class environment as they are not accustomed to the language usage and class interactions. Thoughts may not be precisely expressed in a second language since students have to locate the proper vocabulary and sentence structures. It takes time to organize abstract thoughts in a second language. In particular, their English speaking classmates are accustomed to this educational environment and have an advantage over their experience with their verbal communication skills. This may intimidate students from actively participating or cause delays in responding to professors or classmates while in class.

I can tell you that many of the Taiwanese students are not very easily...I would say open to bring it up questions and discussions in class.

(KK15701, personal interview)

Taiwanese students...don't speak English very well. Not because they don't know English, just because it is a different way to pronounce, a different way to express your ideas in English...they are not very good at raising questions to their professor.

(Tim, personal interview)

Linguistic ability. Another challenge Taiwanese students come across is decoding test questions. Questions included on a test may derive from textual materials used in class or a professor's designed scenarios. In order to understand the test content, sufficient vocabulary and the ability to construct meanings are necessary. However, Taiwanese students may experience additional processing in which they have to reconstruct meanings in their first languages after reading through each word. Words may be rearranged to assist comprehension.

They take more time to read and understand multiple choice questions which might be more natural for the local students. It is the matter of comprehension...I would say that there are differences by which it is just my intuitive guess that there is translation going on back and forth... Taiwanese students would do okay on multiple choice questions, but struggle on time because they get confused if you give them a long question. They have to read it slowly and retention becomes abstraction.

(KK15701, personal interview)

Recommendation

Students coming from different communities that share similar languages may stick together in order to create a comfort zone for learning since using a second language in front of their peers can be a daunting experience. Communicating in similar languages makes it easier for students to understand theoretical concepts and questions asked in class. It is also easier to acquire clarification on the agenda and accelerate the discussion process. Students may feel more confident and express themselves more clearly with their first languages. However, learning with classmates outside of their comfort zone may stimulate more intellectual growth through understanding different perspectives.

Don't stay with their own. It is good to find somebody from other groups, not only in their own groups. It is good but I don't know. That is my idea. You should go and talk to somebody else.

(Tim, personal interview)

International students tend to bunch together and they would speak in their native tongues because they are more used to it but it is understandable. But if they can get out, maybe speak with other folks, then that would be useful.

(Joe, personal interview)

Materials containing professional language and technical terms are more challenging to comprehend if students are not familiar with the subject or language. Since the same evaluation standards apply to all students, they are expected to be ready for any verbal or written activities based on assigned reading materials. Time arrangement and numerous practices help students adapt to business language and theoretical concepts. Strategies can be developed accordingly if the weaknesses can be recognized.

If you are a slower reader, or whatever, I would start a little bit earlier and make sure you put aside some quiet time so that you can concentrate on it. You are not trying to multitask on something else.

(Jimusa, personal interview)

Probably the best way they can help themselves is to read as much as they possibly can, not necessarily the text itself in the class but anything. Just read read read. Just read a lot. Just anything.

(Joe, personal interview)

Written Practices

The written assignments can be designed based on both theoretical and practical aspects (See Table 33). Research papers, article critiques, short analysis or conclusions, Q&A's, case study analyses, PowerPoint projects, video reviews and so forth are included as the written assignments. The research-based assignments not only emphasize the materials covered in class, but they also promote autonomous learning which requires that students locate and synthesize needed information. The application-based assignments stimulate students' problem-solving skills. As a matter of fact, evidence and facts are critical to persuade others in the workplace environment. Most written assignments are inseparable from synthesizing readings or developing communication skills for presentations and discussions. Those written assignments also train students to pay attention to how they should present their written work in terms of content and writing skills. While the content is created through deliberation and thorough understandings of the materials, the writing has to meet the basic standard listed by professors.

Table 33

Written Practices

	Research Paper	Case Analysis	Article Critique	PPT Presentation
Content	1. Business-related materials (multiple genres)	1. Business situations	1. Magazine articles	1. Findings & synthesis
Description	1. Reinforce lectures & autonomous learning 2. Deeper insights & research skills	1. Theoretical & practical 2. Problem-solving skills	1. Q & A 2. Analysis & interpretation	1. Verbal, textual & visual elements 2. Communication skill

Research Paper

The completion of a research paper involves reading numerous materials from business-related sources. There is no limitation to specific genres which may include journal articles, textbooks, books, news, magazines and so forth. Even though this assignment only focuses on one specific topic or idea, in-depth research is necessary. This type of assignment reinforces the concepts covered in class and stimulates autonomous learning outside of class. All information collected is expected to be synthesized into a research paper format, but with elaborated analysis and interpretation of the chosen topic. Developing deeper insights and the ability to investigate the subject matter are the objectives of this research paper assignment.

...teaching them how to research about a new technology and to become informed about that technology... They need to be able to get a definition, they need to be able to list pros and cons, benefits, causes, trend patterns and so forth.

(Gwen, personal interview)

I always give them a final paper that integrates one of the subjects that we've covered in the course and they have to do their investigation on it.

(Jimusa, personal interview)

This type of assignment can be completed as an individual or collaborative project. Group projects, either written or verbal, are commonly seen in the MBA programs. Students are trained to develop their communication and presentation skills which are significant skills for the workplace. Through group projects, students are expected to work with their teams, which consist of members from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Case Analysis

Case analysis is a common assignment given in the MBA courses. The purpose of analyzing cases is for students to be closer to real world situations, rather than fictitious scenarios. When analyzing a case, whether it is about decision making, business situations or marketing strategies, it is necessary to read thoroughly in order to discover noticeable and hidden problems.

Case analysis connects theoretical and practical aspects of business. Students are expected to develop their problem-solving skills in order to utilize specific theories and principles as evidence to support their analysis and solutions. Reasoning with facts leads to stronger content.

The cases are to bring home what the theory is - what the truth is. I can tell them theory from now till the cows come home, but if I can't give them a good example and show them in my experiences where I've actually done that and used these tools to solve that problem, then it doesn't mean anything to them.

(Jimusa, personal interview)

I require them to read carefully and then do the analysis... So the purposes for them to actually apply those concepts to the particular case and answer questions.

(Joe, personal interview)

Article Critique

This assignment also connects the reading materials from business magazines with writing. From the surface level, article critiques may be simply regarded as a question-and-answer assignment and additional research on selected topic is not required. However, individual analysis and interpretation on the article are necessary to complete this assignment. It requires students to elaborate on their statements based on existing materials. By using accessible evidence to support individual thoughts, students can develop and demonstrate their ability to create meaningful content. Also, it strengthens students' ability to accurately distinguish needed information from other irrelevant texts.

So in other words, they read the articles usually from business magazines. And they answer questions that we ask related to the articles. It is mainly to get them to write down their answers. We don't test so much for understanding. We just test them for the fluency in explaining the answers.

(Jezza, personal interview)

PowerPoint Presentation

PowerPoint is used as a presentation device in order to deliver and synthesize ideas in the educational setting as well as in the workplace environment. Presentation skills can be

accumulated through both individual and group projects. Verbal performance, as well as textual and visual literacy, are the key elements to produce proper presentations. In the academic setting, students are expected to develop communication skills to work as a group and report the findings professionally. The quality of the PowerPoint slides can be enhanced after trials, comments and through peer feedback. The presentations are, indeed, necessary training and practice before students step into the real business world.

I do urge them if this is for educational purposes that you keep the PowerPoints simple and keep the background simple, don't use a lot of transitions, graphic... becomes an distraction and people stop paying attention to what you are really trying to say in your message.

(Gwen, personal interview)

Pedagogical Rationale

The written assignments (See Table 34) are designed to provide students with a variety of genres. So they can perform literacy practice in academic and professional ways. Since the written assignments are not solely devoted to reporting results, students are expected to develop multiple skills during the process of completing tasks.

Table 34

Pedagogical Rationale

	Measuring Standards	Levels of Completion
Description	1. Same standards to all MBA students 2. Professional business aspect 3. Academic business aspect	1. Reading evaluation 2. Communication skills training 3. Promoting discussion

Measuring Standard

Same as the measuring standard for reading assignments, professors' expectations and evaluation standards apply to all MBA students. Written assignments come in different genres, lengths and formats, but the ultimate goal is for students to express their thoughts in a proper

written form. In this way, students are prepared to gain more experience with writing, whether they take on jobs in academic or business settings. The professional performance can influence an individual's credibility when handling projects. The accuracy in writing is an issue that has to be taken care of before stepping out into the workplace environment. However, there can be a conflict between content and grammar when it comes to evaluating written work. From the professional business aspect, the written work can be reviewed by people from differing employment positions. The clarity and precision of content and grammar are viewed as equally important. Any mistakes made in writing can potentially create confusion or cause problems or failures.

I do grade them on grammar, on spelling. That type of grammatical errors are not acceptable. Their assignments are graded not just on content, but it is the entire assignment because when they get out in the real world...anyone they come across is not going to look at a report or a resume or anything that they give them in writing and just look for content.

(Gwen, personal interview)

Grades are mostly determined by how well you have analyzed and got the content through. But I do want them not to do that kind of stuff because in the world of business, you can't write emails or things with bad grammar because it creates very bad impression.

(KK15701, personal interview)

I expect them to write well, grammatically. There shouldn't be spelling errors. I asked them to give a type-written on a computer and they can do spell checks and things of that nature.

(Joe, personal interview)

From the academic business aspect, the evaluation may focus more on what meanings are constructed and how materials are analyzed in writing. Written assignments can be used to determine how students understand the chosen materials and if they can creatively apply materials covered in class to other subject matter.

They (grammatical mistakes) shouldn't be forgiven, probably because you can run it through spell check. I realize if you are not native speaker, perhaps your grammar may not be as good. So I am pretty forgiving on that because I wanna know the content more

than I wanna know the format. I wanna know what they know, their content.
(Jimusa, personal interview)

It is not an English class. This is business class. And business you are going to meet with so many different kind of people. So grammatical mistakes, as long as it is not changing the meaning of the sentence, it is fine...For me, content is more important. And grammatical problem is important but not as important as the first one.
(Tim, personal interview)

However, it does not indicate that writing mistakes are completely forgiven in the academic setting. The quality of students' written work can be influenced by how they can present their thoughts concretely. Both of the professional and academic settings require writers to follow the western linguistic standard. After all, the quality of written performance depends on what thoughts are included and how they are presented.

I read them carefully, every word. I do correct them for grammar, spelling, typos and so forth. I show them the mistakes that they make. Sentence structure can be quite a challenge...But I also go back through a second time and look more closely at content...These are the standards I hold for all of my students.
(Gwen, personal interview)

...basically to get them used to American business expressions, colloquialism. You would be surprised how different they are. American style of business writing is more to the point... to write things in the way that are clear, short, precise and simple, clarity.
(KK15701, personal interview)

Of course, there is a basic grammatical rule you have to follow. Business is not English literature. If this is English literature, you have to be perfect but it is business. But you need to follow the basic.
(Tim, personal interview)

They (grammatical mistakes) would be corrected but that wouldn't affect their grade. For example, if they got their tenses confused, I would correct it on the paper. But I wouldn't reduce their score if they answer the question correctly.
(Jezza, personal interview)

Levels of Completion

Oral presentation as an individual or group project is commonly assigned in the MBA courses. Students are expected to present their written work, such as research findings and analysis. They may also be expected to present their synthesis from reading materials. An oral

presentation can be used as a tool for reading evaluation. Some classes are designed as student-centered environments where individuals or groups are responsible for teaching the class with a chosen book chapter, article or other written materials. This way, professors are able to determine if students complete their work or to what extent do the students understand their materials. It can also be used to train communication skills. Also, working with a team is expected. Students not only need to demonstrate their ability to report their deliberation on certain topic, but also learn to work with others to fulfill their academic responsibilities. In addition, it promotes class discussion as to whether students agree or disagree with one another regarding the topic. Students who deliver the presentation may be measured based on how they can defend their statements with evidence.

They are in charge to teach their classmates what they need to know about that topic...And they should have PowerPoint slides or some kind of visual aids, but they have to determine what do their classmates need to know about that particular topic.

(Gwen, personal interview)

After they study, they present it to other students. And usually I will assign, for example, if there are three presenters, I will assign three students to ask questions from different groups. So they will really study their term papers and understand what they are talking about.

(Tim, personal interview)

Academic Performance

Students' written practices can be influenced by how well they understand the subject matter, their language skills and so forth (See table 35). Some may be good at giving original ideas, while some may struggle to express abstract thoughts and produce written work in a second language.

Success

All students' written assignments are evaluated based on the same criteria. In general, international students are able to accomplish professors' expectations. Writing assignments in a second language can be considered a challenge when the quality of students' written work is

Table 35

Academic performance

	Success	Struggle
General (international)	1. Achieving expectations 2. Competitive written performance	1. Vocabulary
Specific (Taiwanese)	1. Personal goals & language ability 2. Content	1. Vocabulary/ comprehension 2. Language switching 3. Assignment requirements

influenced by their familiarity with the language, background knowledge, comprehension of the subject and the ability to put their thoughts into words. Most international students' written performance is competitive with their American classmates at the MBA level.

Like I said, I have not seen any differences in my international students versus American students, regardless of nationality. The majority of my class would be international. So I haven't seen a problem with that.

(Gwen, personal interview)

Because they are graduate students, and tend to be more mature. They know they have to do what is on the syllabus and what I expect from them.

(Jimusa, personal interview)

Everyone who has English as a second language struggles... But, usually it is pretty good at the MBA level.

(Jezza, personal interview)

A variety of written work, including papers, projects, presentations and tests are given in different courses, so students are able to experience and understand how each piece of writing should be approached. As for Taiwanese students, their positive performance on literacy practices may be the result of their own personal goals or language ability.

The Taiwanese students are exceptional because they seem to have a higher degree of commitment and they are more traditional and they do what they are told. I don't think their grammar or their English or whatever...they tend to just do as well on the test and do just as well on their research if not better.

(Jimusa, personal interview)

They write very good...So I don't think they have problem in their writing. So they have very good preparation for that. All of them pass the TOEFL meaning that they have the standard English to be able to study here.

(Tim, personal interview)

Even though their thoughts may not be articulated precisely in a second language, their ability to bring original ideas into their written work should not be overlooked.

Most of them do because they are pretty good on the content side... when it comes down to technical aspects, the Taiwanese students are as good as anybody else.

(KK15701, personal interview)

Struggle

Vocabulary is the main challenge for international students when it comes to literacy practices. The content of their written assignments may suffer due to their word selection and translation. They may choose simple words and grammar to avoid mistakes, while some may use more difficult ones. However, succinct and straightforward vocabulary is preferred in business writing. Word selection can be a tricky process if students look words up through translation. Meanings may be altered or misleading during the translation process.

You have a writing in a second language, thinking in a first language. I think this causes the trouble. The struggle is translation and that is full of danger because translation can only mislead you. You write strange words which is okay in a dictionary translation, but it is not okay in papers...We use expressions which are strange. If you translate it, it's even more stranger. And that happens. That does happen in writing.

(KK15701, personal interview)

Vocabulary is the required component to complete reading and written tasks. Taiwanese MBA students may also run into this challenge, depending on how experienced these students are with English reading and writing. For example, when taking an examination, students need to

understand what tasks are assigned in each section. They then need to figure out how they can approach the tasks. In addition, they may also go through the language switching process during each step. Language switching can be viewed as the students' tactical approach to solve problems, instead of their deficiency in using English.

Taiwanese do have difficulty in taking more time...Some of them take some essay tests in class, or assignments, they'd be the last ones to finish. I don't blame them because in their mind, they are translating and writing. Their writing also much more deliberately.
(KK15701, personal interview)

Other than the challenges in literacy practices, they should be aware of the assignment requirements. A MBA program is like a miniature version of the real business world. Assignment requirements are a reflection of what is expected in the real world workplace environment.

Recommendation

During the writing process, language ability is not the only factor that influences the quality of students' work. How much students comprehend about the selected subject, whether students understand the assignment requirements, and where to look for additional sources may affect their end product. While students may receive strategies mainly focusing on the literacy aspect, whether it is through autonomous efforts or professional writing assistance, some may find the direct channels for clarification.

Autonomous efforts include finding additional sources, whether paper-based or digital. Students may also utilize recommended materials as writing aids, whether it is to find the right format, genre or samples. By using any of the selected writing aids, students may ensure the quality of their written assignments prior to submission or to seeking other help.

I do refer them to the Gregg Reference Manual...it is a style manual but it also tells them a lot of things...It tells you how to write, set up foot notes, references, bibliographies and

a lot of grammatical rules. It tells you how to write a business report.
(Gwen, personal interview)

Abstract thoughts can be organized and expressed through text. In order to take abstract thoughts and put them into a readable state, elements such as content, grammar and spelling are taken into account. The submitted assignments are expected to be evaluated as a whole.

Professional writing assistance such as the Writing Center can provide students with professional comments on their writing. For example, students may run their assignments through spell checkers before submission. However, spell checkers may not detect if students have chosen the proper words to fit into the context of the content.

I ask them to go (to writing center), whether they went or not, that is their business. But most of the time, they come with a good write up. If you need help, you go. But if you don't need any help, you don't have to go. So I suggest in my syllabus that if you need help with writing, you can go to writing center. But it is not a requirement. It is just a suggestion.

(Tim, personal interview)

I don't ask them to go but I do tell them it's available to them...I think, it would help them if they did a draft that they are happy with, and took it to someone like the writing center. And the person just read through and make sure the tenses are correct, that the uhm positives and negatives are correct.

(Jezza, personal interview)

The syllabus is one of the direct sources that may provide students with an immediate explanation on how each written task should be prepared or approached. There can be different levels of details regarding the tasks. Communicating directly to professors is another method that can accelerate the writing process.

The written assignments can be designed in preparation for students to be ready for the job market. Having a certain level of confidence, maturity and familiarity with the second language is required. Other than writing for academic purposes, a variety of written activities may help accelerate students' familiarity with the language.

...you write your diary and share with your friends. And have them help you, get suggestion. Write something that is not like read an article and summarize it. I would simply ask you to express your parts about anything. It's like an open-ended assignment...Write your feelings about it, your ideas about it, but write something that would be interesting to read and give this somebody else. Try to just write with consciousness, not translation. Don't go into the Google translate mode. Don't write and put it in Google translate. It would look as bad as Google.

(KK15701, personal interview)

Again, just continue to write as much as they can. Maybe have some, maybe a colleague review it before they turn it in. But again, write as much as you can, which is good. Just write about anything.

(Joe, personal interview)

Summary

The main focus of this chapter was to describe and investigate the required business literacy practices and how students cope with a variety of genres in three MBA programs in the United States. This chapter started with the description of each programs' linguistic and literacy requirements. The requirements indicated the expected language ability international students should be equipped with. Both types of literacy tasks were included with descriptive analysis. Reading and written assignments were described and categorized in groups. Under each assignment, the rationale, procedure and linguistic involvement were explained with examples. Recommendations were given based on students' struggles.

The literacy practices were designed to encourage students to develop skills to conduct research, practical application and explore a variety of literacy genres. Intellectual growth and professional knowledge were strengthened through individual and collaborative literacy projects. Literacy genres introduced in the MBA programs reflected the practices conducted in the academic and business environment. They may go beyond the students' imaginations, but students were expected to find out genre structures and approaches during the process or by conducting additional research.

English literacy materials introduced in class were commonly used for class projects and discussions. The material content was not limited to strictly the western business environment. In other words, students also encountered textual information relevant to the international business world. Verbal and written performances were conducted in English. However, during the process, the performance was not restricted to a singular language only. Students turned to their first language to accelerate the literacy process. International students may struggle with verbal communication and literacy skills, but they were determined to fulfill their academic requirements.

CHAPTER SEVEN

STUDY-ABROAD STUDENTS' LITERACY HISTORIES IN TAIWAN

Introduction

This chapter aims to understand students' previous literacy experiences and how they are connected to the literacy practices that exist within MBA programs. Students' previous literacy practices are performed based on academic and professional purposes or from personal interests. Their literacy skills are generated through a variety of literacy materials that consist of different genres, writing fashions and word usages. Different textual and visual content requires students to develop their literacy procedures accordingly.

There are two main sections in this chapter. The first section discusses students' literacy experiences prior to their MBA enrollment. It focuses on students' literacy practices completed in their regular lives as well as at the university level. It also includes students' experiences of acquiring literacy skills through both Chinese and English. The second section focuses on students' in-school MBA literacy experiences in the United States. This section elaborates upon the connection that exists between students' previous and MBA literacy practices.

Literacy Experiences Prior to MBA Enrollment

Regular Reading

Students' previous experiences are categorized as regular and university level literacy practices (See Table 36). The activities are not restricted to specific formats, types or genres. Students' reading and writing procedures are influenced by the lessons acquired in school or from their accumulated life experiences. How students' Chinese and English literacy practices influence one another is not always purely positive or negative. Some modifications are expected

to be made. Students also recognize the differences between Chinese and English literacy activities.

Table 36

Regular Literacy Practices

	Regular Reading		Regular Writing	
	Chinese (L1)	English (L2)	Chinese (L1)	(English L2)
Description	1. Relaxing 2. Professional & academic	1. Testing 2. Printed/online materials	1. Academic & professional 2. Personal	1. Academic & leisure 2. Test
Process	1. Specific info 2. Sequential reading	1. Vocabulary building	1. Organized structure 2. Reaching the requirements	1. Structure & word
Pedagogical Process	1. Vague instruction 2. Test driven	1. Test driven 2. Grammatical structures	1. 起承轉合 (chi-cheng-chuan ho) 2. Rhetoric & examples	1. Test driven 2. Specific structures
Process Influence (L1→L2) (L2→ L2)	1. L1 application to L2 2. Differed L1 & L2 methods	1. Smoother process	1. Recognition of differed writing 2. L1 application to L2	1. Grammar & phrases

Chinese Reading

Description. There is a wide range of reading materials. Some of the materials are more relaxed and cover a variety of topics in different forms, including online/printed newspaper, magazines (business weekly), translated comic books, blogs, Internet materials and magazines. Some materials are more professional or academically driven, including textbooks, business books, and books written by economists or marketing professors. Literary readings, including fiction, famous translated novels and Chinese literature are on students' reading lists as well.

Process. How students approach the materials can depend on their priorities, personal reading habits and purposes. Different reading approaches can be affected by material formats

and writing fashions. For example, students may choose to only read specific sections or read the material as a whole to avoid incomprehension. When looking for specific content, the reading procedure is non-linear. This reading procedure requires sufficient background knowledge and a target in mind. When reading as a whole, the procedure is linear and sequential. This reading process ensures the coherence of material content and is beneficial at the fundamental knowledge building stage.

Pedagogical process. Chinese reading pedagogy is not implemented in an explicit progressive manner as compared with English education within school settings. Students are not encouraged to explore different genres or develop individual insights and perspectives.

I do not really remember. Did the Chinese teachers teach these things? I only remember the teacher just kept reading the book in class.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Chinese reading, probably no? It is like when testing English, you are expected to read certain paragraphs or the first sentence. Or you need to look out for disjunctive conjunctions. But I think in Chinese, I was not taught to do so.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Instruction on reading procedures is not recognized as the focus in class. The focus is set for testing purpose. The learning environment is more teacher-centered. Instead of guiding students, explanations are given directly from teachers.

It was some kind of document or ancient poetry that the teachers asked us to memorize after we understood the meanings. And sometimes we were tested on the poetry during midterm or final.

(Mike, personal interview, translated)

Processes influence. When reading materials are in the students' L1, they may follow their habitual reading routines that are accumulated from their educational and personal learning experiences. With the uncertainty of their L2 (English), they can be strongly attached to their L1 reading routines and utilize them as strategies on materials with different linguistic structures.

When reading English, I translated it into Chinese and then tried to understand it. I was not able to directly comprehend in English because it is not my first language. So I think there is some influence.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

English Reading

Description. Other than reading for testing purposes, the English reading material types include news, magazines, online information and articles. The New York Times, Time Magazine, online articles, BBC, CNN and TOEFL readings are the students' preferred sources for reading.

Process. Since English is not the students' first language, the reading process can start with vocabulary building in order to enhance comprehension. Even if students are equipped with professional knowledge, insufficient vocabulary causes incoherence with the content.

Memorizing vocabulary is the first step to help students understand material content.

I just kept forcing myself to read and then memorize a lot of vocabulary. After that, I had more control of what the articles were about. So I just read through it. It did not matter if I understood. After that, I read again in detail, translated words to understand each paragraph, and then thought about its structure last.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Students' habitual reading process can be influenced by their teachers' instruction.

Students may lay focus on particular words or sentences in order to search for needed information.

I would read the first and last paragraphs first because I think the main points are in certain spot. An article's conclusion should be very clear. So sometimes I would look at its conclusion first and then read the other paragraphs afterwards to see what the article is about.

(Cindy, personal interview, translated)

Read the first and last paragraphs...the first and last lines of the middle paragraphs. If I still do not understand, I would read through the details.

(Mike, personal interview, translated)

Pedagogical process. The English reading education can be heavily test-based.

Understanding and interpreting the deeper meanings are not necessarily important. Students are

expected to learn and develop strategic reading procedures to look for needed information in reading materials to approach test questions.

He (the cram school teacher) taught us how to solve reading tests. He asked us to skim through the texts really fast and then we had to catch some keywords, some disjunctives and to see if those words changed the meanings of the sentences.

(James, personal interview, translated)

When I was in the cram school, the teacher taught us how to read. But his lessons simply focused on testing purpose and the reading methods were designed for tests. For example, he asked us to read the first sentence, look for verbs and blah blah blah. That was really just for tests.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

Other than the test-driven purpose, solving reading tasks and grammar drilling are two common reading activities in English class. Looking for keywords, disjunctives and certain sentences are the main focuses.

We had to point out the topic sentence in the first paragraph and find the main points. Teachers always said the same thing - that English and Chinese are different. In Chinese, we start with stages of writing in order to reach the main points at the end, but in English, we start with the main points.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

Processes influence: Continuous English reading habits build a positive bond between students and their L2. The more readings students are engaged with, the smoother the reading process is. Reading practices can familiarize students with the genre-specific structures and increase vocabulary through memorization. Having the knowledge of vocabulary reduces time consuming on translation.

If there are words I do not understand, I would look them up. I would try my best to memorize them.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Regular Writing

Chinese Writing

Description. Most of students' regular Chinese writing activities fall into two categories, which are academic and professional purposes. For academic purposes, students are required to take composition classes from elementary school through high school or in cram schools.

Composition contests are also commonly hosted in school settings. The writing activities are more test-driven in high school in preparation for the College Entrance Exams. For professional purposes, word production is a way to propose ideas or provide an individual's contribution.

While some written reports can heavily focus on textual information, some are caught between the combination of visual and textual components. Other than writing for the academic and professional purposes, personal blogs and diaries are the other writing activities done regularly.

Process. Composition topics can be selected by one's self or by others, depending on the context. A basic writing format starts with an introduction, supporting paragraphs and a conclusion. By following this writing format, digression from the key points of each paragraph can be avoided. This writing process is linear and more organized.

When I write, I generally write down the outline and then probably two to three keywords because I want to avoid repeating my thoughts in paragraphs. So each paragraph has its own points.

(Cindy, personal interview, translated)

When the writing procedure is not explicitly instructed, students are only given a topic to write within a certain amount of time. It can be a daunting journey for novice writers if writing is just to fulfill page requirements or word counts.

I remember I had a composition class in the elementary school, two classes back to back, and twice a week. We were expected to finish a piece of writing each time. It was really painful at that time because the topics might not have been my favorites. And then, I needed to squeeze out a lot of words.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

Pedagogical process. There are four steps in writing, including introduction, elaboration on themes, transition to another point of view, and conclusion (起承轉合 chi-cheng-chuan-ho).

This writing procedure is taught in composition class to familiarize students with the basic format. So students are prepared for the Chinese composition section in the entrance exams.

My Chinese teacher taught us different types of introduction. After that, she taught us how to continue our writing with paragraphs, how to transit to another point and what to write in each paragraph.

(Jim, personal interview, translated)

Idioms, phrases, rhetoric and examples are instructed as the focal elements toward successful and persuasive writing. If the writing contains famous quotes, it is considered as a well-written piece. Also, those quotes are used to support individuals' opinions. However, referencing the original sources is not mentioned as a part of the instruction.

It is better to use more idioms and quotes from famous people. You need to try your best to give clear examples so it is easier for people to resonate with you.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Process influence: Students have many years of experiences and training in Chinese writing; therefore, this becomes their advantage when composing in English. During the reading and writing process, students may use the language that they feel most comfortable with as a strategy to complete their written assignments. It helps them to comprehend reading materials, construct their thoughts and develop the content.

During thinking process, it is natural to use Chinese. For example, if I need to write a paper today, I might use Chinese to search for relevant information. It is faster to use Chinese, so I can have a basic understanding of an issue. Maybe during this process, my English writing is unconsciously influenced by Chinese.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Americans may not understand our writings. But when we read through our own writing, it sounds really smooth because that is what Chinese writing is like. But American would not understand because it is not the grammar they are used to. Sometimes they had to ask me what those sentences meant.

(Jim, personal interview, translated)

English Writing

Description. Committing to regular English writing is a rare activity for students in Taiwan where most writing is done in Chinese (though they may be required to write in English for academic purpose). Even though students have the ability to produce writing in English, the preferred language is still Chinese. Other than the academic and leisure writing, the composition sections in TOEFL and GMAT are mentioned as a regular English writing activity before studying abroad.

Process. Students may choose to create an outline and place keywords or examples in each paragraph at the initial stage. This writing routine allows students to construct a better sense of their writing direction and help them organize their ideas.

I looked at the question (TOFEL essay) first in order to come up with some examples. I wrote down the examples and then thought about how I should put them all together. For instance, how I should start the first and the second paragraphs.

(Mike, personal interview, translated)

Pedagogical process. English writing pedagogy is test-driven. Students need to learn to use specific frameworks, vocabulary and sentence structures to meet the composition requirements. Writing this way can create a more organized essay with transitional sentences. It can also secure solid writing scores.

I went to a cram school to prepare for GMAT. The teacher taught us how to use writing templates and disjunctives, such as however and in addition. He said we need to use a lot of these kinds of disjunctives.

(James, personal interview, translated)

In Taiwan, the writing templates are used for testing. Teachers teach us how to use them. In high school, the teacher taught us the writing sequence, such as first, second, third, last and summary. It is more standardized.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Process influence. The writing frequency can determine the potential improvement

in English writing. If more time is devoted to English writing, students can benefit from the process and strengthen certain composing elements.

It is like when we practice writing, we have to memorize famous quotes or phrases and also learn new grammatical rules that we do not know before. So I think writing more helps.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

University Level Reading

The literacy practices at the university level (See Table 37) are not restricted to academic and professional related materials. Materials can be completely text-based, but they can also include visual content. Students may develop certain literacy approaches based on the diverse genres and content.

Chinese Reading

Description. The Chinese reading materials include theory-based textbooks/materials and lab experiment procedures, dissertations, textbooks and journals. Students are also expected to read Chinese literature, classical Chinese and modern prose in liberal arts class. Other than reading for academic purposes, translated/local novels, online/printed news, online fiction and magazines are also included.

Table 37

Literacy Practices at the University level

	University Level Reading		University Level Writing	
	<u>Chinese (L1)</u>	<u>English (L2)</u>	<u>Chinese (L1)</u>	<u>(English L2)</u>
Description	1. Academic 2. Literary 3. Leisure	1. Academic 2. Leisure 3. Textual & visual	1. Coursework 2. Proposal 3. Personal	1. Academic 2. professional
Process	1. Sequential reading 2. Interest driven	1. Sequential reading 2. Visual materials	1. Organized structure 2. Less structure	1. Vocabulary & grammar 2. L1 writing framework

Process. The reading process changes according to the subject matter. If the content is academically related, students may read in sequence without skipping sections as a full comprehension of the material enables students to participate more effectively in class. If the reading materials are not academically related, less effort may be put in and the reading process can be less time-consuming and more enjoyable.

When reading those lab reports, I read from the beginning to the end because I should not read selectively. The reports were different because every detail may support me to establish the goal for next experiment. So with materials like those, I would approach them attentively.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

I think when reading textbooks, my Chinese reading process was to read through it. When there was something I did not understand or if I had questions, I would stop and digest the information. Basically, my Chinese reading pace was smooth.

(James, personal interview, translated)

English Reading

Description. The reading materials contain different genres and content, including textbooks, journal articles, dissertations, subject-specific papers/articles, PowerPoint presentations, online materials (science news, CNN, BBC) and Time magazine. While most content is heavily text driven, some include visual literacy as the main focus or additional information for clarification.

Process. The reading process may depend on the content and students' language ability. The procedure is similar to students' Chinese reading process. For example, they may choose to read in sequence in order to have a full comprehension of the material if they are not familiar with the content. As a novice reader, skipping sections may cause confusion.

Initially, I read from the beginning to the end because I did not know where the main points were. I read slowly with the Chinese reading style. Eventually I would skim through it first and then find the main points and read more. But, the speed was definitely

way slower.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

I just read through it. When I had questions or words I did not understand, I stopped and looked them up. When I found some parts that were hard to understand, I stopped and slowly figured them out. So it was pretty much the same. I do not think there are many differences (Chinese & English reading process).

(James, personal interview, translated)

While textual literacy serves an elaborative purpose with paragraphs of information, visual literacy provides the shortest path from an abstract description to a concrete image. It directly ‘shows’ the information.

University Level Writing

Chinese Writing

Description. It can be coursework related, including liberal arts assignments, papers, reflections, research papers, lab experiment reports and theory applications. Activity proposals, interior design proposals and online postings (PTT Bulletin Board System) and blogs are also included as students’ Chinese writing activities.

Process: Different procedures are taken when writing in Chinese. For example, in order to complete academic papers or research projects, some students may choose a more structured writing procedure to report findings and deliver thoughts in a systematic way. Some may use a less structured method to write if the writing is not academically related.

We had to write a summary which talked about the results. After that, we had one section talking about the logic explanations or examples. That would be the introduction. And then, we had to elaborate on the themes. Transition to another point of view would not be a good thing because it meant the experiment failed. The conclusion was at the end.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

English Writing

Description. English writing at the university level mostly falls into the academic category, including assignments from required English classes, seminars and PowerPoint presentations. Profession-purposed writing includes international interior design proposals.

Process. Vocabulary building and grammar are the first two steps of the English writing training. Before developing thoughts into an essay with a proper framework and organization, they are the foundation to transform abstract ideas into complete sentence structures. The English writing process may be similar to Chinese writing; however, the quality of the finished products is based on students' awareness toward different writing fashions and their language ability, including word selection, sentence structures and expressions.

Most of the class time was spent on composing sentences. Because we ordered some advanced English magazines, we learned new vocabulary every week. And then, we used those words to write sentences.

(Jim, personal interview, translated)

It is pretty much the same as Chinese writing. You start with a summary and use the following paragraphs to explain. I think when writing in English, my vocabulary capacity is insufficient. Most of the time, the writing is very simple, but it does include a lot of important logic. In Chinese, I can do a lot of explanations. At least the Chinese sentences and expressions look much better. But, in English, I am not capable of doing so. The writing is more simplified.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

In-school MBA Literacy Experiences in the United States

English is the predominant language used in class for verbal and textual performance. Even though students may anticipate language improvement due to the English speaking environment, the linguistic challenges are still expected (See Table 38). Course descriptions can be found on the schools' websites, but details about the amount of literacy practices are not provided. The verbal performance is influenced by students' language abilities, the class environment and their knowledge on the subject matter. Theoretical and practical applications

are implemented through the coursework, so students are able to build a connection between academic and professional settings.

The Imagined Community

Prior Expectations

Before students' enroll into their MBA programs, the educational institutions are an imagined community where students have to gather information from different sources.

Uncertainties and ideals are created to pave their way to the foreign land where they engage in

Table 38

MBA Experiences in the United States

	Prior MBA	Posterior MBA
Expectation	1. Language improvement	1. Peer interaction
Literacy Practices	1. Professional knowledge expansion 2. Uncertainty about reading 3. Uncertainty about writing 4. Difficulty in literacy practices	1. Theoretical & practical development 1. Reading challenges 2. Professional writing development
Learning & adjustments	—	<u>Verbal Interaction</u> 1. Language confidence 2. Interactive learning environment 3. Professional knowledge
	—	<u>Pedagogical Focus</u> 1. Theoretical foundation 2. Practical application

academic and professional pursuits with their previous knowledge and experiences. Students may draw a positive connection between language growth and the environment when the imagined community is situated in the United States. From students' intuition, the imagined community seems to give them a guarantee that there is a positive linguistic growth lying ahead for them.

Literacy Practices

This imagined community also provides students with the learning environment where students look forward to expanding their professional knowledge for the future job market, even though they are uncertain about the academic literacy practices. Large amounts of reading and written assignment are anticipated by students who may have acquired some general information from multiple sources. However, details about the assignment genres, types, forms, procedures, and challenges are still unknown.

I actually did not know anything about it... Maybe cases? I expected to read many case studies... To be honest, I did not have many chances to read them before, so I did not know the details. I only knew the themes. I just knew there would be a lot of paper.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

There would be a lot of paper or stuff like that in the MBA program. The subjects had a wider range than what I learned in the university, probably not just about the theoretical aspect of economics.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

Although students seem to have a positive attitude towards the imagined community, some of them are able to foresee the potential difficulties in the professional literacy practices. In particular, literacy and verbal performance is conducted in English. Therefore, depending on students' background knowledge and language ability, there can be different levels of challenges ahead.

I knew the reading load could be a problem. I also knew that I would have reading difficulties because of the language, logic and grammar.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

I had trouble understanding some of the professional terminology. Before I came here, a lot of people said, "oh, you need to buy the Chinese version of the textbooks".

(Cindy, personal interview, translated)

The Reality

Posterior Expectations

The academic environment and the professional knowledge both influence students' learning outcomes. First, peer interaction can be one of the key motivating factors in knowledge building. However, the lack of diversity in class may reduce or limit the academic and professional stimuli from peers and cause students' hesitation to learn.

Initially, I thought I would take classes with Americans in this MBA program, but this did not happen. I always think that MBA programs should be open to people who have working experiences.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

At that time, I thought the MBA program should be open to people who have work experiences. But I think it is because of this school's policy, it was different from what I thought because my current classmates are mostly Chinese with some Taiwanese.

(Jim, personal interview, translated)

Second, the materials introduced in class are mostly relevant to the western business environment, yet, some international business situations are discussed in class as well. Students may find the materials distant from their working experiences.

I do not know if I can use what I learned here. I wonder if I can use it when I return to Taiwan.

(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

Literacy Practices

After students' enrollment in the MBA programs, the educational institution is no longer an imagined community where students develop and practice their professional knowledge both inside and outside of the classroom. Theories and practical applications enhance the learning outcomes.

Students also shift their emphasis from language improvement to a concentrated focus on professional knowledge development. They may find the literacy practices, especially the

reading load, go beyond their expectations when compared to their previous reading experiences in Taiwan.

The more difficult part was the reading load assigned by the professor. It was super huge. It kind of exceeded my previous reading load. I usually was not able to finish the readings so I had to spend more time on them. The reading load was really more than I expected.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

We had to read one chapter each week and each chapter was like 70 to 80 pages long. It was really painful. The vocabulary was not that common and there was too much new vocabulary. It took me like an hour to read 1 to 2 pages. That class was the most miserable experience for me.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

However, this professional-knowledge-emphasized transition also alerts students to pay attention to their writing performance. The impacts from receiving professional advice and struggling through heavy reading loads may stimulate conscious and subconscious linguistic transformation and modification. A positive tone and proper format in writing are preferred in both the academic and business environments.

From Amateur to Professional

The literacy practices are conducted based on English materials and students are supposed to meet the academic and professional requirements set forth in graduate schools. During the reading and writing processes, Chinese can be used to comprehend text or as a tool to produce thoughts in a concrete form. Students may retrieve their literacy skills from their previous experiences in order to handle the advanced literacy practices in their MBA programs. The influences from previous literacy experiences (See Table 39) can depend on the materials, contexts and intentions.

Table 39

Previous Literacy Influence

	Current MBA Reading	Current MBA Writing
Description	1. English predominantly for readings 2. Chinese for comprehension 3. Concerns for main points	1. English – notes, relevant info & HW 2. Chinese – notes, vocabulary 3. More efforts made for culturally distant material content
Previous L1 Influence	1. L1 application to L2 reading 2. Familiar procedure	1. Alternative writing structure – bullet point, draft, outline
Previous L2 Influence	1. Foundation for more challenging readings 2. Confidence & familiarity 3. Knowledge through genres	1. Composition structure application 2. Transfer – context & purpose

Reading

Students have experienced a variety of reading materials in Chinese and English in the past. The reading materials in their MBA programs are predominantly in English, even though it is not forbidden to use students' first languages to assist comprehension and quicken the reading process. What concerns students the most is their inability to grasp main points from their English readings (case studies and textbooks) in order to fulfill their academic responsibilities (cold calls and group discussions) in their MBA programs. Language ability, background knowledge, experiences with multimodal learning and reading approaches are the important elements to strengthen comprehension during the reading process.

I think the problem was the sentence structures. The grammar was different so I had trouble reading (in English). Sometimes I did not know if the sentences were inverted. There were a lot of things like this in English. I had trouble grasping the structures so I was not able to understand the meanings. It happened a lot.

(Cindy, personal interview, translated)

Influence from L1

When students are not able to rely solely on the target language to complete assigned tasks in class, their previous Chinese reading experiences can be an alternative source a familiar procedures. When the reading procedure is in a sequence, Chinese materials require less time than English ones. Even though it takes more time to complete assigned business readings, students may choose this reading procedure if they are unfamiliar with the subject matter or not able to detect main points.

I applied my Chinese reading method to English readings. Because we had to read a lot of English articles in the MBA program, I was kind of forced to use the Chinese reading method to read in English.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

Influence from L2

Even though language ability may cause difficult moments in reading, students' previous English reading experiences are the foundation for more challenging materials in their MBA programs. The confidence and familiarity with English result from the amount of experiences students have had. Those experiences may help students locate specific information or make the process less time consuming. English reading materials from the past allow students to gain knowledge regarding genres, structures and vocabulary.

Every article has its own writing fashion. Some people write in a simple way and some people use a more complex writing style. But if you read more, they can help you read textbooks faster.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

You will get used to English if those readings are more interesting and you will want to read them more. When you read those English readings, you will get used to the reading pattern. So you can later on apply it to something you do not like to read.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

Writing

Before attending the MBA programs, English writing practices are not reinforced academically or individually. In order to satisfy the western business literacy norms, students change their writing procedures that they learned from English cram schools in Taiwan after their enrollment. Both students' L1 and L2 (Chinese and English) are used for keywords, outline and note taking (Case Studies, Final Reports, Case Study Analysis, Take Home Final, PowerPoint Projects). Other than those functions, Chinese is only used to write down the definition of words. English is used to write down information relevant to the material content in order to avoid meaning loss in translation. Assignments completed in the MBA programs in the United States are completed in English. Culture-oriented assignments (Case Analysis, Metaphor Summary and Analysis) require additional research for comprehension before transferring thoughts into essays.

Influence from L1

When it comes to putting ideas into words, students' previous Chinese writing experiences, including bullet-point (Take Home Final), draft (Issue Analysis Briefing) and outline (Video Case Project and PowerPoint Project) are served as a source for them to develop their writing in a target language environment.

I did not have many English writing experiences in Taiwan, so most of my writing experiences are from Chinese writing. From my Chinese writing experiences, I start with a framework and then put relevant sentences and keywords in it. I think it influences the way I write in English now.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Influence from L2

Students' previous English writing experiences can be positive or neutral. Students are able to find some resonance between their previous English writings and their MBA written tasks.

They are able to apply the composition structures learned from the past to their MBA written assignments. Also, their previous writing experiences may make their writing process smoother.

Writing seminar reports (university assignment) was similar to writing papers. I just had to have strong logic. The content of the assignments was very different, but I think in the writing part, somehow, the seminar reports were helpful. For example, when I wrote a business plan, I needed to know the company's problems, and then I needed to have a method or a model to analyze them. After analyzing, I had to write the results and recommendations. So it was pretty similar to the seminar reports. So when I wrote, I used the same logic to write.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

The benefit is that, at least, when I write in English now, I do not get stuck. Now I have constructed my own writing method so Americans can definitely understand me. The structure is set and solid so I would just follow it.

(Jim, personal interview, translated)

Students may also need to use their English writing experiences as a strategy selectively because the writing is done in different contexts (cram school vs. MBA program) or with different purposes (test vs. academic paper).

I found out that when we were in the cram school in Taiwan, the composition teacher usually asked us to use a lot of disjunctives, like however and in addition. But the professors here, on the contrary, told us not to use too many of those words or phrases. Sometimes I think the transfers are negative.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Learning and Adjustments

Verbal Interactions

The design of the MBA classes in the United States is student-centered where verbal interaction between professors and students is common (See Table 38). English is the predominant language used in class, but, depending on the situations, students' first languages may come handy for discussions. Linguistic confidence influences how students perform in class. Students can be consciously aware of their language ability differences that exist between them and their peers. Also, transferring thoughts from students L1 to L2 may take more time. Openly

using the target language in front of students' L1 and L2 speaking peers may deter some of them from actively participating in class.

I knew the answers, but during the process of answering questions, I was not ready to organize the language. I lost my chance.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

Another reason that might intimidate students from participating actively in class is the highly interactive learning environment. Coming from a different educational culture requires students to make adjustments, not to mention the linguistic challenges that Taiwanese students may feel inferior to their L1 speaking peers who are used to this interactive classroom culture.

A lot of times when I tried really hard in class to catch up to what everybody was discussing, I happened to receive the cold call. That was my worst nightmare, but it was a common interaction in class. When I received the cold call in the first year, my head usually went blank. After a while, I just had to squeeze something out of my brain. It did not matter what I said, the professors always nodded their heads saying he knew I was on track. They were not difficult on me either.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Personally I still prefer the Asian educational culture which means I still prefer receiving lectures because I did not have any business background and did not know what questions I should ask. If you ask me to ask questions, I am not able to do so because I basically just do not understand. So I prefer to listen to lectures. If I really have questions, I would meet with the professor privately. Americans really like to ask questions directly in class, but I sometimes was not able to catch up.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

Some of the professors liked it when we ask them questions. Some of the professors had some weird facial expressions when our pronunciation was not accurate. Some of them even corrected our pronunciation although I knew they were doing that out of good intentions. Basically I think it was okay, but sometimes when I kept repeating the same words, the professors still did not know what I was talking about. It was very frustrating.

(Kevin, personal interview, translated)

However, class participation can also positively go beyond individuals' own awareness toward their language. Students' professional knowledge and experiences can strengthen their confidence to share their opinions, elaborate on their thoughts and debate based on individual perspectives.

First, we can disagree with the professors here, but this situation is unlikely to happen in Taiwan. Second, we can express any thoughts you have so I like the academic environment here because the professors respect us.

(Cindy, personal interview, translated)

The professors looked me in the eyes and paid attention to what I said. Sometimes I did not know if they understood me so I just kept talking. I would say a lot more to make sure they understood me, but they probably understood me at the first place already.

(Mike, personal interview, translated)

When I felt like I had some special thoughts on certain topics or I thought I could share my working experiences in the class, I voluntarily shared my thoughts.

(James, personal interview, translated)

Pedagogical Focus

Theoretical concepts are delivered in class in order to establish the fundamental knowledge for practical application which is essential in the real business world. Textbook chapters and journal articles are used to strengthen the theoretical knowledge with definitions and explanations.

Practical applications and individuals' contributions on subject matter are highly valued. A significant amount of verbal and written performance is completed collaboratively which is common in the workplace environment. A majority of the assigned reading and written materials are designed to focus on application purposes.

After we all finished the case in the Marketing class, he (the professor) asked us to share our experiences. Another example is when we were in the Negotiation class, he (the professor) gave us 30 minutes to decide how we should negotiate with others.

(Ben, personal interview, translated)

The main fields included Marketing and Finance. We needed to calculate the cash flow, estimate a company's gross rate and its future profit trends. As for the Marketing class, there was more practice on how to create a market plan for a company, how to sell products to customers and how to sell the right products to the right customers.

(James, personal interview, translated)

In the Operation Management class, the professor taught us how to calculate. His lessons were mostly based on mathematics. But the calculation was more about the shipments to

certain countries. We needed to measure the capacity of the shipments.
(Sunny, personal interview, translated)

Summary

The main focus of this chapter was to provide further understanding about the literacy genres and practices completed in three MBA programs in the United States. It discussed the literacy requirements for enrollment and literacy experiences from Taiwanese study abroad students and professors. In this chapter, students' previous Chinese and English literacy acquisition and experiences were described. Another aim was to find out the connection between their previous literacy procedures and in-school literacy tasks in their MBA programs.

Students' Chinese literacy acquisition started prior to their English literacy acquisition. The degree of difficulty and the quality of literacy performance could be influenced based on students' experiences and their understandings of the genres. Students have better control over their first language, so the literacy practices conducted were more diverse, ranging from academic to professional to creative work. Since a significant amount of literacy performance was done in Chinese, by comparison, the literacy training in English is inadequate. Instead of exploring a variety of genres, test-driven English tasks were commonly introduced in the educational setting.

The English literacy practices conducted in the MBA programs were more advanced and complicated than the genres students experienced prior to their enrollment. Since students had more literacy experiences in Chinese, retrieving from their previous memories was an alternative source for them to complete the assigned tasks. Modification of the Chinese literacy procedures was created to meet the English literacy requirements in the MBA programs. Students' prior English literacy experiences provided another option. Their writing procedures were developed inside and outside of the academic setting so as to learn and practice various writing techniques.

However, students needed to made adjustments to their previous English writing process in order to fit into the western business writing norms.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

In chapters four and six, data was presented to demonstrate the literacy requirements and practices conducted in the MBA programs in Taiwan and the United States based on student experiences and faculty perspectives. This analysis included each assignment's description, procedure, purpose, linguistic function, difficulty and strategy. In chapters five and seven, students' previous literacy experiences were described to see if there were impacts on their in-school MBA literacy practices.

In the following section, reading and writing comparison summaries of the data analyzed in the previous chapters is presented to see the comparative relationship among the four MBA programs in Taiwan and the United States. It also aims to respond to the fifth research question (What are the differences and similarities of literacy practices among these four MBA programs?). The summaries also leads to the discussion and interpretation of the differences and similarities in four categories: (1) the academic business literacy practices in the MBA programs in Taiwan and the United States, (2) literacy tasks performed by Taiwanese students and Taiwanese study abroad students, (3) comparing students' and professors' perspectives in Taiwan, (4) comparing students' and professors' perspectives in the United States.

The Academic Business Literacy Practices in the MBA Programs in Taiwan and the United States

Reading Comparison Summary

The reading materials contain various genres which are meant to prepare students for academic and professional purposes. All four programs contain an instructional document

(syllabus), real world/scenario-based tasks (business news articles, magazines, case studies, web pages) and theory-based materials (journal articles, textbooks) (See Table 40). Even though the materials have different generic structures, they are used to facilitate students to strengthen theoretical concepts and familiarize students with skills required in the business environment through real world/scenario-based application.

English materials are commonly used in all MBA programs. In particular, theory-based materials heavily focus on the business concepts and trends in the academic environment in North America. Though, the MBA program in Taiwan also incorporates textual materials in Chinese (syllabus, textbooks, magazines, web pages) written by local (Taiwan) and regional (other Asian countries) authors and scholars. Application-based materials are presented in a similar way that regional and international business cases are included to suit the programs' needs.

Table 40

Reading Material Comparison

	1 MBA program in Taiwan	3 MBA programs in the United States
Reading Tasks	Syllabus, business news article, magazines, web page, journal article, textbook	Syllabus, case study, web page, business news article, textbook, journal article, textbook
Structure	Real world-based & theory-based	Real world-/scenario-based & theory-based
Language	Chinese & English	English
Content	Real world-based – western, regional (Asian countries, international) Theory-based – western	Real world-/ scenario based – western, international (world wide) Theory-based – western

Discussion

Similarity

Reading material. The reading materials introduced in class are usually multipurpose. They are also commonly accompanied by verbal and written assignments to strengthen students' knowledge and skills for the future job market. This may reflect that in order to accomplish tasks in industrial settings, having background knowledge is simply not enough. Students need to be equipped with communication skills dealing with a variety of modes, persuade counterparts, engage in negotiations and internalize information. In this case, students are expected to be able to decode the materials, make sense of the content, reflect on their experiences and conduct quality work. The business genres may or may not be new to students, depending on their previous educational and professional backgrounds. The chosen reading materials represent the common genres appear in the academia in Taiwan and the United States.

North America as the norm. The theory-based materials focusing on the business development and evolvement in North America can be seen as the norm for academic work and professional application. English materials used in classes can be regarded as a symbol of integration into the global business community. They can also be regarded as authentic authoritative tools for knowledge building. Some application-based assignments are related to local or international events in order to extend understandings toward business behavior and contexts around the world. However, application assignments still require the support from the English research work.

Regional and international. The incorporation of local and international materials in class represents the need to understand how business is conducted across countries. The amount and variation of regional and international cases introduced in class may indicate the business

relationship, frequency of commercial pursuits among those countries and the emerging economic powers in the world. The chosen materials are used to raise students' awareness toward economic powers that are either newly developed or have maintained their stature in the business world. In order to create or continue a business relationship, it is necessary to understand how business cultures, interpersonal interactions, customs, strategies and so forth influence decision making.

Difference

Language use. Incorporating English materials serves the purpose of training students to understand the specialized language and knowledge which they may utilize in business settings. Through the literacy process, students are also equipped with the ability to use technical terms in different languages. However, the reliance on English materials entirely can overlook the business need in the contextualized environment. The concepts and principles in those English materials may be practically applied to local contexts.

Even though English materials can help facilitate student development of the genre knowledge that they lack and assist students to become familiar with English as an optional language to use in the globalized business community, students' language ability and local business community can be the other factors to use multi-language materials. Choosing materials in students' first language can strengthen students' skills in L1 business literacy and may also reflect the local business demands. At the same time, students can work in accordance with their English materials and become familiar with the professional language used in local contexts.

Writing Comparison Summary

Rather than simply meeting the academic requirements in the MBA programs, students are expected to master a variety of business genres and skills. The written tasks assigned in MBA

programs can be theory/analysis-related to strengthen students' analytical and problem solving skills, be career-oriented to prepare students for the future job market, be summary-based to develop synthesis and interpretation ability and be visual-based to prepare students for non-textual communication. While some tasks are required to be completed with the combination of research and statistical data, some require self reflection and personal insights.

The written assignments in the MBA programs in the United States are entirely written in English which requires the proficiency of the writing and language usage to meet the western academic and professional standards. However, the majority of written tasks assigned in the MBA program in Taiwan are completed in Chinese with a smaller portion in English (PowerPoint presentations, quiz & exam questions) (See Table 41).

A large amount of materials incorporated into the written tasks in the MBA programs in the United States are relevant to the real business world and in academia in North America and international countries. Also, the majority of the written tasks emphasize personal viewpoints, analytical ability, problem solving skills and theory application. Relatively, the MBA program in Taiwan places more emphasis on theoretical aspect of the realm of business. Although English materials are commonly integrated to support personal statements and persuade an audience, textual materials relevant to local and regional business affairs are also incorporated.

Discussion

Similarity

Assignment structure. Even though the assignments may include different agendas, the four MBA programs all include writing genres dealing with analysis, summary and PowerPoint presentations. This can indicate that within the Taiwanese and American business environments, proper written and verbal communication skills are required, regardless of the language.

Table 41
Writing Material Comparison

	1 MBA program in Taiwan	3 MBA programs in the United States
Writing Tasks	Theoretical development, summary & reflection, textual & visual	Professional development, Analysis, summary & reflection, textual & visual
Structure	Analysis/Theory-based, summary-based, visual-based	Career-based, analysis/theory-based, summary-based, visual-based
Language	Chinese & English	English
Content	Analysis/theory-based – western, local (Taiwan) Summary-based – western, regional (Asian countries) Visual-based – western, local (Taiwan)	Career-based – individual Analysis/theory-based – western, international (world wide) Summary-based – western Visual-based – western

Regarding written communication, each individual should be equipped with the ability to synthesize a large amount of information into a condensed format with succinct wording. Also, the ability to detect problems and offer tactical strategies is a requirement. PowerPoint presentations are a commonly assigned task in MBA programs, necessitating interpersonal communication and interactions that simulate what are expected in industrial settings.

North America as the norm. Whether an assignment is theory or analysis-based, using materials retrieved from the academic database in North America is common in these four programs. The decision of incorporating more English research articles, compared with those written in a foreign language, into written tasks may be a sign that North America is the main hub of academic research. Also, those research studies can be regarded as theoretical justification to bolster the credibility of student' writing and innovative ideas.

Local, regional & international. With the incorporation of local, regional and international business materials, the written content can be more contextualized. The amount and

frequency of the introduction of specific content into written work indicates that there is a need to strengthen the business relationships within this globalized community. This can be done by creating connections to the norm, developing contextualized perceptions and establishing broader and deeper insights toward international and regional commercial development.

Difference

Assignment structure. The written genres reflect the academic focus of a program. The MBA programs in the United States focus more on developing students' problem solving and strategy-making skills in regards to business cases, while the MBA program in Taiwan includes more theoretical assignments. This can be the indication that there is a need to strengthen students' background knowledge by connecting to the original sources of academic business.

Language use. The written language for assignments can be based on the program location, students' language abilities and business demands. While English materials are commonly used in the program in Taiwan, students are expected to be able to perform in their first language. English communication skills may be trained through reading English materials and some simple English writing in order to effectively interact with international clients. The majority of the written and verbal tasks are completed in Chinese which may indicate that the business environment in Taiwan still relies on the first language for communication.

Literacy Tasks Performed by Taiwanese Students and Taiwanese Study abroad Students

Reading Performance Comparison Summary

Students' language abilities significantly influence the reading process when the content is in a second language. In general, the reading process can vary depending on the genre-specific structures, non-textual information, familiarity with the subject matter and language ability. Students' first language plays the role of meaning clarification in both settings. The students in

Taiwan also prefer to use their first language as their writing tool, but the students in the United States choose otherwise (See Table 42).

Regardless of the business genres introduced in class, the reading tasks portray the nature of business from the academic and professional perspectives. In these four programs, readings can be completed individually and collaboratively. In particular, engaging students in English materials in Taiwan is done to familiarize them with the language and the academic usage. The challenges students experience can go beyond language and genre-related issues. For example, students in Taiwan worry about how they can apply English materials to the local business environment, while the students in the United States struggle with material content that is distant from their cultural and professional knowledge.

Table 42

Reading Process Comparison

	1 MBA program in Taiwan	3 MBA programs in the United States
Process	Linear & non-linear, certain sections & vocabulary, Translation	Linear & non-linear, visuals, certain sections
Purpose	Real world & theory knowledge, individual & collaborative learning, English familiarity	Real world & theory knowledge, real world application, individual & collaborative learning
Language	Chinese – vocabulary checking, translation (term, phrase, paragraph, article), writing purpose (note, keyword, main point)	Chinese – vocabulary checking English – writing purpose (note, keyword, main point)
Difficulty	Language barrier, vocabulary, terminology, genre-specific structure & visuals, real world application	Vocabulary, terminology, genre-specific structure, length, background knowledge, Content (professional or culture-based)
Strategy	Additional research, learning community, language switching, note taking, visuals	Certain sections, learning community, continuous practice

Discussion

Similarity

Linguistic & genre-specific challenge. Language proficiency tests such as TOEFL, GRE and GMAT are used as the admission and graduation requirements. However, the reading genres in the MBA programs go beyond what those proficiency tests can cover. Those tests do not indicate or guarantee student success in literacy performances in the MBA programs because business literacy has the tendency of using multimodal elements in communication. Students in both settings addressed that English vocabulary, business terminology, material content and genre-specific structures are the challenges they encountered during the reading process. While some students have business-related backgrounds, others are in varied disciplinary fields. When incomprehension occurs, it may not necessarily stem from only the students' language ability. There are variables that can influence how a second language reader comprehends English materials, including different literacy modes, educational background, knowledge of specialized languages, professional knowledge, working experiences and common language used in the local business community.

Material content. The material content is supposed to strengthen students' knowledge regarding local, regional and international business relationships as well as to encourage students to search for original sources. The norm may not be contextualized enough to make practical applications in other business locations. The content may be written based on specific groups, behaviors, customs and cultures which require modifications to suit the local business needs. It can also be too distant from students' background knowledge and professional experiences to be able to build a connection.

Difference

Reading procedure & English familiarity. Students' reading procedures are similar in some ways, depending on the purpose of the assignment, their familiarity with the topic and their language ability. Students in Taiwan take translation as an additional step when reading theory and research-related materials. Even though the translated text requires rearrangement and reorganization, students still choose to take extra steps. This may indicate that students' first language provides the comfort and assurance of understanding the content. This additional process may also be an indication that students are able to seek solutions from their existing resources.

The incorporation of English materials indicates the authoritative status of research study in North America and English as a common language used in world business communication. Learning the academic English usage is one step closer to how scholars communicate in the main research hub. A hierarchical system can be potentially created that shows that research work published in English may receive a prestigious status because they are accepted as the norm.

Writing Performance Comparison Summary

The written tasks in the MBA program in Taiwan include more theory-based materials, while the three MBA programs in the United States include more application-based assignments. These written tasks usually require students to engage in reading. They can also be accompanied by verbal presentations and group discussions. In general, a thorough understanding of the assignment topic and generic structure is the first step. The reading amount and length can be challenging, especially for second language students. Therefore, students are expected to develop the ability to condense and extract main points from the reading materials. Theoretical and practical applications are commonly required in writing. The one difference during the writing

process is the use of translation that students in Taiwan use to successfully read English materials (See Table 43).

Even though the majority of the written tasks are completed in Chinese in the MBA program in Taiwan, students are expected to familiarize themselves with English in general and the academic language used in research-related materials. The three programs in the United States require students' written performance to meet the academic and professional standards. Students in both settings experience linguistic and generic challenges. While students in Taiwan experience the challenge of transferring English materials to Chinese written assignments, the students in the United States struggle to meet the content-related satisfaction and cross-cultural communication. A series of editing and continuous reading can increase students' familiarity with English and genre structures. To clearly express ideas, students in the United States choose to use simplified language, acquire assistance from the Writing Center and count on peers in their learning community.

Discussion

Similarity

Educational & professional performance. The written tasks introduced in the four MBA programs in Taiwan and the United States can be generally categorized as theory and application-based which provides students with business knowledge from academic and professional perspectives. Students' writing processes in these two settings are similar in that they usually start with reading and close with a finished product that meets the academic and professional standards set by the professors. There are other conscious rhetorical moves that take place during the writing process, including drafting, analyzing, interpreting, organizing and editing. The decision regarding how to use or implement rhetorical moves depends on the

assignment genres. These writing steps can be considered the skills required in the professional environment in order to accomplish tasks.

Difference

Language use. The written languages used in academic settings may reflect the common languages used in the professional environment as well as the required writing skills. English

Table 43

Writing Process Comparison

	1 MBA program in Taiwan	3 MBA programs in the United States
Process	Understanding assignment topic, genre & thorough reading, translation, main point selection, keyword/outline, analysis & synthesis, reflection & application	Understanding assignment topic, genre & through reading, main point selection, keyword/outline, analysis & synthesis, recommendation & solution
Purpose	Theory knowledge, practical application, English familiarity, academic language development, problem solving skills, verbal communication	Professional verbal & written communication, theoretical & practical application, problem solving skills, student-centered, individual & collaborative work, career preparation
Language	Chinese – translation, completion, notes, reading English – verification (original terms), notes, reading	Chinese – draft, outline, vocabulary checking English – draft, completion
Difficulty	Language (vocabulary & sentence), business terminology, genre structure, linguistic transition, translation	Language (vocabulary & sentence), technical term, genre structure, group coordination, non-textual information (audio & visual), content, creativity & originality, reflection & analysis
Strategy	Practice & research (background knowledge & academic language), genre-specific imitation, proofreading & editing	Practice & research (background knowledge & academic language), simplified & clear language, attentive reading, learning community, Writing Center

may not necessarily be regarded as a common or prestigious language in the local business setting in Taiwan. It may not be necessary to use English for verbal or written communication within the Taiwanese business environment. With this understanding, training students to use their first language may suit the local business demands and result in better quality work.

Incorporating English materials into Chinese written assignments is another challenge that students encounter in Taiwan. In order to meaningfully present their understandings and interpretations, translation is used as a tactic to transfer meanings from one language to another. Even though the quality of students' written work can be evaluated based on how well they can report findings, their first language writing ability and experiences can also influence how they present their abstract thoughts.

Content, creativity & originality. While the linguistic challenges are shared by both groups of students, content-related challenges can emerge when students find no or limited connection to the materials. Discussions and practical application can become difficult. However, students' problem solving skills may be elevated by conducting additional research about specific topics, seeking help from their learning community and learning from class discussions. Even though these approaches may be simply regarded as the steps to complete assignments, it is through the scaffolding process that students are consciously and unconsciously guided to solve problems. The problems here can impact the level of student uncertainty toward their assignments and also how they generate original ideas. Problem solving skills and creativity are highly valued in the three MBA programs in the United States, which may indicate that these two qualities are important in the workplace environment. Therefore, the assignments may be designed to cultivate students' professional skills.

Writing center. In any case, writing is a skill that takes time to develop and evolve for novice writers in academic and professional settings, whether it is in their first or second language. The three schools in the United States have Writing Centers located on their campuses that are designated to provide services to all students who need help at any stage during their writing process. The school in Taiwan has a Chinese language center for international students who are interested in learning the Chinese language and Taiwanese cultures. However, it does not have any literacy service for Taiwanese students who need suggestions or instructions on how to approach their assignments in their first language. The existence of a writing center on campus may represent the importance on first or second language composition education and the preparation for academic and professional literacy practices.

Comparing Students' and Professors' Perspectives in Taiwan

Taiwan Context Summary (Reading)

From the professors' pedagogical perspectives, reading assignments are categorized as theory and application-based for the MBA program in Taiwan. Theory-based materials provide students with fundamental knowledge regarding specific subject matter, while application-based materials bring students closer to the real business environment. Both kinds of readings guide students to view business situations through academic and professional perspectives (See Table 44).

The design of reading assignments is usually versatile. After reading, students are expected to participate in group discussions, complete written projects, present their findings and contribute to individual and collaborative work. Professors may evaluate students based on how well they internalize and utilize knowledge in class participation and assignments. The required reading materials are in Chinese and English. Some English materials are challenging for

students which can later influence how they complete their other assignments. A variety of reading materials are recommended to improve reading skills and comprehension.

Discussion

Similarity

Language challenge. Reading in English can be difficult for second language readers, especially when the materials include specialized terminology, different literacy modes, complex sentence structures and subject matter. Even though background knowledge and working

Table 44

Reading Comparison (Students & Professors in Taiwan)

	Professors' Perspectives	Students' Perspectives
Reading Tasks	Textbooks, articles (research, cases, news, magazines)	Syllabus, business news articles, magazines, web pages, journal articles, textbooks
Structure	Theory-based, practical application	Real world-based, theory-based
Purposes & Expectation	Academic & professional perspectives & development, current business trends, written & verbal performance, comprehension	Real world & theory knowledge, Individual & collaborative learning, English familiarity
Language	Chinese & English (completion)	Chinese & English (process & completion)
Performance	Success – comprehension (individual case) Difficulty – language, vocabulary, comprehension	Difficulty – linguistic barrier, vocabulary, terminology, genre-specific structures & visuals, real world application
Strategy	Reading practice (any genres & topics)	Additional research, learning community, language switching, note taking, visuals

experiences may also influence comprehension, an individual's second language knowledge and reading experiences are more likely to provide support during the reading process. This may indicate that students' English reading experiences can influence how many language resources

they can draw from. Students' professional knowledge and familiarity with certain topics or materials can also affect how students notice keywords and spend more time consulting a dictionary. Students L1 literacy experiences can also influence how they select the appropriate words in Chinese.

Four out of five MBA students have an educational background in business management and some work experience. Students' previous business education focuses on delivering business related knowledge through their first language in order to construct the foundation for more advanced courses. This may explain the reason that Chinese is still the predominant language used in the business environment in Taiwan.

Difference

Reading practice. Both professors and students raised a similar strategy to remedy the insufficiency of English vocabulary. In order to improve reading skills and comprehension ability, professors addressed a reading approach that involves multiple genres and topics, while students preferred to do additional research on specific subject matter. Professors' suggestions may indicate that the quality of students' reading performance is not simply impaired by their background knowledge, but their unfamiliarity with English in general.

The incorporation of English materials is not completely intended for language development, but to connect students to the original sources of knowledge. However, students recognized it as a technique and expectation to familiarize themselves with English. The decision to conduct additional research is a goal-specific approach and also indicates that students recognize their lack of knowledge on the academic and linguistic levels. By repetitively reading materials with specific genres, students may strengthen their knowledge of vocabulary, content, academic language and generic structures.

Taiwan Context Summary (Writing)

The professors in the MBA program in Taiwan assigned theory and application-based projects with a variety of subject matter. While the theory-based assignments are designed to familiarize students with research-related knowledge, the intention of application-based assignments is for students to develop problem-solving skills. The written language is not restricted to any language, but the common written language is Chinese. Students' writing (Chinese) is expected to meet the academic and professional standards set by the professors (See Table 45).

Students are evaluated based on their written and verbal communication skills, as well expertise in practical application. Professors in Taiwan noticed that students' language abilities (Chinese and English) and background knowledge can influence their comprehension, assignment quality, assignment content and writing skills.

Discussion

Similarity

Written communication. The assignments are usually written based on a variety of Chinese and English reading materials. Regardless of the assignment genres, students are expected to ensure that their written language, content and generic structures meet academic and professional standards. However, both professors and students recognize that there are challenges when transferring English materials into Chinese writing. The intention of incorporating English materials in class is to bring students closer to the original sources, guide them to do research with legitimate materials and introduce them to the worldwide business environment. The translated editions (textbooks) may focus too much on the well-constructed sentence structures that reduce the clarity of the original information. In addition, students' translated version

Table 45

Writing Comparison (Students & Professors in Taiwan)

	Professors' Perspectives	Students' Perspectives
Writing Tasks	Research paper, synthesis, thesis proposal, power point presentation, test	Theoretical development, Summary & reflection, textual & visual
Structure	Theory-based, application-based	Analysis/theory-based, summary-based, visual-based
Purposes & Expectation	Research topics & procedures, verbal communication, problem-solving skills, theoretical & practical application, language ability & writing skills (Chinese)	Theory knowledge, practical application, English familiarity, academic language development, problem-solving skills, verbal communication
Language	Chinese & English (completion)	Chinese & English (process & completion)
Performance	Success – completion with Instruction Difficulty – vocabulary, professional & academic language, background knowledge	Difficulty – language (vocabulary, sentence), business terminology, genre-specific structure, linguistic transition, translation
Strategy	Reading practice & writing practice	Practice & research (background knowledge , academic language), genre-specific imitation, proofreading & editing

(terminology and phrases) can be influenced by their English and Chinese ability, their understanding of the materials and their familiarity with the topics and various literacy modes. The challenges students encounter when incorporating English materials into Chinese writing are not always related to their English language ability.

However, the quality of students' assignment is not solely reliant on how well they can transfer English materials into their writing. The written tasks can also be influenced by how well students understand and internalize the topic, let alone recognize business terminology. This can be accomplished through continuous reading to build familiarity with the subject matter and

how it is presented through an academic tone. In any case, comprehension is the key to report findings.

Besides the challenges and comprehension, students' first language writing ability can also influence the quality of their written assignments. Similar to second language writing, writing in the first language still requires constant training to master the language usage and genre-specific structures.

Comparing Students' and Professors' Perspectives in the United States

The United States Context Summary (Reading)

The reading assignments can be categorized as theory and application-based for the three MBA programs in the United States. Textbooks and journal articles are commonly used as fundamental sources of knowledge, while practical materials are introduced to facilitate application development. One difference between the programs in Taiwan and the United States is the frequency of analyzing business case studies. The programs in the United States include more utilization and evaluation of case studies.

Professors evaluate students' performance based on if they are able to integrate their knowledge into written and verbal performances, how they comprehend the materials and if they can internalize and apply their knowledge and perspectives to real world cases. Even though students are able to complete required assignments, English is still a barrier for them to overcome. Language ability can influence comprehension and verbal communication (See Table 46).

Discussion

Similarity

Learning community. Choosing to form a same-culture learning community may stem

from linguistic and cultural convenience. However, the learning results may lack diverse perspectives. Whether the learning community is composed of members from singular or multiple cultural backgrounds, working and learning as a group is highly valued in the academic business environment. This can be the indication that working collaboratively is a common activity in workplace settings. Collaboration involves verbal and written communication, comment exchanges, discussions, negotiations, cross-cultural interactions and so forth. The skills to clearly express ideas and the ability to internalize received information are the basic elements of collaborative work. During the process of collaboration, students are trained to conduct verbal and written performances in order to meet the academic and professional standards.

Table 46
Reading Comparison (Students & Professors in the United States)

	Professors' Perspectives	Students' Perspectives
Reading Tasks	Textbook, article (research, case, newsletter, magazine, news)	Syllabus, case study, web page, business news article, textbook, journal article
Structure	Theory-based, application-based	Real world/scenario-based, theory-based
Purposes & Expectation	Professional perspectives & examples, professional & application development, theoretical knowledge, current research gap, verbal performance, completion	Real world & theory knowledge, real world application, individual & collaborative learning
Language	Chinese (completion)	English (completion) Chinese (process & completion)
Performance	Success – intellectual & linguistic performance Difficulty – communication skills, language	Difficulty – linguistic barrier, terminology, genre-specific structures & visuals, real world application, vocabulary
Strategy	Culturally diverse learning community, reading practice, time management	Certain sections, learning community, continuous practice

The United States Context Summary (Writing)

The written tasks assigned in the programs in Taiwan and the United States can be categorized into theory-based, application-based and analysis-based. While students are expected to go through the process of internalizing and externalizing concepts and principles for theory-based assignments, the ability to analyze textual and non-textual materials is as important as the application development. Regardless of the written languages and genres, the writing has to meet the academic and professional standards.

Even though there are genre-specific differences in the programs in Taiwan and the United States, the emphasis of the evaluation of the assignments is generally placed on students' written and verbal communication skills, comprehension of the materials and their academic and professional development. Language ability and background knowledge influence how students conduct written performance (See Table 47).

Discussion

Difference

Language use. Regardless of the assignment genres, lengths, content and languages used during the writing process, students are expected to complete their written work meeting the academic and professional requirements regulated by the North America academia. There is no restriction on what languages can be used during the writing or reading process. Students may choose their first language for clarification and also to conduct additional research. However, the assignments have to be completed in English. Students are trained to internalize and produce English work that is suitable for the business environment in the United States. These students are capable of performing Chinese writing in general, while the students in Taiwan also spend the same amount of time in their MBA program with plenty of academic and professional

Table 47

Writing Comparison (Students & Professors in the United States)

	Professors' Perspectives	Students' Perspectives
Writing Tasks	Research paper, article critique, case analysis, short analysis or conclusion, Q & A, video review, power point presentation	Professional development, analysis, summary & reflection, textual & visual
Structure	Theory-based, analysis-based, application-based	Career-based, analysis/theory-based, summary-based, visual-based
Purposes & Expectation	Research, analysis & interpretation skills, problem solving skills, communication skills, theoretical/practical application, discussions	Professional verbal & written communication, theoretical & practical application, problem solving skills, student-centered, individual & collaborative work, career preparation
Language	English (completion)	English (completion) Chinese (process & completion)
Performance	Success – personal goals, language ability, content Difficulty – comprehension/vocabulary, language switching assignment requirements	Difficulty – language (vocabulary, sentence), technical terms, genre-specific structure, group coordination, non-textual information (audio & visual), content, creativity & originality, reflection & analysis
Strategy	Additional research, Writing Center, syllabus, writing practices (any genres & topics)	Practice & research (background knowledge), simplified & clear language, attentive reading, learning community, Writing Center

Chinese writing practices. Educational backgrounds and training may create a dilemma in the business environment, including: Do the employers prefer to hire applicants with a foreign degree, yet, with insufficient training in Chinese business writing or applicants with a degree from local universities with sufficient training in Chinese business writing? What are the similarities and differences between academic and real world business writing? Is there a gap between academic and real world business writing? What writing preparation should students

acquire before employment? Students who graduate with a foreign degree may potentially go through a transitional stage to reconstruct their knowledge to suit the local business environment, such as writing and application. However, this stage may vary depending on the complexity and how much written work needs to be produced at the workplace.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study investigated L2 writers' business literacy experiences and the negotiation between their L1 and L2 during the literacy process in two settings, since a great amount of research on disciplinary literacy work has focused on science and engineering (Zhu, 2004b). There are three sections included in this chapter. The first section summarizes the results based on each research question. The second section addresses the contributions of this study in the fields of business literacy and L1 and L2 literacy practices. The third section includes business literacy and business literacy pedagogy in Taiwan and the United States.

Summary of Research Results

There are five research questions intended to investigate cross-cultural and cross-linguistic academic business literacies performed by Taiwanese MBA students in Taiwan and the United States. The summary of the results are presented in accordance to the research questions listed below. The research questions are listed as:

1. What first language (Chinese) and second language (English) literacy practices are required by a MBA program in Taiwan?
2. What first language (English) and second language (any language) literacy practices are required by three MBA program in the United States?
3. How do Taiwanese students understand and cope with different genres of writing in their business program?
4. How do Taiwanese study abroad students understand and cope with different genres of writing in their business programs?

5. What are the differences and similarities of literacy practices among these four MBA programs?

The following is the summary of the business literacy practices that students conducted in their L1 and L2 in the MBA programs in Taiwan and the United States based on student experiences and professor observations. The MBA program in Taiwan evaluates students' L1 and L2 literacy skills based on their enrollment exam or admission application (both in L1) and their language proficiency tests (L2). The literacy tasks assigned in the MBA program embrace theoretical knowledge and practical application. The reading assignments are used to strengthen the students' ability to decode information, transform meanings and construct their ideas in textual, visual and verbal performance. While the reading tasks include L1 and L2 materials with a variety of genres and topics, the majority of written activities are completed in students' L1. In general, English is the language that is used to compose the reading materials. To a small degree, it is also used by students to take notes and verify terminology. There is no restriction on how and what languages students should use to complete their assignments as long as their work reflects professional quality. Students rely on their L1 to complete their literacy tasks, including translation and textual and verbal performance. Students' L1 is a valuable asset during their literacy process.

As for study abroad Taiwanese MBA students, language proficiency exams are the basic assessment tools to evaluate their general language ability. Essay writing is another instrument to evaluate students' literacy skills, though with a more contextualized focus. The literacy practices in the three MBA programs in the United States consist of theory and application-based materials and professional development. Students' literacy practices are inseparable from verbal and visual presentations. That being said, completing required readings is not the end of their assignments,

but is intended to develop knowledge in different forms. All of the assigned reading and written materials are in students' L2. However, students are allowed to use their L1 during the process. The majority of the students are inclined to use their L2 at any stages of their work, such as note taking, drafting and completion. L1 is mostly used to clarify vocabulary meanings. Even though students still rely on their L1 to comprehend, language switching can potentially alter meanings. Also, language usage and grammar are the criteria for evaluation.

Regarding the third research question, chapter four addresses students' academic business experiences and chapter five focuses on students' previous L1 and L2 literacy development in Taiwan. Students' reading procedure can depend on their background knowledge and their familiarity with the language, terminology and topics. Translation is usually involved if the material is written in English. The main challenge that students encounter is language-related which can later influence how they apply their knowledge to workplace environment. Also, approaches retrieved from their previous L1 reading experiences are limited due to the different linguistic systems. However, students still rely on their L1 for the clarification purpose. As for their writing procedure, thorough reading is usually the first step, followed by a series of drafts and translation if using English materials. Students find it difficult to transfer and construct meanings from English materials to their Chinese writing because of their language abilities and linguistic transitioning from Chinese to English. Since their written assignments are mostly completed in Chinese, they either make modifications or retrieve strategies from their previous experiences.

In response to the fourth research question, Taiwanese study abroad students' reading procedures are generally influenced by the information needed for their assignments as well as their familiarity with the topics and genre-specific structures. Language is also a challenge for

these students, in terms of specialized language and business terminology. However, translation is rarely used. Material content can be difficult if it is irrelevant to students' professional backgrounds and culture. Students usually seek help from their learning community. It is also common for students to retrieve their L1 reading habits from previous experiences. The amount of influence from their L2 depends on their reading experiences and familiarity with English. As for their writing process, students go through a series of reading and drafting. Language is one of the challenges that they come across when expressing ideas in text. Students also struggle to fully express their thoughts in writing due to the disconnect that exists within the reading materials. Simplified language, learning communities and Writing Centers are the strategies commonly taken. Students utilize their previous L1 writing experiences during the drafting stage. Even though their L2 writing experiences are limited, they are able to utilize or modify previous writing procedures. However, this application can be negative due to different prior contexts (cram school vs. MBA programs) and purposes (linguistic proficiency tests vs. academic paper).

In regard to the final research question, a series of comparisons in chapter eight discusses the similarities and differences of literacy practices, literacy processes and literacy experiences between Taiwanese MBA students and professors in Taiwan and the United States. The similarities in literacy practices are the assignment structures and content. The literacy practices assigned in these four MBA programs require students to develop appropriate verbal, visual and textual performance. The chosen material content indicates the authoritative status within the academic and business world. Whether the tasks contain theoretical, analytical or practical subject matter, North America steers the direction of educational and professional development. The literacy practices also include local, regional and international issues which infuse contextualized elements into literacy tasks and represent the needs to raise students' awareness

of the intertwined business world. The proportion of theoretical and practical materials shows the different focuses in these programs. The program in Taiwan includes more theoretical materials to guide students to original sources, while the programs in the United States focuses more on practical application. Another factor that distinguishes these programs is the language usage. The incorporation of Chinese and English literacy tasks indicates the required knowledge and skills in the academic and professional settings in Taiwan, while the programs in the United States only includes English materials.

The literacy process comparison is divided into reading and writing. Even though language proficiency tests and enrollment examinations are considered appropriate evaluation tools to determine students' qualifications, they do not guarantee academic success or focus on business-related literacy genres. English vocabulary, business terminology and genre-specific structures are the main challenges students face when encountering L2 reading materials. Also, material content can be disconnected from students' educational backgrounds and working experiences. Their familiarity with the community and common languages and professional knowledge are the other factors that influence L2 comprehension. Even though translation complicates the process and consumes more time, students in Taiwan use it to comprehend readings. This shows that students' familiarity with their L1 is supportive during the reading process.

In general, written assignments are usually inseparable from PowerPoint presentations and require students to actively participate in class discussions in these two settings. Students are expected to review, extract main points and construct meanings from their reading materials. The differences in the students' writing processes in Taiwan and the United States comes down to language usage, content, creativity and originality. The incorporation of Chinese and English

materials into students' written assignments in Taiwan reveals two points of interest. First, English is a language skill required for international communication, but is not necessarily a common language used in the local setting. Second, students are placed in a linguistic dilemma. While students are not able to complete their written assignments in English, they are also challenged to transfer and construct meanings from English to Chinese. As for the study abroad Taiwanese MBA students, they struggle to meet the content-related requirements. The disconnection from reading materials influences the quality of written work. Students' language ability is not the only cause for the lack of originality in their written assignments. The existence of Writing Centers is another factor that differentiates the strategies used by students. The university in Taiwan is not equipped with such an entity to facilitate students' L1 writing, while the three universities in the United States provide English literacy service to all students.

Linguistic challenges are mutually recognized by students and professors in the MBA program in Taiwan. Students' familiarity with English, knowledge regarding specialized language usage and insufficient L2 reading experiences can influence comprehension. All of these factors influence how students transfer meanings and report findings in their writings. The quality of students' work is also influenced by their training in Chinese writing, even though it is their L1. From students' perspectives, English materials are used for language development, but the technical terms can cause comprehension issues. Therefore, additional research is conducted to solve problems. From professors' perspectives, students' unfamiliarity with English in general is the crucial reason for lacking comprehension. Their suggestion for students is to read materials with multiple genres and topics.

As for the programs in the United States, discussions are commonly based on students' verbal and written assignments. From students' experiences and professors' observations,

Taiwanese students have a tendency to form their learning community without including diverse membership due to linguistic and cultural convenience. Writing training is another issue. While students are able to use any languages during the literacy process, their final products must meet the linguistic requirements set by their professors. However, meeting those criteria triggers a series of questions regarding students' L1 writing preparation for the workplace environment in Taiwan.

Implications to Disciplinary Business Communication

From the literature reviewed in chapter one and chapter two, there were studies focusing on L2 literacy for specific purposes and business literacy, such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Belcher, 2006; Nickerson & Planken, 2009; Nguyen & Miller, 2012; Uhrig, 2012) and English for Business Purposes (EBP) (Bhatia & Bhatia, 2013), literacy comparison between ESP and MBA (Raymond & Parks, 2002), and information literacy and academic business writing (Katz, Haras & Blaszczyński, 2010). These studies mostly focused on the students' performance on reading, writing or the combination of disciplinary business communication which provided more conventionally defined business literacy practices. There were also studies that focused on the analysis of academic business assignment types (Zhu, 2004b), MBA literacy and study abroad experiences (Sasson, 2010) as well as faculty perspectives on disciplinary literacy (Zhu, 2004a). In this study, qualitative approaches were utilized to investigate the nature of MBA literacy practices through Taiwanese MBA students' experiences and faculty members' perspectives in two geographic settings (Taiwan and the United States).

MBA literacy contains conventional models of literacy and the ability to read and write is a requirement. Through reading and writing, students are expected to develop communication skills, analytical and quantitative methods and practical application skills which are intended to

meet both academic and professional standards. During the process, students are also expected to encounter various genres that are introduced in class based on academic and professional trends. However, MBA literacy can also go beyond textual operations and functions. According to the data presented in chapters four and six, a series of non-textual elements are also integrated into the conventional way of literacy practice, whether it is theoretical or practical, including symbols, visual, verbal, audio and numerical information. With these textual and non-textual modes, MBA literacy has a diverse and flexible way to represent and communicate information. Meaning-making in disciplinary business communication requires multiple or a combination of textual and non-textual modes.

The structure of student body may consist of both linguistic and cultural diverseness. For L2 writers, what influences the performance of multimodal MBA literacy can go above their language abilities. Disciplinary business literacy emphasizes the representation of evidence and findings. For example, the way evidence reported can be presented in written form which requires students to explicitly express their thoughts with linguistic and visual components. It can also be presented in verbal form where students are expected to conduct presentations or in-class discussions by using verbal, visual and linguistic elements. It is important to note that these literacy tasks are multipurpose that they may contain more than one literacy mode for students to complete the assignments. Due to the linguistic and cultural diversity existing in student backgrounds, how literacy is conducted can consist of creativity and flexibility because they may use their resources as strategies. Therefore, the quality of students' literacy performance can be influenced by their experiences with different literacy modes, background knowledge, familiarity with topics and working experiences.

When L2 writers experience disciplinary business literacy, they may go through a series of language transition such as codeswitching or translation. This process should be considered the way multilinguals function and operate and is flexible in that they have different levels of control over their languages to complete tasks. Students may use translation as a tactical approach or use any languages that they feel most comfortable with when dealing with disciplinary business literacy. With the multimodal nature of MBA literacy, L2 writers may need to draw from their literacy resources and prior experiences.

Implications to the Field of Business Communication

According to Kubota (2014), “as increased numbers of multinational corporations and smaller businesses cross-national borders, successful management of diversity—recognition of multiplicity and negotiation with cultural and linguistic difference among diverse employees and clients—has become a key to economic success” (p.12). Previous studies have focused on documenting L2 literacy performance in the business environment, including Business English as Lingua Franca (BELF) in professional contexts (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2007, 2010) and workplace communication (Kankaanranta, 2006; Nickerson, 2005; Planken, van Meurs & Radlinska, 2010). The literacy practices integrated into MBA programs are designed to develop students’ communication skills and prepare students for the future job market. They are also contextualized which corresponds to professional business literacy.

From the results of this study, the nature of disciplinary business literacy is influenced by multimodality and multilingualism. In this sense, literacy performance can potentially be transformed and modified based on a variety of reasons such as students’ experiences with multimodal performance and students’ literacy resources. From this perspective, this study can be useful for multinational companies or business dealing with communication crossing

linguistic and cultural boundaries, especially for employers and employees to reconsider the nature of business communication and business literacy performance.

First, in globalized business communities, communication is inevitably influenced by business demands and business professionals. The business world is changing continuously which may require different communication modes or the ability to communicate in certain languages. Also, the languages used for communication can stem from a variety of Englishes or local languages. Business professionals working in the internationally intertwined business world need not only English but also their first language(s) to function and communicate (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). There can be alternative ways to express the same thing, though business principles and protocols should not be ignored. It is important for monolinguals and multilinguals to be equipped with understanding toward the culturally and linguistically diverseness in business communication and vice versa. For example, companies can arrange workshops focusing on cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication for their business practitioners that within the lingua franca business community, communication is not constrained to one set of a standardized model (House, 2002). This is also a way for companies to evaluate their practitioners' perceptions toward such communication and improve the efficiency in communication.

According to Kankaanranta (2006), “genre knowledge is more essential for business practitioners' professional success than having impeccable English language skills without an understanding of how the language works in particular corporate contexts” (p. 8). In addition to multimodal and multilingual communication, literacy performance within professional business communication can be influenced by other variables such as business professionals' work and multilingual literacy experiences, background knowledge, familiarity with literacy modes, and so

forth. Language should not be solely considered as the only challenge for multilingual business practitioners' literacy performance. English is considered as an "international code and operating language" that business professionals utilize to fulfill business demands and communication (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010, p. 400). For multilingual business practitioners, they should take advantage of these variables and turn them into their skills.

Limitations

There are some limitations in this study that need to be addressed. The first limitation is relevant to the researcher's position in this study. As a researcher, significant focus was placed on the analysis of the data through an unbiased lens. With that said, the researcher is also an international student and a multilingual user. The way data was interpreted may have been influenced by the researcher's own experiences and beliefs regarding L2 literacy. Sharing the same culture, language and pre-college educational background with the student participants allowed the researcher to communicate and understand them from a deeper perspective. However, these similar backgrounds may have also caused the researcher to make certain assumptions when trying to understand the Taiwanese students' L2 literacy performances.

Another limitation is related to the methodology of this study. There were 12 student participants in this study, and while greater participation may have aided the study further, the required commitment to the two long format interview sessions may have served as a deterrent. In addition to the three MBA programs in the United States, there was only one MBA program from Taiwan included in this study. This only represents the literacy tasks assigned and performed in one program in Taiwan. As for the 8 faculty participants, again, greater participation may have increased the study's understanding. As with the student interview, this also may have caused a reduction in participation due to the nature of the interview that requires

a long session. The data collection techniques that were utilized in this study are also a limitation. Snowball sampling was used to collect data in Taiwan, while convenience sampling and snowball sampling were used in the United States. These two techniques lack random sampling, but as this study seeks to qualitatively understand MBA literacy practices, the sampling techniques utilized were appropriate. Due to the small size of participants and concentrated sampling, the results of this study cannot be generalized.

Another limitation is the interview data collected. Since this study is about how Taiwanese students perform disciplinary business literacy, the truthfulness of the collected interview data is based on how willingly the student participants shared their stories regarding their business literacy experiences. Without being able to witness their literacy process, the data can only rely on student participants' perceived experiences through self-reporting. What they shared during the interviews can be their perspectives of what happened, but may not have necessarily occurred in that way. Also, they might share experiences, thereby giving information that was needed for this study. The framing of the questions and how the questions were asked may have led them to provide certain answers. This can be influenced by their comfort level with their shared experiences and the researcher's position as an interviewer in this study. The questions were reviewed by the dissertation committee.

Future Research

As mentioned in chapter three, this study is designed as a qualitative research to investigate participants' cross-cultural and cross-linguistic literacy experiences in their MBA programs. Since there were studies concerning the gap between academic and professional writing in the North America context (Dias, Freedman, Medway & Pare, 1999; Bremner, 2010), a longitudinal research project can be conducted to investigate in-school and post-MBA literacy

practices. This potential study can be based on the same groups of L2 participants who enroll in the MBA programs in their home of origin and the United States. It can explore the similarities and differences in their in-school and post-MBA literacy performance and evaluate both cultural and linguistic aspects. Also, it may provide an opportunity to see how participants utilize their L1 and L2 literacy practices in the workplace environment in their home country or in the United States.

This current study only focuses on Taiwanese students. Another potential direction for future research is to include students from diverse linguistic backgrounds to understand how international students perform business literacy practices with their L1 and L2 in general. It can also investigate if there are similarities and differences among these international students' business performances. This future research may build a connection with this current study to see if any characteristics in literacy performance can be potentially transferred among groups of diverse populations. The results of this future research can also be used to better prepare international students, faculty members and university policy makers.

The third future research I propose here is to include quantitative research methodologies, as this study utilized qualitative methods, including interviews and document analysis to understand how L2 writers approach business readings and writings with their L1 and L2. This may generate statistical characteristics that belong to certain diverse populations when performing business literacy.

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APPENDIX A

First Student Interview Questions

Background information and experiences of literacy practices before the MBA programs

1. Tell me about your name, pseudonym you want to use, your education backgrounds, your experiences of studying or living abroad, and your plans for the future.
2. Tell me about your experiences of writing in Chinese. What activities do you do regularly? How do these experiences influence you in writing in English?
3. Tell me about your experiences of writing in English. What activities do you do regularly? How do these activities influence your writing in English?
4. Tell me about the writing (both in Chinese and English) genres you did in the university in Taiwan. What were the requirements for the papers? What were the amounts of the finished papers?
5. Tell me about your process of writing a paper in Chinese and English. What are the steps?
6. What were your writing instructions (Chinese/English) like in Taiwan?

Professional writing in the MBA program

1. Tell me about if your previous experiences of writing in Chinese/English influence how you write in English in the program.
2. Tell me about your experience of being a MBA student. What were your expectations before enrolling in the program? What are your expectations after enrolling in the program?
3. Tell me about what you knew about the reading/writing practices in the program before enrolling as a MBA student. What have been changed or stayed the same after you enrolled as a MBA students?
4. Tell me about the courses you are required to take. What were/are those classes like? What were/are the requirements? What languages were/ are used?
5. Tell me about how people participate and the language use in class. Describe the feelings, environments, reactions you have when interacting with your professors and classmates.
6. Tell me about the required readings for the classes. What types of reading have you done so far? How did you approach different types of reading? What are the specific features for each type? How did you figure them out?
7. Tell me about the required writings for the classes. What types of writing have you done so far? How did you approach different types of writing? What are the specific features for each type? How did you figure them out? How did you understand and utilize specific features in your writing?
8. What are the steps you take when writing your papers, research projects and class assignments? How do you start writing your papers (information, sources, ideas, experiences, books, classmates, professors)?
9. Tell me about your feelings and experiences of writing your first paper? What concerned you? Where there difficulties? What were the solutions or strategies used?

APPENDIX B

Second Student Interview Questions

1. Tell me about the way you read your syllabus. What sections did you start first? What were your main concerns when reading your syllabus? How did you understand the syllabus?
2. Tell me about the purposes of this specific paper. What were the expectations from the professor? Did you achieve the goal? Why or why not? How did you work on this paper (the approaches, stages)? How did your professor regard this paper? How would you evaluate the quality of this work?
3. Tell me about the purposes of this specific research project. What were the expectations from the professor? Did you achieve the goal? Why or why not? How did you work on this paper (the approaches, stages)? How did your professor regard this paper? How would you evaluate the quality of this work?
4. Tell me about the purposes of this specific class assignment. What were the expectations from the professor? Did you achieve the goal? Why or why not? How did you work on this paper (the approaches, stages)? How did your professor regard this paper? How would you evaluate the quality of this work?
5. What strategies or skills did you use to write academic papers/research projects/class assignments? What were the differences/similarities between the strategies you used for business English and regular writing?
6. What were the conflicts or difficulties you faced in the process of writing/reading in business English?
7. Tell me about how you evaluated your academic papers. What were the criteria?
8. Tell me about the characteristics or the conventions for each business genre you have done so far. How did you use them in your paper?
9. Tell me about your experiences of the language used in reading/writing in the program. Did you switch languages to help your learning? Why or why not?

APPENDIX C

Faculty Interview Questions

1. Tell me about the classes you teach.
2. Tell me about the reading assignments you give in your class. What are the purposes? What are your expectations toward your Taiwanese students? Did your students achieve your goals? Why or why not? How do you evaluate students' reading assignments (standards or criteria)?
3. Tell me about the written assignments you give in your class. What are the purposes? What are your expectations toward your Taiwanese students? Did your students achieve your goals? Why or why not? How do you evaluate students' reading assignments (standards or criteria)?
4. Tell me about the successes/difficulties Taiwanese students have in their writing/reading?
5. Do you have any recommendations for Taiwanese students on reading/written assignments?